



# Middle School 2019–20 Summer Reading Requirements

"It is what you read when you don't have to  
that determines what you will be  
when you can't help it."  
~ Oscar Wilde

## **The Middle School Program: Community Books and Individual Choices**

The summer reading program in the Middle School balances choice with a desire to give students at each grade level a common reading experience with which to begin the year. For each grade level—6th through 8th—a student will read three books: one common book, one book selected from a list of titles provided by the faculty and one book entirely of the student's choice. The experience of the common text helps build a community through grade-level-wide discussions of themes the common text raises. The other two texts give students the experience of choosing and finding for themselves something that they enjoy.

Students should expect to talk about their reading experiences at retreats, in advisory groups and in their classes early in the fall. They should be able to answer questions such as, "What did you really like and why?" "What did not work for you?" "What did you learn?" "What did your summer reading make you think about?" and "What would you recommend to the rest of us?"

## **6th Grade**

Entering 6th-graders are required to read a minimum of **three (3)** titles prior to the start of school.

### **Book 1: Required for students**

#### **Posted by John David Anderson**

Please read *Posted* during the month of August or review it before school starts, as we will be working with this text extensively over the first few weeks of school. Once you have read the book, please complete the following:

Using five different sheets of blank 8½" x 11" computer paper, please create an original picture (ie: do not just find a picture from the internet) of an object that you associate with each of the following characters:

1. Frost
2. Wolf
3. Deedee
4. Bench
5. Rose

You should have five sheets of paper when you come to school in the first week.

### **Book 2: Required for students—select *one (1)* of the following:**

#### ***One Thousand and One Arabian Nights* by Geraldine McCaughrean**

(Oxford edition) King Shahryar is enthralled by the stories of his new bride Shahrazad. Take a magic carpet ride and experience these tales of humor, horror, wisdom, deceit, incredible adventure and love.

#### ***The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan**

What if the gods of Olympus were alive in the 21st Century? What if they still fell in love with mortals and had children who might become great heroes—like Theseus, Jason and Hercules? What if you were one of those children? Such is the discovery that launches 12-year-old Percy Jackson on the most dangerous quest of his

life—to catch a thief who has stolen the original weapon of mass destruction, Zeus' master bolt. Along the way, he must face a host of mythological enemies determined to stop him. Most of all, he must come to terms with a father he has never known and an Oracle who has warned him of betrayal by a friend.

### **Book 3: Your choice**

A great place to find exemplary books: [YALSA's Best of the Best](#)

Or consider these books enjoyed by 6th-grade teachers:

#### ***Beowulf the Warrior* by Ian Serraillier**

This is the story of the hero Beowulf and his three memorable exploits—his rescue of Hrothgar the Dane from the ravages of monstrous Grendel, his victory over Grendel's strange and horrible mother, and the saving of his own people, the Geats, from a dragon.

#### ***The Great Gilly Hopkins* by Katherine Paterson**

Unhappy and badly behaved, Gilly has bounced from foster home to foster home. About to give up on her, the social worker stumbles across a new and surprising family for Gilly.

#### ***Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen**

Bitter about his parents' divorce, Brian Robeson finds himself stranded in the Canadian wilderness, where he must put his anger behind him and struggle to stay alive.

#### ***Holes* by Louis Sachar**

Holes is a darkly humorous award winner about a motley group of boys at a detention center run by some unsavory adults. Everyone learns lessons about crime, punishment and redemption.

#### ***Pax* by Sara Pennypacker**

Peter and his pet fox Pax are inseparable. After his father forces him to release Pax back into the wild, Peter strikes out on his own despite the encroaching war, spurred by love, loyalty and grief, to be reunited with his best friend.

#### ***Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson**

Set in the days of sailing ships and pirates, this classic retells the adventures of cabin boy Jim Hawkins and his search for the buried treasure of the notorious pirate Captain Flint.

#### ***Twerp* by Mark Goldblatt**

In Queens, New York, in 1969, 12-year-old Julian Twerski writes a journal for his English teacher in which he explores his friendships and how they are affected by girls, a new student who may be as fast as Julian, and especially an incident of bullying.

#### ***A View from Saturday* by E. L. Konigsburg**

Four students, bound together through intertwined lives, attract the attention of their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent the 6th grade in the formidable Academic Bowl competition.

#### ***Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls**

This novel is a heartwarming classic about a 10-year-old boy growing up in the Ozarks and his inseparable pair of coonhounds.

#### ***Wonder* by R.J. Palacio**

Auggie Pullman was born with severe facial deformities—no outer ears, eyes in the wrong place, his skin "melted"—and he's learned to steel himself against the horrified reactions he produces in strangers. Now, after years of homeschooling, his parents have enrolled him in fifth grade. In short chapters told from various first-person perspectives, debut author Palacio sketches his challenging but triumphant year.

#### ***Woodsong* by Gary Paulsen**

The popular writer for young people recalls his experiences with "sleds and dogs," from his introduction to sled-dog racing in northern Minnesota to the 17 grueling days he spends with his 15-dog team in Alaska's Iditarod race.

## 7th Grade

We encourage students to read to relax, to escape, to explore and to pursue their passions, and we ask them to read a minimum of **three (3)** titles over the course of the summer. We expect all students to be prepared to discuss their reactions to their reading in small and large classroom groups.

### Book 1: *Required for students*

Teachers will be doing a lot of work with this novel during the first couple of weeks of school; please read this title in the month of August or review the work prior to coming back to school.

#### ***Salt to the Sea* by Ruta Sepetys**

January 1945. The war in Europe is in its end stages as German forces are beaten back by the Allied armies. To escape the Soviet advance on the eastern front, thousands of refugees flee to the Polish coast. In this desperate flight for freedom, four young people—each from very different backgrounds and each with dark secrets—connect as they vie for passage on the *Willhelm Gustloff*, a former pleasure cruiser used to evacuate the refugees. Packed to almost 10 times its original capacity, the ship is hit by Soviet torpedoes fewer than 12 hours after leaving port. As the ship sinks into the icy waters of the Baltic Sea, what was supposed to be an avenue for escape quickly becomes another fight to survive the randomness of war.  
–Library Journal

### Book 2: *Required for students—select one (1) of the following:*

***The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain**

***Before We Were Free* by Julia Alvarez**

***Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson**

***The Elephant in the Garden* by Michael Morpurgo**

***Peak* by Roland Smith**

***Piecing Me Together* by Renee Watson**

***Watership Down* by Richard Adams**

### Book 3: *Your choice*

A great place to find exemplary books: [YALSA's Best of the Best](#)

## 8th Grade

As 8th-graders embark on their final year in the Middle School, we continue to celebrate the joy of reading by asking them to read at least **three (3)** books over the course of the summer. We expect all students to be prepared to discuss their reactions to the books in small and large classroom groups.

### Book 1: *Required for students*

#### ***Refugee* by Alan Gratz**

Josef is a Jewish boy fleeing Nazi Germany aboard a large ocean liner. Isabel is a young Cuban girl attempting to escape the rule of Fidel Castro. Mahmoud is a young boy from Syria traveling to a new country away from the terrors of war. This story follows three protagonists as they endure harrowing events, heartbreaking moments, and constant unknowns along their journeys to find refuge and hope. This book will take you on an emotional rollercoaster that can be quite intense at times, but the surprise ending is well worth the ride.

### Book 2: *Required for students—Select one (1) of the following.*

#### ***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams**

Ford Perfect reveals to his friend, Arthur Dent, that he is not really an Earthling but a roving reporter from a distant planet whose mission is to compile a travel guide to the galaxy. The adventures of these two characters are comical to the very end.

***Brightly Woven* by Alexander Bracken**

A young wizard, Wayland North, is searching for an assistant who will join him in his quest to save a village. He chooses Sydelle Mirabil for the job, but why? Join Sydelle on her journey with Wayland as she discovers secrets about this wizard and why he's chosen her.

***Fat Kid Rules the World* by K.L. Going**

Have you ever felt alone in the world; that you are the one person who doesn't quite fit in? If the answer is yes, read this book; if the answer is no, read this book anyway. This is a book for anyone who escapes reality through music.

***Jefferson's Sons* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley**

This is the untold story of Thomas Jefferson's slave children and the complexities of skin color within the same family. Will the act of "passing" carry implications Jefferson's children are unable to bear on their own?

***Parallel Journeys* by Eleanor Ayer**

She is a young German Jew. He is a staunch supporter of Hitler and the creation of a "master race." Alternating chapters trace the experiences of Helen Waterford and Alfons Heck during the Nazi reign of terror and WWII.

***Summer Ball* by Mike Lupica**

When you are the smallest guy on the basketball court, the challenges at times seem insurmountable. Just ask Danny Walker as he leads his travel team to the national championship. His experience at a summer camp for basketball players changes his opinion of the game.

***Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Patillo Beales**

In 1957, Melba Patillo turned 16. That was also the year she became a warrior on the front lines of a civil rights firestorm. Follow her story of courage and resolve as she paves the way for the privileges that all of us enjoy.

**Book 3: Your choice**

A great place to find exemplary books: [YALSA's Best of the Best](#)

***A note to students and parents...***

You can find book reviews by Kent Denver students in our online, searchable book review database: [Books We Recommend](#). The titles offer a wide variety of reading interests, levels and content. Some inclusions have been edited for the purpose of clarity and space; however, we have tried to honor the student's writing.

## **The Reader's Bill of Rights**

The right to not read  
The right to skip pages  
The right to not finish  
The right to reread  
The right to read anything  
The right to escapism  
The right to read anywhere  
The right to browse  
The right to read out loud  
The right to not defend your tastes

~ Daniel Pennac