

Purpose of summer reading:

The purpose of summer reading in the middle school is to encourage the enjoyment of reading and to develop our students' abilities to choose books for themselves. During the school year, teachers select all of the books and students have little choice (besides reading on their own for pleasure). However, during the summer months, we want our students to be able to read and explore topics of their own interest and genres. By allowing the students to practice choosing books, self-regulating when and where they read, and sustaining that reading over the summer, we hope students' identities as readers will continue to grow throughout the summer months. The students' choice of reading will also foster a vibrant and diverse community of readers upon their return to school in the fall. Their summer reading experience will stimulate an exciting conversation about books both with their peers and with their teachers. In addition, this conversation will inspire an eagerness to create ongoing reading plans and a deeper relationship with their chosen books.

This change in direction results from two decades' research on student motivation to read, as well as our own observations as classroom teachers and reading professionals. Studies have shown that students who choose to read on their own and find reading a pleasant experience are far more likely to experience the benefits of reading, such as improved vocabulary, wider background knowledge, greater reading comprehension, and increased likelihood of becoming a lifelong reader. Reaching this level of enjoyment, engagement and self-identity as a reader requires that certain "rules of engagement" are in place (Gambrell 173-175). These include:

- choice of reading materials that correspond to student interests and reading level
- time and opportunity for sustained reading
- opportunity to interact socially around reading
- opportunity to develop individual reading plans (genres, titles, etc.)

In each grade level, students will be required to read any two books. However, we encourage students to read more than this because studies show that enjoying additional books over the summer helps avoid the summer slide. (Pressley and Allington). The criteria for book selection is:

- a. Their two books cannot have been read previously
- b. These books should not be those that the students will read during any year in Language Arts class (see below for list)
- c. Students must read two books from different authors and from different series (so they could read the first Harry Potter, but not the second book)
- d. The theme and content of the books must be appropriate for their age level
- e. The books must be a quality selection (see below)
- f. Books must be able to stand alone (meaning that a student can read the book realizing that there will not be an adult present [besides a parent] to explain theme or content details).

Finally, parents will also need to sign a document stating that their child read the books over the summer.

Students and their parents have several options when selecting books. They can ask a middle school LA teacher, the MS/LS librarian, or they can consult the Internet for suggestions concerning reading levels, the maturity of the subject matter, and the age range considered appropriate for many books. We would also suggest using these websites:

<http://www.arbookfind.com>, <https://www.commonsemmedia.org/> or <http://www.goodreads.com>.

At the end of this document, there are also listed some suggested books per grade level. These are only suggestions because within any grade there is a wide range of reading levels and maturity. These suggested books have been read by the LA teachers or the librarian.

Quality in Selected Books:

The books students select for their summer reading should be quality works of young adult or children's literature. By quality, we mean that these books should reflect a certain level of descriptive or figurative language and be driven not just by plot, but by character development and thematic depth. We are looking for works that are of substantial length and contain situations, conflicts, and characters that spark discussion and intrigue. If students or parents have any questions, then they should please ask.

Assessment:

During the summer, students will read their books and take notes on several questions (see below). It is strongly recommended that students do the written part of the summer reading as soon as the book is read. Oftentimes, students read the books early in the summer and have forgotten important details by the start of school. Students are also encouraged to highlight and annotate their summer reading books as they read. This is a skill that is used in the 7th and 8th grades and summer reading is a good time to practice. Students can highlight words or passages that they find important, and write in the margins of the book to show noteworthy information such as a character trait, a turning point in the story, a conflict, an example of irony, etc.

During the first week of school, students will work in school and at home to create a presentation about their books. They will then present their work to their peers.

Students should take notes [or highlight] for these questions while reading:

5th

- 1) Write a short plot summary of the book.
- 2) Describe the setting of the book in detail.
- 3) Describe the most exciting moment in both books.
- 4) Why did you select this book? Be specific.
- 5) Who was the most interesting character in the books? Why?

6th

- 1) Write a short plot summary of the book.
- 2) Describe the setting of the book in detail.
- 3) Describe a major conflict a main character faces.
- 4) Why did you select this book? Be specific.
- 5) Who was the most interesting character in the books? Why?
- 6) If you would recommend this book to a friend, why would you do so? If you would not recommend this book, what specifically did you dislike about the book?

7th

- 1) Summarize the plot, setting and main characters of this novel.
- 2) What is a major conflict a main character faces in both books?
- 3) What is a theme that both novels share?
- 4) Compare one thing about both books.
- 5) Would you recommend this book to a peer?

8th

- 1) Summarize the plot, setting and main characters of this novel
- 2) What are some examples of figurative language in each book?
- 3) What is the theme of these books?
- 4) Compare and contrast the two books (avoiding the obvious things).
- 5) Would you recommend this book to a peer?

Students may not select books that will be read in the middle school during the academic year. These include:

5th

Tuck Everlasting by Eloise Jarvis McGraw

Dragon Keeper by Carole Wilkinson

Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli

6th

Kensuke's Kingdom by Michael Morpurgo

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor

The Truth About Sparrows by Marian Hale

7th

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

Wonder by PJ Palacio

Hope was Here by Joan Bauer

8th

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

As You Like It or *Midsummers Night Dream* by William Shakespeare (No Fear Shakespeare series)

Little Worlds: A Collection of Short Stories for the Middle School by Peter Guthrie and Mary Page

Some suggested books by grade level:

5th

The BFG by Roald Dahl

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson

Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Curtis

City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau

El Deafo by Cece Bell, 2015 Newbery Honor Book

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

From the Mixed Up Files of Basil E. Frankweiler by E. L. Konigsburg

The Fourteenth Goldfish by Jennifer Holm

Holes by Louis Sachar

The Indian in the Cupboard by Lynn Reid Banks

Inkspell by Cornelia Funke

The Mysterious Benedict Society by Trenton Lee Smith

The Penderwicks by Jeanne Birdsall

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry

The Sea of Trolls by Nancy Farmer

Ruby Holler by Sharon Creech

Rules by Cynthia Lord

The Watsons go to Birmingham: 1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls

The View from Saturday by E.L. Konigsburg

6th

The Book of Time by Guillaume Prevost

The Crossover by Kwame Alexander, 2015 Newbery Award

A Face First by Priscilla Cummings

Garden of the Purple Dragon by Carole Wilkinson
The Golden Goblet by Eloise Jarvis McGraw
Hoot or *Flush* by Carl Hiaasen
A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park
Mockingbird by Kathryn Erskine
Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli
Smile and Sisters by Raina Telgemeier, graphic novels
Story of My Life by Helen Keller
War Horse by Michael Morpugo
The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin
The Wizard of Earthsea by Ursula LeGuin
A Wrinkle in Time: The Graphic Novel by Madeleine L'Engle and Hope Larson

7th

Annie, Between the States by L. M. Elliott
Animal Farm by George Orwell
The Divergent Series- Veronica Roth
Dragon Moon by Carole Wilkinson
Fever 1793 by Laurie Halse Anderson
The Gate of Days: The Book of Time II by Guillaume Prevost
The Graveyard Book Graphic Novel by Neil Gaiman
House of the Scorpion and its sequel *The Lord of Opium* by Nancy Farmer
March: Book One by John Lewis, graphic novel
The Phantom Tollbooth by Jules Feiffe
Red Kayak by Priscilla Cummings
Shooting Kabul by NH Senzai
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith
The Wednesday Wars by Gary D. Schmidt

8th

The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak
Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson, 2015 Newbery Honor Award
The Call of the Wild by Jack London
Cinder (The Lunar Chronicles by Marissa Meyer)
The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexander Dumas
Counting by 7's by Holly Goldberg Sloan
A Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank
Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury
Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes
The Great Wide Sea by M.H. Herlong
The Giver by Lois Lowry
Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad

The Hobbit by JRR Tolkien
Little Women by Louisa May Alcott
The Maze Runner Series by James Dashner
Scorpio Races by Maggie Stiefvater
Unbroken by Laura Hillebrand

Works Cited and Consulted

Gambrell, Linda. "Seven Rules of Engagement." *The Reading Teacher* 65.3 (2011): 172-78.

JSTOR. Web. 6 Feb. 2015.

"Leisure Reading." *Leisure Reading*. International Reading Association, 2014. Web. 08 Feb. 2015.

Pressley, Michael, and Richard L. Allington. *Reading Instruction That Works: The Case for Balanced Teaching*. 4th ed. New York: Guildford, 2014. Electronic.