

Summer Reading Lists for Grades Six, Seven, and Eight
School Year 2009-2010

“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.

Toby Wheeler Eighth-Grade Benchwarmer by Thatcher Heldring

“A truly great basketball story. . . Every hoops fan will love this book.” Phil Jackson, member of the NBA Hall of Fame and head coach of the Los Angeles Lakers

This is the story of Toby who loves the sport of basketball. He must honor the code of the benchwarmer. Such as the benchwarmer must be ready to sit or play at all times. Practice isn't over until Coach says it's over. A positive attitude can be the benchwarmer's best contribution.....etc.

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.

Weedflower by Cynthia Kadohata

Twelve-year-old Sumiko's life can be divided into two parts: before Pearl Harbor, and after. Before the bombing, although she was lonely, she was used to being the only Japanese-American in her class and she always had her family to comfort her. When the government forces all of the Japanese-American living in California into internment camps, Sumiki soon discovers that the Japanese are just as unwanted on the Mohave reservation they have been shipped to as they were at home. But then she meets a young Mohave boy, who, after initial resentment, becomes her first real friend.

Together, they navigate the racial and political challenges of the times, and both help each other understand the true meaning of friendship.

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?

The Convicts by Iain Lawrence

After seeing his father hauled off to debtors' prison, Tom Tin sets out to take revenge on Mr. Goodfellow, the man responsible for his family's misfortune. But the fog-filled London streets are teeming with sinister characters. Tom encounters a blind man who scavenges the riverbed for treasure and wants what Tom digs up; worms a body snatcher who reveals a shocking surprise a nasty gang of pickpockets who mistake Tom for someone known as the Smasher.

. And, ultimately, Tom comes up against the cruel hand of the law. Accused of murder, Tom is to be transported to Van Diemen's Land with the other juvenile convicts. But life on the hulk, the ship where the boys are temporarily held, is a horror. So Tom plots his escape....

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..

GRADE 8

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

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The Wave by Todd Strasser

As they study World War II, Ben Ross's students can't seem to understand how the German people could have followed Hitler and the Nazis. So Mr. Ross created an experimental movement called The Wave. What begins in a single classroom quickly gathers momentum. Before the end of the week, The Wave's motto, "Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community, Strength Through Action," governs the entire school. Only two students, Laurie Saunders and David Collins, recognize The Wave for what it is and set out to stop it before it's too late. But is history destined to repeat itself?

Tunnels by Roderick Gordon and Brian Williams

Fourteen-year-old Will Burrows has little in common with his family. But he does share one bond with his odd father: an obsession with archaeological digs. When the two discover an abandoned tunnel buried beneath modern-day London, they think they're on the brink of a major find. Then Dad vanishes. With the help of his best friend Chester, Will decides to investigate the truth behind his father's disappearance. Soon, they're lost in a dark underworld – and the deeper they descend, the deadlier the threat to their lives.

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 fleeing 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.

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