
GOOD TO KNOW! - Kits check out for a total of 6 weeks.

All kits contain 8 regular print copies and supplement discussion materials. Some kits may also include 1 large print edition and 1 audio book on cd edition where available. Please review each kit's inventory tag to make sure all kit materials are included when checking out and returning.

All Girl Filling Station's Last Reunion (fiction) by Fannie Flagg

This new comic mystery novel is about two women who are forced to reimagine who they are spans decades and generations. Mrs. Sookie Poole of Point Clear, Alabama, has just married off the last of her daughters and is looking forward to relaxing and traveling with her husband, Earle. The only thing left to contend with is her mother, who may be a lot of fun for other people, but is, for the most part, an overbearing presence for her daughter. Then one day, Sookie discovers a secret about her mother's past that knocks her for a loop and calls into question everything she ever thought she knew about herself, her family, and her future.

Annie's Ghosts (biography) by Steve Luxenberg

Great Michigan Read 2013

Steve Luxenberg, a senior editor at the *Washington Post* and Detroit native, explores the story of his aunt, Annie Cohen, who was committed to Detroit's Eloise Hospital in 1940 when she was 21. She was effectively erased from Luxenberg's family tree thereafter. In investigating his family's personal history, Luxenberg embarks on a journey to discover not only his aunt's story, but explores the social history and day-to-day life of turn-of-the-century Detroit through its present day.

Beautiful Ruins (fiction) by Jess Walter

The story begins in 1962. On a rocky patch of the sun-drenched Italian coastline, a young innkeeper, chest-deep in daydreams, looks out over the incandescent waters of the Ligurian Sea and spies an apparition: a tall, thin woman, a vision in white, approaching him on a boat. She is an actress, he soon learns, an American starlet, and she is dying. And the story begins again today, half a world away, when an elderly Italian man shows up on a movie studio's back lot—searching for the mysterious woman he last saw at his hotel decades earlier.

NEW - Feather Brained: My Bumbling Quest to Become a Birder and Find a Rare Bird on My Own

(memoir) by Bob Tarte

Michigan Notable Author

For much of his life, the closest Bob Tarte got to a nature walk was the stroll from parking lot to picnic table on family outings. But a chance sighting of a dazzling rose-breasted grosbeak in wife-to-be Linda's backyard prompts a fascination with birds, which he had never cared about before in the least. Soon he is obsessed with spotting more and more of them-the rarer the better-and embarks on a bumpy journey to improve his bumbling birding skills. Along the way, Tarte offers readers a droll look at the pleasures and pitfalls he encounters, introduces a colorful cast of fellow birders from across the country, and travels to some of the premier birding sites in the

Midwest. This funny, heartfelt memoir will appeal to birders of all skill levels as well as to anyone who knows and loves a birder.

House Girl (fiction) by Tara Conklin

Virginia, 1852. Seventeen-year-old Josephine Bell decides to run from the failing tobacco farm where she is a slave and nurse to her ailing mistress, the aspiring artist Lu Anne Bell. New York City, 2004. Lina Sparrow, an ambitious first-year associate in an elite law firm, is given a difficult, highly sensitive assignment that could make her career: she must find the “perfect plaintiff” to lead a historic class-action lawsuit worth trillions of dollars in reparations for descendants of American slaves. Moving between antebellum Virginia and modern-day New York, this searing, suspenseful and heartbreaking tale of art and history, love and secrets, explores what it means to repair a wrong and asks whether truth is sometimes more important than justice.

NEW - Immigration & Justice For Our Neighbors (anthology) edited by Jennifer Clark and Miriam Downey

Through poetry, essays, and interviews, 36 contributors – many from Kalamazoo and the surrounding area – explore the theme of immigration and help us reflect on what it means to be a neighbor. How do we show or not show hospitality to our neighbors? What does it mean to be a foreigner, a traveler in the world today? “This anthology sings the song that Kalamazoo and the rest of America strives, although sometimes fails to be: a welcoming place for all. This important collection brings awareness and hopefully even greater support for our newest and sometimes most vulnerable neighbors, immigrants.” – Mollie Clements.

Invention of Wings (historical fiction) by Sue Monk Kidd

This novel is the riveting, inspiring story of the Grimke sisters, Sarah and Angelina who were at the forefront of the abolitionist and women’s rights movements. The novel interweaves the narrative of a determined, inventive young slave, Hetty or Handful, who was given to Sarah as a gift on her 11th birthday. Sarah despises slavery and rejects the gift. Hetty still remains in the Grimke household and forms a remarkable friendship with Sarah in a state that places a price on slaves in the same way it does a bolt of cloth or side of beef. Much of the Grimke story is historically based and crafted into an elegantly written first person account of Sarah and Hetty’s struggle for freedom and voice in a time where women and certainly slaves had little chance to develop their talents and articulate and act on their beliefs and passions.

Isadore’s Secret (nonfiction) by Mardi Jo Link

Michigan author

A gripping story of a nun who was murdered in Isadore nearly 100 years ago. Years after the nun's disappearance, her bones were found, but only when local law enforcement found out about this murder as gossip spread through the town was anything done to find out who killed the nun, Sister Janina. A compelling story and a well-researched and carefully written account of the events that affected Isadore and its Catholic Polish population so greatly." -Michigan Notable Book Award committee

Life After Life (fiction) by Kate Atkinson

Goodreads Best Books of 2013

On a cold and snowy night in 1910, Ursula Todd is born, the third child of a wealthy English banker and his wife. Sadly, she dies before she can draw her first breath. On that same cold and snowy night, Ursula Todd is born, lets out a lusty wail, and embarks upon a life that will be, to say the least, unusual. For as she grows, she also dies, repeatedly, in any number of ways. Clearly

history (and Kate Atkinson) have plans for her: In Ursula rests nothing less than the fate of civilization.

Lisette's List (historical fiction) by Susan Vreeland

In 1937, young Lisette Roux and her husband, André, move from Paris to a village in Provence to care for André's grandfather, Pascal. Lisette regrets having to give up her dream of becoming a gallery apprentice and longs for the comforts and sophistication of Paris. But she soon develops strong ties to the land and people of her new village and a new appreciation for the power of art. As a pigment salesman and frame maker selling his pigments in Paris, Pascal befriended Pissarro and Cézanne and received some of their paintings. When war breaks out, André goes off to the front, but not before hiding Pascal's paintings from the Nazis' reach. With German forces spreading across Europe, the sudden fall of Paris, and the rise of Vichy France, Lisette sets out to locate the paintings. Her search takes her through the stunning French countryside, and introduces her to Marc and Bella Chagall. Throughout the novel Vreeland explores the power of art as a way to persevere the sorrow, loss and tragic destruction of war.

Luminaries (fiction) by Eleanor Catton

It is 1866, and young Walter Moody has come to make his fortune upon the New Zealand goldfields. On the stormy night of his arrival, he stumbles across a tense gathering of twelve local men who have met in secret to discuss a series of unexplained events: A wealthy man has vanished, a prostitute has tried to end her life, and an enormous fortune has been discovered in the home of a luckless drunk. Moody is soon drawn into the mystery: a network of fates and fortunes that is as complex and exquisitely ornate as the night sky. Richly evoking a mid-nineteenth-century world of shipping, banking, and gold rush boom and bust, *The Luminaries* is a brilliantly constructed, fiendishly clever ghost story and a gripping page-turner.

The Martian (fiction) by Andy Weir

Apollo 13 meets *Cast Away* in this grippingly detailed, brilliantly ingenious man-vs-nature survival thriller, set on the surface of Mars. It started with the dust storm that nearly killed him and forced his crew to leave him behind, sure he was already dead. Now he's stranded millions of miles from the nearest human being, with no way to signal Earth that he's alive--and even if he could get word out, his food would be gone years before a rescue mission could arrive. But Mark isn't ready to give up yet. Drawing on his ingenuity, his engineering skills--and a relentless, dogged refusal to quit--he steadfastly confronts one seemingly insurmountable obstacle after the next. But will his resourcefulness be enough to overcome the impossible odds against him?

Me Before You (fiction) by Jojo Moyes

Lou Clark knows lots of things. She knows how many footsteps there are between the bus stop and home. She knows she likes working in The Buttered Bun tea shop and she knows she might not love her boyfriend Patrick. What Lou doesn't know is she's about to lose her job or that knowing what's coming is what keeps her sane.

Will Traynor knows his motorcycle accident took away his desire to live. He knows everything feels very small and rather joyless now and he knows exactly how he's going to put a stop to that. What Will doesn't know is that Lou is about to burst into his world in a riot of color. And neither of them knows they're going to change the other for all time.

Orphan Train (fiction) by Christina Baker Kline

This is a captivating story of two very different women who build an unexpected friendship: a 91-year-old woman with a hidden past as an orphan-train rider and the teenage girl whose own

troubled adolescence leads her to seek answers to questions no one has ever thought to ask. Nearly eighteen, Molly Ayer knows she has one last chance. Just months from "aging out" of the child welfare system and close to being kicked out of her foster home, a community service position helping a Vivian Daly clean out her home is the only thing keeping her out of juvie. As she helps Vivian sort through her possessions and memories as an orphaned immigrant put on a train to the Midwest with hundreds of other children whose destinies would be determined by luck and chance, Molly discovers that she and Vivian aren't as different as they seem to be.

Rosie Project (fiction) by Graeme Simsion

This feel-good novel is narrated by an oddly charming, socially challenged genetics professor on an unusual quest: to find out if he is capable of true love. Don Tillman, has never been on a second date and knows he is not wired for romance. So when an acquaintance informs him that he would make a "wonderful" husband, his first reaction is shock. Yet he must concede to the statistical probability that there is someone for everyone, and he embarks upon finding the perfect partner. Then he meets Rosie who is not perfect in anyway. She is beguiling, fiery, intelligent—and on a quest of her own: to find her biological father. When Don agrees to help Rosie on her quest, he discovers that love is not always what looks good on paper.

The Secret Keeper (fiction) by Kate Morton

During a summer party at the family farm in the English countryside, sixteen-year-old Laurel has escaped to her childhood tree house. She spies a stranger coming up the road to the farm and watches as her mother speaks to him. Before the afternoon is over, Laurel will witness a shocking crime that challenges everything she knows about her family, especially her loving mother, Dorothy. Now, fifty years later, the family is gathering at the family farm for Dorothy's ninetieth birthday. This may be the last chance Laurel has to discover her mother's secret past which spans from pre-WWII England through the blitz, to the '60s and beyond. It is the hidden history of three strangers—Dorothy, Vivien, and Jimmy—who meet by chance in wartime London and whose lives are forever entwined.

Shoemaker's Wife (fiction) by Adriana Trigiani

Based partially on Trigiani's grandparent's life, this sprawling story set at the turn of the twentieth century follows two teenagers' lives from the small villages in the Italian Alps, to New York City and finally to the plains of northern Minnesota. Enza, a practical beauty, and Ciro, a hardworking, fun loving young man who grew up working for the sisters in a small convent near Enza's family in the mountains of northern Italy, meet as teenagers and fall in love. When Ciro catches the local priest in a scandal, he is banished from his village and sent to hide in America as an apprentice to a shoemaker in Little Italy. Not knowing what happened to Ciro, Enza's too, is forced to go to America with her father to earn enough money to support their struggling family. The devoted lovers join and separate, until, finally, the power of their love brings them together in a touching finale.

Station Eleven (fiction) by Emily St. John Mandel

2015-16 Great Michigan Read/National Book Award Finalist

The same night a famous Hollywood actor had a heart attack during a production of King Lear, a devastating flu pandemic swept through the city and the world wiping out populations and civilizations in its wake. Twenty years later, Kirsten, one of the few survivors, moves between the settlements of the altered world with a small troupe of actors and musicians dedicated to keeping the remnants of art and humanity alive. The story moves back and forth in time and eventually connects the characters in a strange twist of fate.

The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry (fiction) by Gabrielle Zevin

This is the story of a middle-age literary snob who owns a failing independent bookstore in an old Victorian cottage on Alice Island off the coast of Massachusetts. A. J. Fikry's life is not at all what he expected it to be. His wife has died, his bookstore is experiencing the worst sales in its history, and now his prized possession, a rare collection of Poe poems, has been stolen. He tries to isolate himself but his friend the island police officer, Ismay, his sister-in-law and Amelia, the quirky, high spirited Knightly Press rep refuse to let him do so. Then a package appears at the bookstore. It's that unexpected arrival that gives A. J. Fikry the opportunity to fill the emptiness in his life and the ability to see everything anew. *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry* is a tale of transformation and second chances, an indelible affirmation of why we read, and what happens to us when we love.

Thirteenth Tale (fiction) by Diane Setterfield

Biographer Margaret Lea returns one night to her apartment above her father's antiquarian bookshop. On her steps she finds a hand-written request from one of Britain's most prolific and well-loved novelists. Vida Winter, who is gravely ill, wants to recount her life story to Margaret before it is too late. The request takes Margaret by surprise since she doesn't know the author, or her work. After accepting the request, Margaret learns Miss Winter's dark family secrets surrounding Angelfield, the now burnt-out estate that was her childhood home. As Margaret records Miss Winter's history, she finds herself more deeply immersed in the strange and troubling story that introduces her to her own ghosts from the past.

Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption (biography) by Laura Hillenbrand

On a May afternoon in 1943, an Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean and disappeared, then, on the ocean surface, a face appeared. It was that of a plane's bombardier, Louis Zamperini. So began one of the most extraordinary odysseys of the Second World War. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, a foundering raft, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. *Unbroken* is a testament to the resilience of the human mind, body, and spirit.

NEW - Underground Railroad (fiction) by Colson Whitehead

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award

Life is hell for all the slaves, but especially bad for Cora; an outcast even among her fellow Africans, she is coming into womanhood—where even greater pain awaits. When Caesar, a recent arrival from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they decide to take a terrifying risk and escape. In Whitehead's ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor—engineers and conductors operate a secret network of tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil. Cora and Caesar's first stop is South Carolina, in a city that initially seems like a haven. But the city's placid surface masks an insidious scheme designed for its black denizens. And even worse: Ridgeway, the relentless slave catcher, is close on their heels. Forced to flee again, Cora embarks on a harrowing flight, state by state, seeking true freedom.

We Need New Names (fiction) by NoViolet Bulawayo

formerly of Kalamazoo

The unflinching and powerful story of a young girl's journey out of Zimbabwe and to America. Darling is only ten years old, and yet she must navigate a fragile and violent world. In Zimbabwe, Darling and her friends steal guavas, try to get the baby out of young Chipso's belly and grasp at memories of Before. Before their homes were destroyed by paramilitary policemen, before the school closed, before the fathers left for dangerous jobs abroad. But Darling has a chance to escape: she has an aunt in America. She travels to this new land in search of America's famous abundance only to find that her options as an immigrant are perilously few. NoViolet Bulawayo's debut calls to mind the great storytellers of displacement and arrival who have come before her—from Junot Diaz to Zadie Smith to J.M. Coetzee—while she tells a vivid, raw story all her own. Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize.

NEW - Writings on the Wall (nonfiction) by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

2017 Reading Together Selection

Since retiring from professional basketball as the NBA's all-time leading scorer, six-time MVP, and Hall of Fame inductee, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar has become a lauded observer of culture and society. Using his unique blend of erudition, street smarts and authentic experience in essays on the country's seemingly irreconcilable partisan divide - both racial and political, parenthood, and his own experiences as an athlete, African-American, and a Muslim. The book is not just a collection of expositions; he also offers keen assessments of and solutions to problems such as racism in sports while speaking candidly about his experiences on the court and off. The combination of plain talk on issues, life lessons, and personal stories places many of Abdul-Jabbar's topics at the top of the national agenda. As The Washington Post observed: Abdul-Jabbar "has become a vital, dynamic and unorthodox cultural voice."