Middle School Summer Reading Requirements

At A Glance:

Each middle school student will be required to read one assigned text listed below by grade level. Each assigned text comes with a discussion and writing guide for students to complete. Students should then read a second text of their choosing.

Students should come to the first day of school with the **completed writing guide** and/or a **completed artifact** representative of the assigned book they read. This artifact could be in the form of an essay, visual representation, series of poems, recorded film, music score, or presentation. Finally, students should be ready to discuss the texts that they read over the summer. If you have any questions or concerns please reach out to Dr. Ed Gallagher, and we look forward to collaborating to support your student’s reading and writing success.

Rationale:

While some students read voraciously over the summer, other students are more recalcitrant. With that said, research points to the importance of reading everyday for student success. We have also found that students who read prodigiously over the summer do not show the same regression in their reading skills learned over the course of the school year. Quite simply, summer reading is important and is a crucial component of the English Language Arts curriculum.

That said, the following summer reading selections support the Middle School’s English Language Arts curriculum and were specifically chosen to capitalize on topics and themes explored throughout the school year. The books on this list connect to the enduring understandings for each grade level and many selections build upon familiar stories and characters students read about during the school year. Thus, learners continue to build background knowledge and make connections to the topics and themes they learned about. Research shows that background knowledge is essential for reading comprehension as the more one knows about a topic, the easier it is to read a text, understand it, and retain the information. Building meaningful background
knowledge on a topic or subject also increases reading comprehension by enabling students to make meaningful connections to what they are reading.

Additionally, each text has a corresponding discussion and writing guide which features questions that can be used to talk about the book at home. Reading comprehension improves as students read about and discuss events, characters, and motivations. They learn to predict what will happen next as well as increase their vocabulary knowledge and build syntactic awareness. Similar to the reading slide and decline seen over the summer, the same is also true about writing. The provided writing questions for each chapter are meant as a way to continue to work on writing in context. As opposed to writing one book report after reading the text, the shorter writing practice for each chapter gives students the opportunity to continue to work on writing skills learned during the school year much like keeping your stamina and form by running every day.

**Teacherly Hints:**

- If possible, get two copies of the summer reading text so that you can read through it together. If amendable and not the cause of great tension, having the student read the text out loud has greater benefit for fluency. You can even try trading off reading every other page.

- Routines are often helpful during the summer for continuing reading and writing skills. Set a specific time for reading everyday. It can also be helpful to start that routine immediately in June after school lets out for the summer.

- Continued writing practice often gets overlooked during the summer but is of equal if not greater importance. The writing guides created for each text can help support this endeavor. While the guides were made with lines for handwritten responses, students may choose to type or dictate their responses for equal benefit. Other ways to incorporate daily writing is through letter writing to distant relations or on trips. Some people find creating summer journals to record the day’s events or to use general writing prompts can also help maintain consistent writing habits.

- Building vast background knowledge has huge benefits for comprehension not only in English Language Arts but in other disciplines as well. You can have students read short articles from appropriate informational magazines and newspapers. Furthermore websites like NewsELA rewrite news stories for different lexile or reading levels.
Enter 6th Grade

*Merci Suarez Changes Gears* by Meg Medina

Merci Suarez knew that sixth grade would be different, but she had no idea just how different. For starters, Merci has never been like the other kids at her private school in Florida, because she and her older brother, Roli, are scholarship students. They don’t have a big house or a fancy boat, and they have to do extra community service to make up for their free tuition. So when bossy Edna Santos sets her sights on the new boy who happens to be Merci’s school-assigned Sunshine Buddy, Merci becomes the target of Edna’s jealousy. Things aren’t going well at home, either: Merci’s grandfather and most trusted ally, Lolo, has been acting strangely lately — forgetting important things, falling from his bike, and getting angry over nothing. No one in her family will tell Merci what's going on, so she's left to her own worries, while also feeling all on her own at school. In a coming-of-age tale full of humor and wisdom, award-winning author Meg Medina gets to the heart of the confusion and constant change that defines middle school — and the steadfast connection that defines family.
Entering 7th Grade

*Auggie and Me* by R.J. Palacio*

Over 2 million people have read the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Wonder* and have fallen in love with Auggie Pullman, an ordinary boy with an extraordinary face. Readers have also been treated to three stories offering a special look at Auggie’s world through new points of view. These stories are an extra peek at Auggie before he started at Beecher Prep and during his first year there. Readers get to see him through the eyes of Julian, the bully; Christopher, Auggie’s oldest friend; and Charlotte, Auggie’s new friend at school. Together, these three stories are a treasure for readers who don’t want to leave Auggie behind when they finish *Wonder*.

*Students are required to read *The Julian Chapter* but may also be interested in the *Pluto* or *Shingaling* chapters*

Enter 8th Grade

Students may select **one** of the following texts:

*Lu* by Jason Reynolds

Lu was born to be co-captain of the Defenders. Well, actually, he was born albino, but that’s got nothing to do with being a track star. Lu has swagger, plus the talent to back it up, and with all that—not to mention the gold chains and diamond earrings—no one’s gonna outshine him. Lu knows he can lead Ghost, Patina, Sunny, and the team to victory at the championships, but it might not be as easy as it seems. Suddenly, there are hurdles in Lu’s way—literally and not-so-literally—and Lu needs to figure out, fast, what winning the gold really means. Expect the unexpected in this final event in Jason Reynolds’ award-winning and bestselling Track series.
Patina by Jason Reynolds

Patina, or Patty, runs like a flash. She runs for many reasons—to escape the taunts from the kids at the fancy-schmancy new school she’s been sent to ever since she and her little sister had to stop living with their mom. She runs from the reason WHY she’s not able to live with her “real” mom any more: her mom has The Sugar, and Patty is terrified that the disease that took her mom’s legs will one day take her away forever. And so Patty’s also running for her mom, who can’t. But can you ever really run away from any of this? As the stress builds, it’s building up a pretty bad attitude as well. Coach won’t tolerate bad attitude. No day, no way. And now he wants Patty to run relay…where you have to depend on other people? How’s she going to do THAT?

Sunny by Jason Reynolds

Sunny is just that—sunny. Always ready with a goofy smile and something nice to say, Sunny is the chillest dude on the Defenders team. But his life hasn’t always been sun beamy-bright. You see, Sunny is a murderer. Or at least he thinks of himself that way. His mother died giving birth to him, and based on how Sunny’s dad treats him—ignoring him, making Sunny call him Darryl, never “Dad”—it’s no wonder Sunny thinks he’s to blame. It seems the only thing Sunny can do right in his dad’s eyes is win first place ribbons running the mile, just like his mom did. But Sunny doesn’t like running, never has. So he stops. Right in the middle of a race.

With his relationship with his dad now worse than ever, the last thing Sunny wants to do is leave the other newbies—his only friends—behind. But you can’t be on a track team and not run. So Coach asks Sunny what he wants to do. Sunny’s answer? Dance. Yes, dance. But you also can’t be on a track team and dance. Then, in a stroke of genius only Jason Reynolds can conceive, Sunny discovers a track event that encompasses the hard beats of hip-hop, the precision of ballet, and the showmanship of dance as a whole: the discus throw. But as he practices for this new event, can he let go of everything that’s been eating him up inside?
The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis

The Newbery and Coretta Scott King Honoree about the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan—from Christopher Paul Curtis, author of Bud, Not Buddy, a Newbery Medal and Coretta Scott Award Winner.

Enter the hilarious world of ten-year-old Kenny and his family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan. There's Momma, Dad, little sister Joetta, and brother Byron, who's thirteen and an "official juvenile delinquent." When Byron gets to be too much trouble, they head South to Birmingham to visit Grandma, the one person who can shape him up. And they happen to be in Birmingham when Grandma's church is blown up.