

# Summer Reading

Grades 6-8

Reading Public Schools  
2023

Reading can be one of the many fun activities students enjoy during the summer. We hope that summer reading provides students with a positive reading experience outside the school context and that it supports students in finding new genres and topics of interest.

Students who read over the summer will be well on their way to success when they return to school in the fall. We encourage you to investigate programs at the Reading Public Library and to plan ways to make time to read throughout the summer months.



*English Department, Coolidge & Parker Middle Schools  
Erin Burchill, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator*

Students who are best prepared for sixth grade read at least 2-3 books over the summer. These titles are suggestions for you to consider. You may choose from this list, or make your own selections. Be ready to share about your reading when school begins - this may include written responses, discussion groups, or other activities. Of course we encourage you to read more than three titles but what's more important to us than the number of books is that you find ways to make reading a part of your entire summer. Find time in your schedule - even if just a few minutes on most days - to read regularly throughout the season.

**Lincoln's Grave Robbers**  
by Steve Sheinkin

*A true crime thriller -- the first book for teens to tell the nearly unknown tale of the brazen attempt to steal Abraham Lincoln's body!*  
(narrative nonfiction)

**Hidden Figures (YRE)**  
by Margot Lee Shetterly

*...the powerful story of four African-American female mathematicians at NASA who helped achieve some of the greatest moments in our space program.*  
(narrative nonfiction)

**El Deafo**  
by Cece Bell

*Starting at a new school is scary, even more so with a giant hearing aid strapped to your chest! At her old school, everyone in Cece's class was deaf. Here she is different...*  
(graphic memoir)

**Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina (YRE)**  
by Misty Copeland

*Misty opens a window into the life of an artist who lives life center stage, from behind the scenes at her first classes to her triumphant roles in some of the world's most iconic ballets. This is a story of passion, identity and grace for anyone who has dared to dream of a different life.*  
(memoir)

**The Fourteenth Goldfish**  
by Jennifer L. Holm

*Ellie has never liked change. She misses 5th grade. She misses her old best friend. She even misses her dearly departed goldfish. One day a strange boy shows up. He's bossy. He's cranky. And weirdly enough...he looks a lot like her grandfather, a scientist who's always been slightly obsessed with immortality. Could this boy really be Grandpa Melvin? Has he found the secret to eternal youth? (fiction)*

**The Young Man and the Sea**  
by Rodman Philbrick

*Skiff Beaman's mom just died, and his dad is too depressed to drag himself off the couch and go to work. So these days Skiff has to take care of everything himself. But when his dad's boat sinks, Skiff discovers it will cost thousands to fix. Skiff's lobster traps won't earn him enough, but there are bigger fish in the sea -- bluefin tuna. If he can catch one of those monster fish, he just might save the boat -- and his family. (fiction)*

**Front Desk**  
by Kelly Yang

*Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. # 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. # 2: Her parents hide immigrants. # 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year.*  
(realistic fiction)

**The Crossover**  
by Kwame Alexander

*Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood.*  
(realistic fiction; novel-in-verse)

**Hatchet**

by Gary Paulsen

*Brian is on his way to Canada to visit his estranged father when the pilot of his small prop plane suffers a heart attack. Brian is forced to crash-land the plane in a lake--and finds himself stranded in the remote Canadian wilderness with only his clothing and the hatchet his mother gave him as a present before his departure. (realistic fiction)*

**Pashmina**

by Nidhi Chanani

*Priyanka has so many unanswered questions: Why did her mother abandon her home in India years ago? What was it like there? And most importantly, who is her father, and why did her mom leave him behind? A tale about the hardship and self-discovery that is born from juggling two cultures and two worlds.*  
(graphic novel)

**Harbor Me**  
by Jacqueline Woodson

*It all starts when six kids have to meet for a weekly chat--by themselves, with no adults to listen in. When the six are together, they can express the feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. And together, they can grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives.*  
(realistic fiction)

**Turtle in Paradise**  
by Jennifer L. Holm

*11-year-old Turtle is smart and tough and has seen enough of the world not to expect a Hollywood ending. It's 1935 and jobs and money and sometimes even dreams are scarce. When her mama gets a job Turtle says goodbye without a tear and heads off to Florida, to live with relatives she's never met.*  
(historical fiction)

**Stella By Starlight**  
by Sharon M. Draper

*When the Ku Klux Klan's unwelcome reappearance rattles Stella's segregated southern town, bravery battles prejudice in this Depression-era tour de force from Sharon Draper.*  
(historical fiction)

**Nine, Ten: A September 11 Story**  
by Nora Ryleigh Baskin

*From the critically acclaimed author - a touching look at the days leading up to the tragic events of September 11, 2001 and how that day impacted the lives of four middle schoolers.*  
(historical fiction)

**Serafina and the Black Cloak**  
by Robert Beatty

*Serafina has never had a reason to venture beyond the grounds of the Biltmore estate. But when children start disappearing, only Serafina knows who the culprit is: a terrifying man in a black cloak who stalks Biltmore's corridors at night. To save the children of Biltmore, Serafina must seek the answers that will unlock the puzzle of her past. (fantasy)*

Incoming 7th graders, please select *at least* two titles from this list and be ready to report back about your reading at the beginning of the school year. Fall sharing may include written work and/or book discussion groups. We encourage you to read additional books of your own choosing.

***The Bridge Home***  
by Padma Vankatraman

*When Viji and her sister, Rukku run away to live on their own, the situation could not be more grim. Life on the streets of the teeming city of Chennai is harsh for girls considered outcasts, but the sisters manage to find shelter on an abandoned bridge. There they befriend Muthi and Arul, two boys in a similar predicament, and the four children bond together and form a family of sorts.*  
(realistic fiction)

***So B. It***  
by Sarah Weeks

*She doesn't know when her birthday is or who her father is. In fact, everything about Heidi and her mentally disabled mother's past is a mystery. When a strange word in her mother's vocabulary begins to haunt her, Heidi sets out on a cross-country journey in search of the secrets of her past.*  
(realistic fiction)

***Ghost\****  
by Jason Reynolds

*\*or any title in the Track series*  
*Running. That's all that Ghost has ever known. But never for a track team. When Ghost impulsively challenges an elite sprinter to a race -- and wins -- the Olympic medalist track coach sees he has something: crazy natural talent. Thing is, Ghost has something else: a lot of anger, and a past that he is trying to outrun. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed and meld with the team, or will his past finally catch up to him?*  
(realistic fiction)

***The Outsiders***  
by S.E. Hinton

*The Outsiders is about two weeks in the life of a 14-year-old boy. The novel tells the story of Ponyboy Curtis and his struggles with right and wrong in a society in which he believes that he is an outsider.*  
(fiction)

***New Kid***  
by Jerry Craft

*Perfect for fans of Raina Telgemeier and Gene Luen Yang, New Kid is a timely, honest graphic novel about starting over at a new school where diversity is low and the struggle to fit in is real, from award-winning author-illustrator Jerry Craft.*  
(graphic novel)

***Wonderstruck***  
by Brian Selznick  
*Ben and Rose secretly wish for better lives. Ben longs for the father he has never known. Rose dreams of a mysterious actress whose life she chronicles in a scrapbook. When Ben discovers a puzzling clue in his mother's room and Rose reads an enticing headline in the newspaper, both children set out alone on desperate quests to find what they are missing.* (fiction)

***Full Cicada Moon***  
by Marilyn Hilton  
*It's 1969, and the Apollo 11 mission is getting ready to go to the moon. But for half-black, half-Japanese Mimi, moving to a predominantly white Vermont town is enough to make her feel alien. Suddenly, Mimi's appearance is all anyone notices. She struggles to fit in with her classmates, even as she fights for her right to stand out.*  
(historical fiction; novel-in-verse)

***Freak the Mighty***  
by Rodman Philbrick

*Two boys – a slow learner stuck in the body of a teenage giant and a tiny Einstein in leg braces – forge a unique friendship when they pair up to create one formidable human force. A wonderful story of triumph over imperfection, shame, and loss.*  
(realistic fiction)

***Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans***  
by Don Brown

*Hurricane Katrina's monstrous winds and surging water overwhelmed the protective levees around New Orleans. Eighty percent of the city flooded, in some places under twenty feet of water. The riveting tale of this historic storm and the drowning of an American city is one of selflessness, heroism, and courage—and also of incompetence, racism, and criminality.*  
(graphic nonfiction)

***The Omnivore's Dilemma (YRE)***  
by Michael Pollan  
*"What's for dinner?" seemed like a simple question—until journalist and supermarket detective Michael Pollan delved behind the scenes. From fast food and big organic to small farms and old-fashioned hunting and gathering, this young readers' adaptation of Pollan's famous food-chain exploration encourages kids to consider the personal and global health implications of their food choices.*  
(narrative nonfiction)

***Shoe Dog (YRE)***  
by Phil Knight  
*"Knight writes from the heart in this young adult version of his 2016 adult memoir. The book takes readers from the beginning of his dream...to the creation of the internationally known, uber-successful Nike brand. Shoe Dog reads like a great story about how an ambition turned into a business, while at the same time it serves as a guide for accomplishing great things."*  
(memoir)

***Chains\****  
by Laurie Halse Anderson  
*\* or any title in the Seeds of America trilogy*  
*As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel.*  
(historical fiction)

Incoming 8th graders, please select *at least* two titles from this list and be ready to report back about your reading at the beginning of the school year. Fall sharing may include written work and/or book discussion groups. We encourage you to read additional books of your own choosing.

**Okay For Now**  
by Gary Schmidt

...explores a seemingly improbable alliance between new outsider in town Doug Swietek and Lil Spicer, the savvy spitfire daughter of his deli owner boss. With Lil's assistance, Doug discovers new sides of himself. Along the way, he also readjusts his relationship with his abusive father and his older brother, a newly returned war victim of Vietnam. (historical fiction)

**A Northern Light**  
by Jennifer Donnelly

Sixteen-year-old Mattie Gokey has big dreams but little hope of seeing them come true. Desperate for money, she takes a job at the Glenmore, where hotel guest Grace Brown entrusts her with the task of burning a secret bundle of letters. But when Grace's drowned body is fished from the lake, Mattie discovers that the letters could reveal the grim truth behind a murder. (historical fiction)

**Echo**  
by Pam Munoz Ryan

Lost and alone in a forbidden forest, Otto suddenly finds himself entwined in a puzzling quest involving a prophecy, a promise, and a harmonica. Decades later, Friedrich in Germany, Mike in Pennsylvania, and Ivy in California become interwoven when the same harmonica lands in their lives. All the children face daunting challenges and ultimately, pulled by the invisible thread of destiny, their solo stories converge in an orchestral crescendo (historical fiction)

**The Rules of Survival**  
by Nancy Werlin

For Matt and his sisters, life with their cruel abusive mother is a daily struggle for survival. But then Matt witnesses a man named Murdoch coming to a child's rescue and for the first time, he feels a glimmer of hope. Life is suddenly almost good. But the relief lasts only a short time. Matt knows that he'll need to take some action. Can he call upon Murdoch to be his hero? Or will Matt have to take measures into his own hands? (realistic fiction)

**Piecing Me Together**  
by Renee Watson

Friendships, race, privilege, identity—this compelling and thoughtful story explores the issues young women face. A timely and powerful story about a teen girl from a poor neighborhood striving for success. (realistic fiction)

**Ghost Boys**  
by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Twelve-year-old Jerome is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat. As a ghost, he observes the devastation that's been unleashed on his family and community in the wake of what they see as an unjust and brutal killing. (realistic fiction)

**Posted**  
by John David Anderson

In middle school, words aren't just words. They can be weapons. They can be gifts. The right words can win you friends or make you enemies. They can come back to haunt you. Sometimes they can change things forever. (realistic fiction)

**House of the Scorpion**  
by Nancy Farmer

With undertones of vampires, Frankenstein, dragons' hoards, and killing fields, Matt's story turns out to be an inspiring tale of friendship, survival, hope, and transcendence. A must-read for teenage fantasy fans. (sci-fi - dystopian)

**I Am Malala**  
by Malala Yousafzia

...the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons. It will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world. (memoir)

**The Unwanted: Stories of Syrian Refugees**  
by Don Brown

An important, timely, and eye-opening exploration of the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis, exposing the harsh realities of living in, and trying to escape, a war zone. Don Brown depicts moments of both heartbreak and hope in the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis; shining a light on the stories of the survivors. (graphic nonfiction)

**Bomb: The Race to Build and Steal the World's Most Dangerous Weapon**  
by Steve Sheinkin

This is the story of the plotting, the risk-taking, the deceit, and genius that created the world's most formidable weapon. This is the story of the atomic bomb. (narrative nonfiction)

**Pride and Prejudice**  
by Jane Austen

The romantic clash between the opinionated Elizabeth and her proud beau, Mr. Darcy, is a splendid performance of civilized sparring. And Jane Austen's radiant wit sparkles as her characters dance a delicate quadrille of flirtation and intrigue, making this book the most superb comedy of manners of Regency England. (classic literature)

If you have questions about summer reading please contact:

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