

# THE BIRCH WATHEN LENOX SCHOOL

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Dear Incoming 11th Graders:

Greetings! Ms. Anderson and I are both excited about English next fall. Our required summer reading book, *Americanah*, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, is fantastic and perfect, we believe, for 11th grade. A young woman, not much older than you, journeys from Nigeria to America, seeking opportunity. Along the way, she wrestles with questions about her identity and who she wants to love. Though the book is on the long side, I read it in just a few hours; it creates not only a rich, complex portrait of race relations in America, but it is also a page-turner with a lot of romance and snappy prose.

Adichie is an extremely engaging storyteller. Many of you watched her TedTalk last year, “The Danger of a Single Story.”

[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en)

We will begin with writing about the summer reading and then continue on to some great American classics: *The Scarlet Letter*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Death of a Salesman*, by Arthur Miller, and *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison. We will also read and write our own poetry and, at the end of the year, we will approach the college essay through a unit on personal essay writing.

We have all survived a difficult year, and Ms. Anderson and I look forward to meeting you all and teaching you in person.

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