



Summer 2022

Dear 6th Grade Students,

We are so excited to work with you next year in middle school, and we are eagerly preparing for our classes with you in September!

Over the summer, please read two (2) books. The first book must be ***The Lightning Thief***, by Rick Riordan, which will tie in perfectly with our first unit on the hero's journey. *For the other book, please choose from the suggested reading list attached to this handout.*

After you finish the books, please complete one (1) reading letter, describing in detail the two books you read. Follow the guidelines listed below:

Reading Letter Content

- Paragraph 1 - Summarize the plot of *The Lightning Thief*, including characters, setting, major problems, and how the problems are solved (8-15 sentences).
- Paragraph 2 - Summarize the plot of your *second* book, including characters, setting, major problems, and how the problems are solved (8-15 sentences).
- Paragraph 3 – Explain which book was your favorite. In your response, justify your choice with details and examples from the book (5-10 sentences).

Reading Letter Format

- Start with a greeting (Dear Ms. Carrella and Mr Pictor,)
- End with a closing (Sincerely, Your Name)
- Double spaced, Times New Roman, Size 12 Font

This assignment is due (printed) on the first day of school and should be **shared via Google Docs** with **BOTH** 6th grade English teachers, Ms. Carrella (lauren.carrella@gbwl.org) and Mr. Pictor (geoff.pictor@gbwl.org). **Be sure your first and last name are in the title of your document.** Should you misplace your assignment, you can always access this information on our BWL website at http://www.bwl.org/middle_school, or you can email Ms. Carrella and Mr. Pictor at their emails above.

Sincerely,
Your 6th grade English teachers

The Birch Wathen Lenox School
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6th Grade Summer Reading Suggestions

Ghost—Jason Reynolds. After his dad tried to kill him and his mom, Castle Cranshaw (aka Ghost) has been running. His running was always for himself, until he joined an elite track team. With a new mentor at his side, Coach, will Ghost be able to make good choices, or will his own bad decisions ruin his chances on the team? (Realistic Fiction)

Lucky Broken Girl—Ruth Behar. In this coming of age story, Ruthie Mizrahi, a 10- year- old girl of Cuban- Jewish heritage, comes to live in New York City. Just when she feels she is making progress socially and culturally, a traumatic injury changes everything. (Historical Fiction)

Merci Suárez Changes Gears—Meg Medina. As scholarship students at their Florida private school, Merci and her brother Roli have always felt a little different. When her grandfather starts to forget things, life at home and in sixth grade seem almost impossible to manage. Winner of the 2019 Newbery Award! (Realistic Fiction)

New Kid—Jerry Craft. Jordan Banks dreams of going to art school as he enters seventh grade, however his parents would rather send him back to the prestigious prep school he attends where he is among the only black students. With humor and sadness, this graphic novel gives a glimpse into the world of a middle school student who just doesn't quite fit in. (Graphic Novel)

One Crazy Summer—Rita Williams Garcia. In the summer of 1968, after travelling from Brooklyn to Oakland, California, to spend a month with the mother they barely know, eleven-year-old Delphine and her two younger sisters arrive to a cold welcome as they discover that their mother, a dedicated poet and printer, is resentful of the intrusion of their visit and wants them to attend a nearby Black Panther summer camp. (Historical Fiction)

Refugee—Alan Gratz. Follows the lives of three young people, Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud, as each goes on a harrowing journey in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers—from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But for each of them, there is always the hope of tomorrow. And although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, surprising connections will tie their stories together in the end. (Historical Fiction / Young Adult)

The Misfits—James Howe. Skeezie, Addie, Joe, and Bobby -- they've been friends forever. They laugh together, have lunch together, and get together once a week at the Candy Kitchen to eat ice cream and talk about important issues. Life isn't always fair, but at least they have each other -- and all they really want to do is survive the seventh grade. This funny coming of age novel explores what it means to fit in, and just how cool it can be to be a misfit. (Young Adult)



The Night Diary—Veera Hiranandani. Our 2019-2020 BWL Middle School Reads book! Follow Nisha as she flees Pakistan after partition in search for a safe place for her family. Told through letters to her deceased mother, Nisha tells a heartfelt story of one girl's search for home and her own identity. (Historical Fiction)

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SAMPLE 6th Grade Summer Reading Letter

Dear Ms. Carrella and Mr. Pictor,

This summer I read a book called *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* by Chris Grabenstein. The main character's name is Kyle; he is a huge game fanatic. He loves board games, word games, video games... all kinds of games. It just so happens that his hero, Mr. Lemoncello, the inventor of all of his favorite games, has built a new library in Kyle's town. As part of the celebration for the opening of the new library, twelve lucky kids get to have a sleepover inside. Kyle gets chosen, but when he gets to the library, the doors are locked and all the kids are stuck inside. He quickly realizes that Mr. Lemoncello has designed an elaborate game that the kids must solve in order to escape from the library. This book was really fun to read because I love puzzles and games, too. Kyle forms alliances with different kids so they can work together to figure out the puzzles. The whole time I was reading it, I was reminded of the TV show "Survivor." In the end, of course Kyle and his friends win, and the kids who showed bad sportsmanship the entire time are kicked out.

For my second book, I chose to read *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*. This book is a bit different from my normal genre choice because it is historical fiction, but I thought I'd give it a try. The story is about Byron and Kenny Watson, two brothers growing up in Flint, Michigan in the early 1960s. Kenny is a huge nerd who is constantly bullied by his classmates. Byron, the older brother, always gets in trouble with his parents for acting out in school and making bad decisions at home (like lighting matches in the bathroom!). To teach Byron a lesson, his parents decide to drive the family down to Birmingham, Alabama to drop Byron off for the summer with Grandma Sands. Little do they know, life in Alabama is a LOT different for African Americans

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than it is in Michigan. The family experience segregation, racism, and even a church bombing. In the end, Kenny and Byron realize they have to grow up quickly, because the world isn't all fun and games. They have to find the strength and courage within themselves to face their problems. I thought for sure that Joey (Byron and Kenny's little sister) was going to die at the end, but luckily she didn't. This still ended up being a sad book in the end.

Of all the books I read, I think my favorite was *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*. I say this because even though the ending was a little sad, it still had so much humor. Byron always gets himself into hilarious situations, like the time his lips froze to the car mirror (he was kissing his own reflection!). He also tells his brother and sister funny stories, like when he told them Southern people freeze in the winter in the North and garbage trucks pick up their frozen, dead bodies. I also thought it was sad when Kenny hid behind the couch for several weeks after the bombing. I got a little emotional reading that part! The author did a great job showing how devastated and frightened he was after that experience. I've never lived through anything so traumatic, but I think if I had experienced something like that, I would have reacted in the same way. I was so glad the book ended on a positive note, with Kenny recovering and becoming better friends with Byron.

Sincerely,

Susie Smith