

## Entering 6th Grade (5th to 6th) Summer Reading

### Checklist At a Glance:

- ☐ Read the Required text *Merci Suarez Changes Gears* by Meg Medina
- ☐ Complete the provided [writing discussion guide](#) (PDF linked, found on website and uploaded to Google Classroom in last year's ELA class folder). Students may type into the Google doc version, create their own document or print out and write in the guide.
- ☐ **AND/OR create an artifact** (artifact could be in the form of an essay, visual representation, series of poems, recorded film, music score, or presentation)
- ☐ Students should then read a second text of their choosing

**Reminder:** Students who attend AIM's Summer program DO NOT have to complete their summer reading or math packets.

### First day of school:

Students should come to the first day of school with the **completed writing guide** and/or a **completed artifact** representative of the required text *Merci Suarez Changes Gears* by Meg Medina. 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 Mrs. Mellon over the summer. We look forward to collaborating to support your student's reading and writing success.

### Required Reading: *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 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.



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*We thank you in advance for your support with this important endeavor and hope that you and your student have a wonderful time enjoying many great books together this summer.*

## **Summer Reading 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.

