



2015 SUMMER READING LIST

July 01, 2015 / Laura Burgess



Our summer reading list is back by popular demand! This year we curated a list based on a variety of sources as well as suggestions from our own delegation staff. Each link below has a rich list of

recommendations, some focusing on topics such as national security, science, or law while others are geared toward easy summer reading. From these lists as well as staff recommendations, we selected several books which peaked our interest and divided them up into five categories- hopefully something for everyone.

We wish you a relaxing and fun summer, happy reading!!!

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RT @ICRC: On the final day of #rcrc15, we reaffirm our commitment to protect and assist vulnerable people

Reading lists to check out:

Bill Gate's Summer Reading List in Esquire
TED Summer Reading List

The New York Times: Cool Books for Hot Summer Days
JP Morgan Summer Reading List

The New Yorker: What We're Reading This Summer
Lawfare Reading list

Foreign Policy Summer Reading List
Tiny Book Reviews

TIME Beach Reads to Transport You This Summer
Goodreads Summer Reading List



LEARN SOMETHING RANDOM

What If?, by Randall Munroe

In reviewing it, Gates says "The questions are funny—"From what height would you need to drop a steak for it to be cooked when it hit the ground?"—but the science underpinning them is very accurate. And what thought leader doesn't like thought experiments?" Recommended by: Bill Gate's Reading List in Esquire.

Jonas Salk, A Life, by Charlotte DeCroes Jacobs

worldwide.

#powerofhumanity

15 hours ago



ICRC US & Canada

Submit by Dec 31st! Call for papers for the 2016

Richard R. Baxter Military Writing Prize

<https://t.co/ZgqY4oaZMf>

16 hours ago



ICRC US & Canada

RT @ICRC: How can we ensure the fundamental values of the

#GenevaConventions are honoured?

<https://t.co/Sy9rsTT3MJ> via

@PMaurerICRC #rcrc15

16 hours ago

News & Updates:

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SUBMIT

Resources

Just Security

Lawfare

Real Clear Defense

InterAction Blog

“It’s a recent biography of the man who discovered and introduced the successful 'Salk vaccine' used to prevent polio.” *Recommended by: Christopher Harland, ICRC Legal Advisor in Washington.*

How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character by Paul Tough.

“By offering evidence that traits like empathy, determination and self-control tend to be better predictors of success than IQ, Tough will make you think differently about raising kids in a highly competitive world.”- Tony Fadell, *Nest Founder. Recommended by: TED Summer Reading List.*

This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate, by Naomi Klein

Given Pope Francis’ recent encyclical on climate change, it seemed timely to include something on the subject matter. Though Klein’s view is one perspective of many on the subject, her book received high reviews for taking an optimistic stance while diagnosing tangible things that need to change. *Recommended by: Goodreads Best Non-fiction of 2014.*

The Recording Angel: Music, Records and Culture from Aristotle to Zappa, by Evan Eisenberg

“I recently purchased this book after deciding that I wanted to learn more about the history of music and its evolution through society. The first covers the history of music dating back to the tradition of oral storytelling through to the digital era of today. It critically examines the effect that recording via paper, plastic, and then digitally has had on the music itself and the way that people and society interact with it.” *Recommended by: Laura Burgess, ICRC Intercross Editor.*

Who We Be: The Colorization of America, by Jeff Chang

European Journal of International Law: Talk !

The Diplomat

Harvard Humanitarian Initiative

Foreign Policy

Opinio Juris

Pulitzer Center On Crisis Reporting

StoryCorps

TED

“Don’t let the textbook look of this book stop you, because it’s awesome. No one writes more beautifully about race and culture than Jeff, the author of *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop*. Only he can make topical discussions of race and art into a page-turner.” - Anne Pasternak, Incoming Director of the Brooklyn Museum. *Recommended by: TED Summer Reading List*

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, by Rebecca Skloot

"It book is a nonfiction account of a poor black woman named Henrietta Lacks who was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cervical cancer in the late 1940s. Her cells were taken by doctors without her knowledge in 1951, and became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more. Known as HeLa cells, doctors all over the world have bought and sold these cells, and yet no one knows much of anything about her. I found the book riveting - the author is a journalist who meticulously retraced the life of Henrietta - beginning with her family as poor tobacco farmers in North Carolina, their move to Baltimore to find better paying work in a factory, to her daughter and family still living in poverty today in Baltimore. The book confronts a host of interesting questions and moral dilemmas around race and poverty in America and medical ethics in modern medicine. A thought provoking and very interesting read!" *Recommended by Clare Taylor, ICRC Assistant to the Armed Forces Delegates in Washington.*

The Secret History of Wonder Woman, by Jill Lepore.

“This book is about the man who invented Wonder Woman, and the women around him who reflected historical changes in the role of women in society. It’s smart and funny, a refreshing look into a corner of cultural history that I would never have thought to explore.” - David Rothkopf, Foreign Policy. *Recommended by: TED Summer Reading List.*

Private Eye

"Catch up on reading this saucily irreverent fortnightly nearly irreplaceable catalogue of life and politics in the UK."

Recommended by Christopher Daniell, ICRC Detention Doctor in Washington.



NOT ASHAMED OF FICTION

Ruby, by Cynthia Bond

"Oprah recommended this book to me, and it is astounding. The writer has such a majestic command of language; she catapults everyday words into rare air with lines that sear into your memory. The characters Ruby and Ephraim shimmer with vibrancy — they show the complications of pain and joy, all messily and beautifully together. A total triumph." - Ava DuVernay, Director of *Selma*. *Recommended by: TED Summer Reading List.*

Ghost Fleet, by Peter Singer and August Cole

"It's billed as 'a novel of the next world war', seemingly more plausible than many books of the genre."

Recommended by: Christopher Harland, ICRC Legal Advisor in Washington.

Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

"This is the last novel I read. It's the story of a Nigerian woman who comes to America and then returns home, full of culture shock and self-discovery. It's beautifully done and will have you looking at the world around you in a very different way." - David Rothkopf, Foreign Policy.

Recommended by: Recommended by: TED Summer

All the Light We Cannot See, by Anthony Doerr

"Epic and immensely readable romance of a blind young girl set mainly in the Bretagne port of St. Malo during the Second World War." - *Recommended by Christopher Daniell, ICRC Detention Doctor in Washington.*

The Transcriptionist by Amy Rowland

"A lonely woman in New York City, the last transcriptionist at a major newspaper, discovers a story she can't forget. It's a quiet, beautifully observed book about who gets remembered, who gets forgotten, and how we decide whose stories deserve to be told. One of my favorite unexpected finds in a long time.." - *Recommended by: Nadia Goodman, Author of Tiny Book Reviews*

The Trouble with Poetry, by US Poet Laureate Billy Collins

"I'm currently savoring US Poet Laureate Billy Collins' witty and evocative volume entitled, "The Trouble with Poetry." Two of my favorite poems from the slim collection are 'The Lanyard,' about the gift we can never repay, and 'Class Picture, 1954,' which is so rich with nostalgia and wonder, it prompted me to get out my old photo albums (from before I stored my pictures in the Cloud) and revel in days gone by." *Recommended by: Anna Nelson, ICRC Head of Communications & Public affairs in Washington.*

The Rocks, by Peter Nichols

"In this decades-spanning mystery novel, Peter Nichols sweeps us away to a Mediterranean island, and slowly uncovers its murky history: In 1948, two honeymooners suddenly fell out of love with each other. Generations later, the same thing occurs again. Feel free to think of this as the anti-romance novel. It's definitely not your typical love story." *Recommended by: Refinery 29.*

The Imperfectionists, by Tom Rachman

"It is a 2010 novel about an English-language newspaper in Rome and the people who work there over the years. It's a wonderful book with outsized, memorable characters whom we bump up against and then perhaps lose sight of —just the way we do with people in real life. It's moving and funny and knowing and true."—Meg Wolitzer, Author.

Recommended by: Harper's Bazar.

Dept. of Speculation, by Jenny Offill

"Easily my favorite book of 2014; I read the whole thing in one sitting. Insightful, heartbreaking, brutally honest, and peppered with such a dry sense of humor that I found myself laughing out loud. Impeccable in so many ways, not the least of which is her unique tone and form." –

Recommended by: Nadia Goodman, Author of Tiny Book Reviews.



FOR THE BEACH BUM

Hyperbole and a Half: Unfortunate Situations, Flawed Coping Mechanisms, Mayhem, and Other Things that Happened, by Allie Brosh.

"[It] is an honest-to-goodness summer read. You will rip through it in three hours, tops. But you'll wish it went on longer, because it's funny and smart as hell. I must have interrupted Melinda a dozen times to read to her passages that made me laugh out loud." *Recommended in Bill Gate's Reading List in Esquire, read his review [here](#).*

The Places in Between, by Rory Stewart

"A delightfully written account of Stewart's eccentric walk through the center of Afghanistan in 2002. Since then he has been elected to the UK Parliament, been the youngest Defense Select Committee chair, and since the recent election is now a junior minister." - *Recommended by Christopher Daniell, ICRC Detention Doctor in Washington.*

The Diver's Clothes Lie Empty: A Novel, by Vendela Vida

In Vendela Vida's taut and mesmerizing novel of ideas, a woman travels to Casablanca, Morocco, on mysterious business. While checking into her hotel, the woman is robbed of her wallet and passport—all of her money and identification. Stripped of her identity, she feels burdened by the crime yet strangely liberated by her sudden freedom to be anyone she chooses. *Recommended by: TIME Beach Reads to Transport You This Summer.*

The Martian, by Andy Weir

"The Martian is a great summer read. It follows the misadventures of an astronaut accidentally stranded on Mars after his team's mission is disastrously aborted. Written as a series of surprisingly hilarious diary entries, it's a book about scientific discovery and human ingenuity in the most desolate of places, but also about the sheer human will to survive." *Recommended by: Andrea Harrison, ICRC Deputy Legal Advisor in Washington.*

The Girl on the Train, by Paula Hawkins

"I started it last night and already finished 100 pages. It's a great summer read." *Recommended by: Tracey Begley, ICRC Public Affairs Officer in Washington*

A Year in the Merde, by Stephen Clarke

A hysterical novel based on the author's own experiences as an English expat in Paris. He finds himself in an endless stream of unfortunate situations that he begins to metaphorically compare to what he terms *merde*, slipping on some of the 15 tons of dog poop that lines the streets of

Paris. *Recommended by: Golareh Yazdanpanah, ICRC
Data Administrator in Washington*

Travel blogs (aggregated by Fathom)

“I recently discovered a collection of travel blogs that are equally remarkable yet distinct in their travel narrative and storytelling. For anyone (like me) who is in a constant state of wanderlust, or simply wants to research where to go and how to tackle it, these blogs are beautifully artistic and resourceful.” *Recommended by: Laura Burgess, ICRC Intercross Editor.*



FOR NON- FICTION

JUNKIES

Junipero Serra: California's Founding
Father, by Steven Hackel; &

Doña Francisca Pizarro: una ilustre
mestiza 1534-1598, by María Rostworowski

“I'm currently reading California historian Steven Hackel's Junipero Serra: California's Founding Father. The subject is timely as Pope Francis is scheduled to canonize the Franciscan friar on September 23rd during a visit to Washington. The upcoming canonization has reignited controversy over Serra's legacy and the impact of Spanish colonization on the state's Native American population. Also, Doña Francisca Pizarro: una ilustre mestiza 1534-1598 by Peruvian historian María Rostworowski depicts the life of the daughter of Peru's conqueror Francisco Pizarro

and Inés Huaylas Yupanqui (aka Quispe Sisa), descendant of an Inca ruler. The portrayal of gender roles and relations, social stratification and political ambitions in colonial Peru invites readers to re-imagine what otherwise could have been possible.” *Recommended by: Margarita Studemeister, Principal Advisor for Inter-American Affairs.*

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption, by Bryan Stevenson

“I’m currently reading this autobiography. As Bryan Stevenson said in his TED Talk: ‘We will ultimately not be judged by our technology; we won’t be judged by our design; we won’t be judged by our intellect and reason. Ultimately, you judge the character of a society by how they treat the poor, the condemned, the incarcerated.’ This book is not to be missed.” – David Isay, StoryCorps.

Recommended by: *TED Summer Reading List.*

Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman

“Kahneman is a renowned researcher on the psychology behind judgment and decision-making. In this book, he explains that there are two systems that drive the way we think. System 1 is fast, intuitive, and emotional; System 2 is slower, more deliberative, and more logical. He dissects both to understand how each system shapes our judgments and decisions.” *Recommended by: Laura Burgess, ICRC Intercross Editor*

Capital Dames, by Cokie Roberts

“**Capital Dames** delves into the significant role that the women of Washington played during the Civil War era. They couldn't even vote but boy, did they know how to lobby and assert their influence.” *Recommended by: Anna Nelson, ICRC Head of Communications & Public affairs in Washington.*

Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now, by Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Continuing her journey from a deeply religious Islamic upbringing in Somalia to a post at Harvard, the author makes a powerful plea for a Muslim Reformation as the only way to end the horrors of terrorism, sectarian warfare and the repression of women and minorities.

Recommended by: an anonymous friend.

Uncommon Grounds: New Media and Critical Practices in North Africa and the Middle East edited by Anthony Downey

“In countries with rich histories, changing boundaries and war/conflict, artists are sharing histories, reflecting on the past to see the present and speaking truth to power. Check out the thriving artistic practices emerging in the Middle East and North Africa.” - Anne Pasternak, Incoming Director of the Brooklyn Museum. *Recommended by: TED Summer*

Reading List

Truth and Beauty: A Friendship, by Ann Patchett

“Ann Patchett's memoir entitled, "Truth and Beauty," - is a moving tribute to the power of friendship. (If you've never read Patchett's novel "Bel Canto," be sure to put it on your summer reading list. It's a stunning piece of literature, which also happens to mention the ICRC.)” *Recommended by: Anna Nelson, ICRC Head of Communications & Public affairs in Washington.*

Reading Lolita in Teheran, by Azar Nafisi; & The Lieutenant of San Porfirio, by Joel Hirst

"Both books are about revolution process/regimes. I want to know more about the whole process that people have to go through along with government authorities and/or religious leaders." *Recommended by Mila Lozano, ICRC Tracing Officer in Washington.*

