

Entering 8th Grade (7th to 8th) Summer Reading

Checklist At a Glance:

- ☐ **Read one of the required texts** (listed below and more information on next page)
 - *Ghost* by Jason Reynolds
 - *The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- ☐ **Complete a writing guide and/or create an artifact**
 - **Complete the provided writing discussion guide for the appropriate text** (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**
 - If they read *Ghost*, they can fill out a writing guide for extra credit for one of the sequels to *Ghost*:
 - *Patina*, *Sunny*, or *Lu*

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

First day of school:

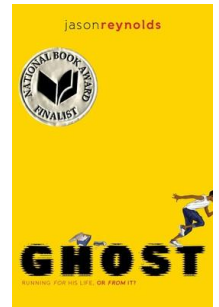
Students should come to the first day of school with the **completed writing guide** and/or a **completed artifact** representative of their chosen required text: *Ghost* or *The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963*. Finally, students should be ready to discuss the texts that they read over the summer. If 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.

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.

8th Grade Required Reading: Students should select **one** of the following texts -

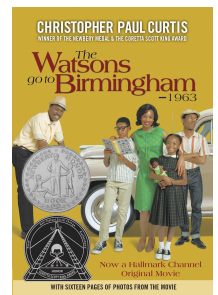
***Ghost* by Jason Reynolds**

Running. That's all Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. But Ghost has been running for the wrong reasons—it all started with running away from his father, who, when Ghost was a very little boy, chased him and his mother through their apartment, then down the street, with a loaded gun, aiming to kill. Since then, Ghost has been the one causing problems—and running away from them—until he meets Coach, an ex-Olympic Medalist who sees something in Ghost: crazy natural talent. If Ghost can stay on track, literally and figuratively, he could be the best sprinter in the city. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed, or will his past finally catch up to him?



***The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis**

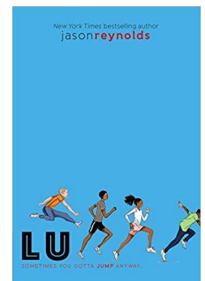
The Newbery and Coretta Scott King Honoree about the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan—from Christopher Paul Curtis, author of *Bud, Not Buddy*, a Newbery Medal and Coretta Scott Award Winner. Enter the hilarious world of ten-year-old Kenny and his family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan. There's 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.



For Extra Credit (sequels to Ghost):

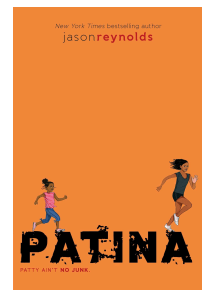
***Lu* by Jason Reynolds**

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.



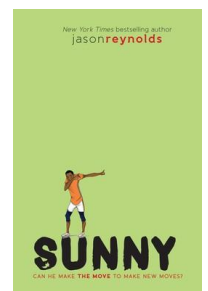
***Patina* by Jason Reynolds**

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.



***Sunny* by Jason Reynolds**

Sunny is just that—sunny. Always ready with a goofy smile and something nice to say, Sunny is the chilliest 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.



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 amenable 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.