Books considered
The following are the titles we considered for our 2004 new student summer reading. These books were suggested either by our own faculty and administrators, were sent to us by individuals at other colleges or universities, or appeared on lists generated by organizations such as the Chronicle of Higher Education, the First-Year Experience, etc.

Sherman Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*
Stephen Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West*
Lance Armstrong, *It's Not About the Bike* (used by Texas Tech Univ.)
Mary Hunter Austin, *Writing the Western Landscape*
Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, *All the President's Men*
Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*
Angela Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary*
Geoffrey Canada, *Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun*
Kim Alan Chapman, *Valley of Grass: Tallgrass Prairie and Parkland of the Red River Region*
Stephanie Cowell, *Nicholas Cooke: Actor, Soldier, Physician, Priest*
Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* (used by LSU)
Gretel Ehrlich, *Match to the Heart*
Louise Erdrich, *Tales of Burning Love, The Master Butcher's Singing Club*
Dorothy Canfield Fisher, *Seasoned Timber* (local author, from Arlington, VT)
Caroline Gordon, *Green Centuries*
Martha Grimes, *The Deer Leap*
David Guterson, *Snow Falling on Cedar*
Nat Hentoff, *The War on the Bill of Rights and the Gathering Resistance*
Homer, *The Iliad*
John Irving, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*
Molly Ivins, *Bushwhacked: Life in George W. Bush's America*
Joe Kane, *Savages*
Alex Kotlowitz, *There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America*
Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild*
Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*
Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
Alfred Lubrano, *Limbo: Blue-Collar Roots, White-Collar Dreams*
Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir*
Malcolm X, *Autobiography*
Nancy Mitford, *Madame de Pompadour*
Michael Moore, *Dude, Where's My Country?*
 Move On's 50 Ways to Love Your Country: How to Find Your Political Voice and Become a Catalyst for Change
Howard Frank Mosher, *Stranger in the Kingdom*
George Orwell, *Animal Farm, 1984*
Ann Patchett, *Bel Canto: A Novel*
Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture*
Janet Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*
Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*
Richard Russo, Empire Falls
Nancy Rica Schiff, Odd Jobs: Portraits of Unusual Occupations
Eric Schlosser, Fast Food Nation (used by LSU and Ball State Univ.)
David Shipper, The Working Poor: Invisible in America
Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich
John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath, The Red Pony
Nancy Turner, These is my Words: The Diary of Sarah Agnes Prine, 1881-1901
Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Kurt Vonnegut, Slapstick, or, Lonesome No More!
C.V. Wedgwood, A Coffin for King Charles: The Trial and Execution of Charles I
Simon Wiesenthal, The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness
Tom Wolfe, The Right Stuff
Howard Zinn (Soundings speaker for Fall), Terrorism and War. Other popular titles of his include: A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present, The Twentieth Century: A History, You Can't be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times, Passionate Declarations: Essays on War and Justice, The Zinn Reader: Writings on Disobedience and Democracy.

And the winner is . . .
In the end, we selected Stranger in the Kingdom by Howard Frank Mosher.

Criteria for selecting the book
I making this choice we considered the following factors:
1. Accessib ility
2. Reading level
3. Background/context required (Does the selection require substantial background understanding that students of modest-to-moderate educational preparation levels might not have, as they read the text while at home over the summer?)
4. Relevance to orientation—and now American Democracy Project—themes
5. Availability of author (If at all possible, we hope to build a conversation with the author, or someone otherwise very knowledgeable about the text, into our start-of-the-year orientation program.)
6. Adaptability of the book to other possible orientation events (Whenever possible we have tried to use the book as the basis of a second orientation event, typically one involving more student engagement than a lecture by the author.)
7. Regional relevance (We often like to choose books by Vermont authors or at least books that address themes relevant to Vermont and Vermonters.)
8. Cultural diversity (We hope over time to choose a significant percentage of works by women and authors of color.)
9. Emotional tone (We’re inclined to avoid books with very depressing themes.)
10. Length (We didn’t want to choose a book much longer than 250 pages.)
11. Cost (We have traditionally built the purchase of the text into our registration/orientation fee and present the book to students, along with the associated writing assignment, when they attend one of our summer registration weekends in June or July.)

Current plans for use of the book
The plan thus far for our use of Stranger in the Kingdom is that we will:
1. Buy the book for new students (and First-Year Seminar faculty) and present it to them at summer registration.
2. At that time also give students instructions for the reflective essay they are required to write based on the book and submit to us before the start of the August orientation program.
3. On the first day of the orientation program, we have scheduled a session with Jay Craven, director of the film version of Stranger in the Kingdom, who will show clips from the movie and have a dialog with students about the film and the process of making it.
4. On the second day of orientation, author Howard Frank Mosher will speak with new students and their faculty about the book and its themes.
5. The orientation weekend will also include the first meetings of First-Year Seminar courses. Faculty will use these meetings to discuss the essays students wrote about the book, among other topics.