



# IGSS Summer Reading 2025-2026

Our goal for summer reading this year is to kick off a celebration of all the reading that goes on among our IGSS community. Our plan is to highlight independent reading throughout the year in a visible way within our IGSS space. The reading that you complete over the summer (all of it!) will help to launch that effort. Looking for suggestions on what to read? Check out the IGSS recommended reading list on the other side of this flyer.

There are two threads to our IGSS reading experience over the summer. For the first **REQUIRED** thread, if you responded to the email asking you to rank your preference, you got either your first or second choice. If not, we put you in a group. [Here](#) are the assigned groups. When we return, we will kick off the year with some small group discussions.

The second thread is all-choice, all the time. To complete this **REQUIRED** thread, you just need to keep track of the books you read over the summer. Take a photo of yourself with the book when you finish it. You need to complete at least two. The books for this thread can be fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels, poetry, a play, an audio book, or whatever. Be ready to talk about what you've read on your return.

## **REQUIRED BOOK — Your group is [here](#) (you're only reading one of the books below)**

Plato's *Apology*:  Plato Apology.pdf (~35 pages) AND Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Ilyich*  Death of Ivan Ilyich.pdf (~50 pages)

These two classic texts look into opposing "meanings of life:" On the one hand, Ivan Ilyich is dedicated to living a pleasant, decent, and wealthy life; on the other hand, Socrates is devoted to improving his city/state, Athens, by challenging the politically powerful and trying to convince them they should make virtue and wisdom their first priority, even if it means that Socrates has to publicly embarrass the city's leaders. One of them is sentenced to death, the other finds it impossible to die. All of us will have the opportunity to discuss what is most meaningful in our lives and to decide if "the unexamined life is worth living."

## ***Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia (320 pages)**

In *Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia, young socialite Noemí Taboada is sent to a remote estate in the Mexican countryside after receiving a troubling letter from her newlywed cousin. What she finds is a decaying mansion, an enigmatic family, and a chilling atmosphere thick with secrets. As she navigates the house's strange rules and haunting beauty, Noemí begins to suspect something far more sinister than she imagined. Her courage and cleverness are tested as reality begins to unravel around her.

### *Kent State: Four Dead in Ohio* by Derf Backderf (288 pages)

Non-fiction graphic novel. Winner of the 2021 Eisner Award for Best Graphic Novel and NY Times Best Book of the Year. From Amazon: "*Kent State: Four Dead in Ohio* is a moving and troubling story about the bitter price of dissent—as relevant today as it was in 1970.

On May 4, 1970, the Ohio National Guard gunned down unarmed college students protesting the Vietnam War at Kent State University. In a deadly barrage of 67 shots, four students were killed and nine shot and wounded. It was the day America turned guns on its own children—a shocking event burned into our national memory."

### *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold (368 pages)

From Amazon: "My name was Salmon, like the fish; first name, Susie. I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973." So begins the story of Susie Salmon, who is adjusting to her new home in heaven, a place that is not at all what she expected, even as she is watching life on earth continue without her -- her friends trading rumors about her disappearance, her killer trying to cover his tracks, her grief-stricken family unraveling. Out of unspeakable tragedy and loss, *The Lovely Bones* succeeds, miraculously, in building a tale filled with hope, humor, suspense, even joy."

### *The Things They Carried*, by Tim O'Brien (233 pages)

A classic work of American literature that has not stopped changing minds and lives since it burst onto the literary scene, *The Things They Carried* is a ground-breaking meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling. *The Things They Carried* depicts the men of Alpha Company: Jimmy Cross, Henry Dobbins, Rat Kiley, Mitchell Sanders, Norman Bowker, Kiowa, and the character Tim O'Brien, who has survived his tour in Vietnam to become a father and writer at the age of forty-three. Taught everywhere from high school classrooms to graduate seminars in creative writing, it has become required reading for any American and continues to challenge readers in their perceptions of fact and fiction, war and peace, courage and fear and longing.

## **INDEPENDENT READING FREE FOR ALL (2 books minimum; don't forget the selfie)**

- Finish a minimum of two books that you choose on your own.
- Keep track of what you read and take a selfie holding the book you finished!

## IGSS RECOMMENDED READING

Need a suggestion? Check out some of the books on these lists:

- [IGSS Teacher Recommendations List](#)
- A Pulitzer-prize winning book ([fiction](#) or [nonfiction](#))
- This [interactive list](#) and another list [here](#)
- Books that may be relevant to other works we will read this year
  - *David Copperfield*, by Charles Dickens
  - *Dopesick*, by Beth Macy — (also a Hulu TV series worth watching)
  - *American Dirt*, by Jeanine Cummins
  - *Song of Solomon*, by Toni Morrison
  - *Sense of an Ending*, by Julian Barnes