

## Summer reading for students entering grade 8

Dear incoming 8th graders,

The following books represent a range of topics, perspectives, and experiences. All of our units this year will connect in some capacity to the theme of “Identity and Justice”. For summer reading, I’d like you to choose two books from the list below that you think you will most enjoy reading. While there is not a written portion of the summer reading assignment, you are encouraged to take notes and annotate your text in preparation for the beginning of the school year. Upon return, students will be expected to write an informative/explanatory essay (in class!) to examine the theme of “Identity and Justice”. While reading, make sure to keep an eye out for well-chosen facts, details, quotations, or other information/examples.

I’m providing graphic organizers that you may use to aid in your note taking and annotating. These are not mandatory, merely a tool. Again, being prepared with notes and annotations will be essential to your success on your in class essay upon your return to school.

	Genre	Title	Author	ISBN-13	Pages	Amazon purchase link
	Graphic Novel	Chunky	Yehudi Mercado	978-0062972781	208	<a href="https://a.co/d/1GRAOHw">https://a.co/d/1GRAOHw</a>
	Memoir	Everything Sad Is Untrue: (a true story)	Daniel Nayeri	978-1646140008	368	<a href="https://a.co/d/0Dq85Yr">https://a.co/d/0Dq85Yr</a>
	Memoir	Four Perfect Pebbles	Lila Perl, Marion Blumenthal Lazan	978-0062489968	160	<a href="https://a.co/d/iefZUPH">https://a.co/d/iefZUPH</a>
	Non Fiction	Free Lunch	Rex Ogle	978-1324016946	224	<a href="https://a.co/d/jjiPUQy">https://a.co/d/jjiPUQy</a>
	Non Fiction	We Should Hang Out Sometime	Josh Sundquist	978-0316251006	352	<a href="https://a.co/d/7iiTTIX">https://a.co/d/7iiTTIX</a>
	Science Fiction	Project Hail Mary: A Novel	Andy Weir	978-0593135228	496	<a href="https://a.co/d/208Cd86">https://a.co/d/208Cd86</a>
	Verse	Brown Girl Dreaming	Jacqueline Woodson	978-0147515827	368	<a href="https://a.co/d/hpgNKBz">https://a.co/d/hpgNKBz</a>
	Verse	The Poet X	Elizabeth Acevedo	978-0062662811	384	<a href="https://a.co/d/c88vsoL">https://a.co/d/c88vsoL</a>
	Young Adult Fiction	Orbiting Jupiter	Gary D. Schmidt	978-0544938397	192	<a href="https://a.co/d/i0DYvVV">https://a.co/d/i0DYvVV</a>
	Young Adult Fiction	The Girl From Everywhere	Heidi Heilig	978-0062380760	480	<a href="https://a.co/d/ewYHmzl">https://a.co/d/ewYHmzl</a>

For your Social Studies summer reading, you will choose **ONE** of the three books listed below which will serve as a background and introduction to our first unit on Puritanism.



Young Adult Fiction	The Witch of Blackbird Pond	Elizabeth George Speare	978-0547550299	272	<a href="https://a.co/d/i5WZ7zi">https://a.co/d/i5WZ7zi</a>
Children's Fiction	A Break with Charity: A Story about the Salem Witch Trials	Ann Rinaldi	978-0152046828	320	<a href="https://a.co/d/0mf59em">https://a.co/d/0mf59em</a>
Young Adult Fiction	Witch child	Celia Rees	978-0763642280	288	<a href="https://a.co/d/3BDGASst">https://a.co/d/3BDGASst</a>

To help you to decide which book to choose, you will see a description of the story. It may be helpful to know that all three books are essentially the same length. Each description has some **key phrases printed in red** to help you identify the dilemma faced by the protagonist or main character. The questions you will answer will also be centered around the key words or phrases printed in blue.

Please number your answers as they are listed below, and please respond in complete sentences.

### The Witch of Blackbird Pond

Sixteen-year-old Kit Tyler is marked by suspicion and disapproval from the moment she arrives on the unfamiliar shores of colonial Connecticut in 1687. Alone and desperate, she has been forced to leave her beloved home on the island of Barbados and join a family she has never met. Torn between her **quest for belonging and her desire to be true to herself**, Kit struggles to survive in a hostile place. Just when it seems she must give up, she finds a kindred spirit. But Kit's friendship with Hannah Tupper, believed by the colonists to be a witch, proves more taboo than she could have imagined and ultimately forces Kit to **choose between her heart and her duty**.

Elizabeth George Speare won the 1959 Newbery Medal for this portrayal of a heroine whom readers will admire for her **unwavering sense of truth** as well as her infinite **capacity to love**.

#### Reading questions:

1. What is the mood or tone of the community in which the main character finds themselves? Why is this mood or tone important to the story?
2. What is the central event around which this story is organized?
3. Explain the conflict or dilemma faced by the main character, which is identified by the phrases in red:
  - a. On the one hand, discuss in what way(s) Kit wants to belong, and what she wants to belong to
  - b. On the other hand, discuss in what way(s) she wants to be true to herself

## A Break With Charity

Susanna desperately wants to join the circle of girls who meet every week at the parsonage. What she doesn't realize is that the girls are about to set off a **torrent of false accusations** leading to the imprisonment and execution of countless innocent people. Susanna **faces a painful choice**. Should she **keep quiet** and let the witch-hunt panic continue, or should she "break charity" with the group--and **risk** having her own family members named as witches?

### Reading questions:

1. What is the mood or tone of the community in which the main character finds themselves? Why is this mood or tone important to the story?
2. What is the central event around which this story is organized?
3. Explain the conflict or dilemma faced by the main character, which is identified by the phrases in red:
  - a. Begin by discussing the false accusations that were being circulated. Specifically, what were the accusations and why did the girls make them?
  - b. Discuss the choice(s) Susannah faces: why might she choose to remain quiet? And why would breaking with the group put her family at risk of being accused?

## Witch Child

Welcome to the world of young Mary Newbury, a world where simply **being different can cost a person her life**. Hidden until now in the pages of her diary, Mary's startling story begins in 1659, the year her beloved grandmother is hanged in the public square as a witch. Mary narrowly escapes a similar fate, only to **face intolerance and new danger** among the Puritans in the New World. How long can she **hide her true identity**? Will she ever find a place where her healing powers will not be feared?

### Reading questions:

1. What is the mood or tone of the community in which the main character finds themselves? Why is this mood or tone important to the story?
2. What is the central event around which this story is organized?
3. Explain the conflict or dilemma faced by the main character, which is identified by the phrases in red:
  - a. Begin by discussing the differences that appeared in this story. Specifically, what was Mary's true identity?
  - b. In relation to this story, discuss how being different could cost a person their life. Specifically, what intolerance and new danger(s) did she face?

Please feel free to contact Mrs. Wendy Friz ([wfriz@montgomeryschool.org](mailto:wfriz@montgomeryschool.org)) for Language Arts or Mrs. Heather Schelhorn ([hschelhorn@montgomeryschool.org](mailto:hschelhorn@montgomeryschool.org)) for Social Studies with any questions or concerns.

# Theme: Graphic Organizer

**Theme** is the message the author wants to convey to the reader about life. It goes beyond simply a topic - such as 'friendship' or 'happiness'. When identifying the theme in a piece of literature, ask yourself: What is the author trying to teach me about this topic? A **theme** is arguable - but you must be able to back it up with evidence from the text. Good literature will have multiple themes in one text. Fill out the chart below using direct quotes from the text.

**Title:** What does the title suggest? Why do you think the writer chose this title?

**Diction:** What words/phrases does the narrator use relating to the topic?

**Characters:** What do the characters say and do in the story related to the topic?? How do the main characters change in the course of the story? What do they discover that could have meaning for other people's lives?

**Conflict:** What is the conflict of the story? How are conflicts or problems in the story settled? How do you feel about the outcome? Does the resolution give you an idea of what the story means?

**Resolution:** What is the resolution of the story? Which scene or passages in the story seem especially important? What revelations about life do they suggest to you?

**Theme:** What is the author trying to teach the reader about life? What lesson does the character learn about life? How does the lesson apply to the lives of others? What is one word to summarize the lesson? What evidence can I cite to support the theme?



# **THEME: Things to consider**

TO FIND THE THEME, REFLECT ON: WHAT LESSON IS LEARNED FROM THE TEXT?

## **Questions to Consider:**

- HOW DO CHARACTERS RESPOND TO MAJOR CHALLENGES?
- HOW DO CHARACTERS OVERCOME OBSTACLES OR SOLVE THEIR PROBLEM?
- WHAT DO YOU LEARN FROM THE CHANGES THE MAIN CHARACTER UNDERGOES?
- WHAT IDEA DOES THE WRITER WISH TO CONVEY ABOUT THE SUBJECT?