

Summer Reading Lists for Grades Six, Seven, and Eight
School Year 2008 – 2009

“The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them.” Mark Twain

Dear Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Graders,

The importance of reading cannot be overstated; it stretches one’s imagination, strengthens one’s awareness of the world, and provides insight into ourselves and others – all this, and it’s a pleasure, too. Your summer reading list has been compiled with these in mind, and I’m looking forward to discussing your thoughts on the reading in the fall.

You are to ***pick three books*** out of five from the list that follows. Choose wisely and enjoy your book. Take the time to find a special place to read. A place that is totally yours, and that you will not be distracted. Embrace this experience and let it be an adventure not a chore. Take the time and make a schedule and stick to it. It will be very rewarding for you. Take notes or highlight key things that you think are important. Sentences that you want to remember at a glance should be highlighted.

Have a great summer! I will see you in the fall!!!

Mrs. Schmidt

GRADE 6

A Friendship for Today by Patrica C. Mckissack

Rosemary Patterson is about to make history. She is among the first African American students in her town to enroll in what had once been an all-white school. Rosemary is ready for the challenge, but when her best friend is suddenly diagnosed with polio, she must face school alone.

Stares and whispers follow Rosemary wherever she goes, and the worst offender is Grace Hamilton, a girl who makes no secret of both her and her family’s racism. Can Rosemary make it through the school year...and maybe even make a friend?

The River by Gary Paulsen

Two years ago, Brian Robeson was stranded alone in the wilderness for fifty-four day with nothing but a small hatchet. He survived. Now the government wants him to do it again – to go back into the wilderness so that astronauts and the military can learn the survival techniques that kept him alive.

This time he won’t be alone: Derek Holtzer, a government psychologist, will accompany him. But during a freak storm, Derek is hit by lightning and falls into a coma. Their

radio transmitter is dead. Brian's only hope is to build a raft and try to transport Derek a hundred miles down the river to a trading post – if the map he has is accurate.

Running Out of Time by Margaret Peterson Haddix

When a diphtheria epidemic hits her 849 village, 13 year old Jessie discovers it is actually a 1995 tourist site under unseen observation by heartless scientists, and it's up to Jessie to escape the village and save the lives of the dying children.

The View from Saturday by E.L.Konigsburg

Noah, who quite by accident was best man at the wedding of Ethan's grandmother and Nadia's grandfather.

Nadia, a hybrid with a halo of red hair, a dog that's a genius, and a fondness for baby turtles.

Ethan, the silent second son of one of Epiphany's oldest families, who discovers he likes halos.

Julian, the strangest person on the school bus, who starts everything by inviting the others to a tea party.

How did Mrs. Olinski, returning to teaching ten years after being paralyzed in an automobile accident, choose these four to be in her sixth-grade Academic Bowl team? And how did this unlikely foursome become even unlikelier champions, in far more than just the state middle school competition?

Keeper by Mal Peet

In a small newspaper office in South America, Paul Faustino, a veteran soccer reporter, begins an exclusive interview with El Gato, the World Cup – winning goalkeeper.

Through the long night, El Gato recounts his life story, which begins in a poor logging town in a mythic corner of the jungle, with a ghostly but very real mentor: the Keeper

GRADE 7

In an effort to offer stimulating reading to students of varying interests and abilities, some books that have an asterisk may contain some mature language even though the material is considered suitable for seventh and eighth graders. These books have won awards on the Best Seller Lists for young adults.

Jacob Have I Loved by Katherine Paterson

Louise has had enough of her twin sister. Caroline is beautiful. Caroline is talented. Caroline is better. Growing up on the small island of Rass in Chesapeake Bay, Caroline seems to do nothing but take from Louise: their parents' love, Louise's chances for an

education, her dreams for the future. They have spent their lives entwined – sleeping in the same room, eating at the same table, learning in the same classroom – and yet somehow nothing can bring them together. Louise’s only hope lies in seeking a place for herself beyond the stretch of Rass’s shores and her sister’s shadow. What will it take for her to break free?

Double Identity by Margaret Peterson Haddix

When Bethany’s mother gets ill, she suddenly finds herself living with a distant aunt in a town where the people recognize her – as someone else! How could she be the twin of a sister who died over twenty years ago?

Messenger by Lois Lowry

For the past six years, Matty has lived in Village and flourished under the guidance of Seer, a blind man known for his special sight. Once, Village was a place that welcomed newcomers and offered hope and homes to people feeling poverty and cruelty. But something sinister has seeped into Village, and the people have voted to close it to outsiders. All along, Matty has been invaluable as a messenger between Village and other communities. He hopes someday to earn the name of Messenger. Now he must make one last journey through the treacherous Forest to spread the message of Village’s closing and convince Kira, Seer’s daughter, to return with him. Matty’s only weapon against his increasingly dangerous surroundings is a secret power he unexpectedly discovers within himself. He wants to heal the people who have nourished his body and spirit and is willing to offer the greatest gift and pay the ultimate price.

Somewhere in the Darkness by Walter Dean Myers *

Jimmy’s doing all right. He’s fourteen, lives in Harlem, and is holding his own in a pretty tough world. But things get tougher when Jimmy’s father, Crab, shows up. Crab, who disappeared nine years ago, suddenly wants Jimmy to know who his Father is.

Crab and Jimmy set off on a trip halfway across the country to visit Crab’s old haunts. During the awkward, tense, and scary ride, Jimmy learns about Crab and about himself. And he discovers that while things can’t always be fixed, sometimes they can be understood, and maybe even forgiven.

Someone is Hiding on Alcatraz Island by Eve Bunting

Danny Sullivan has to get away from a gang who is threatening him after he reports one of them to the police: but just when he thinks he’s escaped from them on a boat to Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, he is horrified to find that they have followed him, and now they have him trapped. Theme: action, adventure, suspense..

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When Zachary Beaver Came to Town by Kimberly Willis Holt

Toby Wilson is having the toughest summer of his life. It's the summer his mother leaves for good; the summer his best friend's brother returns from Vietnam in a coffin; and the summer that Zachary Beaver, the "fattest boy in the world," arrives. There are heartaches, friendships gained, and old friendships renewed. And it's Zachary Beaver who turns the town of Antler upside down and leaves everyone, especially Toby, changed forever. Theme: fitting in, 1970's, friendship.

In These Girls, Hope is a Muscle by Madeleine Blais

Finally, after five straight years of disappointments on the basketball court, the Amherst Lady Hurricanes found they just might have what it took to go all the way. This is a fierce, funny, and intimate look into the minds and hearts during one very special season. Themes: basketball, perseverance, non-fiction.

Under the Blood Red Sun by Graham Salisbury

After the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 13 year old Tomizu, the American-born son of Japanese immigrants, suddenly becomes the man of the house after his father is arrested and discovers the true meaning of friendship and loyalty. Theme: World War, Attack on Pearl Harbor, identity, adventure

Losing Joe's Place by Gordon Korman *

Jason and his two best friends are about to have the ultimate summer experience, because they've just taken over Jason's cool older brother Joe's apartment for the summer. Now all they have to do is just say no: No parents. No rules. No problems. Right? Wrong. And Jason's brother hasn't even found out what happened to his apartment. Yet.

Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery, John Feinstein

From "School Library Journal" – This action-packed mystery is set at the NCAA Final Four men's basketball tournament. Eighth-graders Steve Thomas and Susan Carol Anderson are aspiring journalists and winners of the U.S. Basketball Writer's Association 14-and-under writing contest. Their prize is a trip, with press credentials and reporting responsibilities, to the Final Four in New Orleans. While exploring the Superdome, they overhear a blackmail threat leveled at Minnesota State University's star Superdome, they

overhear a blackmail threat leveled at Minnesota State University's star player. Threatened with a falsified transcript that would disqualify him and his team, Chip Graber is pressured to deliberately lose the final game against Duke. Stevie and Susan Carol become resourceful sleuths determined to save Chip and to expose the scandal. Throughout the story, famous basketball personalities make memorable guest appearances, including spirited sports analyst Tony Kornheiser and irrepressible commentator Dick Vitale. References to real players and coaches mingle, almost eerily, with the fictitious characters. Feinstein shares his extensive sports expertise, smoothly weaving into the tale a wealth of background information about NCAA regulations, tournaments traditions, recruitment and eligibility issues, and gambling. Although the action on the court is vividly described, this story also breaks new ground for teens, focusing primarily on the influential role of media in promoting college basketball. Readers will enjoy the rivalry and chemistry between outspoken but insecure Stevie and savvy-beyond-her years Susan Carol, and their spunky determination to get the scoop. Mystery fan will find enough suspense into his fast-paced narrative to keep them hooked.

– Gerry Larson, Durham School of the Arts, NC