

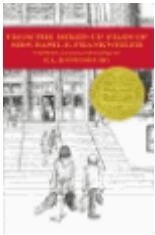
Required Reading for Summer 2026
Penn's Grove Language Arts Department

Entering 7th Grade

All students must choose **one of the themed clusters** listed below (Cluster 1-4) and complete the reading of **two texts**. Students may not mix and match texts from different clusters. Within each cluster, students **must read the non-fiction text designated "Required Read,"** but they may **choose one** of the three **fiction texts** listed. Students must complete the attached questions for each book (a total of 6 questions for each book) and turn them into their Language Arts teacher at the beginning of the year.

DUE DATE: Wednesday, September 30, 2026

EMERGING LEVEL –cluster 1



* # *From The Mixed-Up Files Of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg (fiction)

Claudia Kincaid and her brother run away to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City in order to teach their parents a lesson and embark upon a mystery involving a priceless work of art and the strange old woman who sold the piece to the museum. 770 L



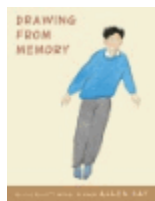
* *Trash* by Andy Mulligan (fiction)

A group of fourteen-year-old boys, who make a living picking garbage from the outskirts of a large city, finds something special and mysterious that brings terrifying consequences. 860 L



The City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau (fiction)

In the city of Ember, twelve-year-old Lina trades jobs on Assignment Day to be a Messenger to run to new places in her decaying but beloved city, perhaps even to glimpse Unknown Regions. 680 L



Drawing From Memory by Allen Say (nonfiction- required book for this cluster)

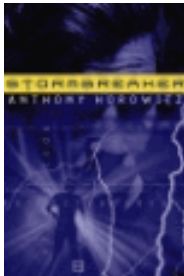
Drawing from Memory is Allen Say's own story of his path to becoming the renowned artist he is today. Shunned by his father, who didn't understand his son's artistic leanings, Allen was embraced by Noro Shinpei, Japan's leading cartoonist and the man he came to love as his "spiritual father." As WWII raged, Allen was further inspired to consider questions of his own heritage and the motivations of those around him. He worked hard in rigorous drawing classes, studied, trained — and ultimately came to understand who he really is. 560 L

*May contain sensitive content

eBook available through Penn's Grove catalog

L = Lexile measure

ON LEVEL – cluster 2



Stormbreaker (Alex Rider series) by Anthony Horowitz (fiction)

After the death of the uncle who had been his guardian, fourteen-year-old Alex Rider is coerced to continue his uncle's dangerous work for Britain's intelligence agency.

670 L



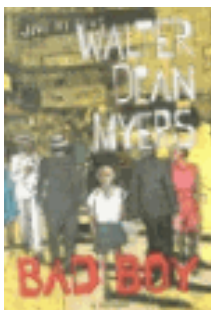
* # *Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline B. Cooney (fiction)

A photograph of a missing girl on a milk carton leads Janie on a search for her real identity. 660 L



Doll Bones by Holly Black (fiction)

Zach, Poppy, and Alice have been friends forever. And for almost as long, they've been playing one continuous, ever-changing game of pirates and thieves, mermaids and warriors. Ruling over all is the Great Queen, a bone-china doll cursing those who displease her. But they are in middle school now. Zach's father pushes him to give up make-believe, and Zach quits the game. Their friendship might be over, until Poppy declares she's been having dreams about the Queen—and the ghost of a girl who will not rest until the bone-china doll is buried in her empty grave. 571 L



Bad Boys: A Memoir by Walter Dean Myers (nonfiction- required book for this cluster)

Author Walter Dean Myers describes his childhood in Harlem in the 1940s and 1950s, discussing his loving stepmother, his problems in school, his reasons for leaving home, and his beginnings as a writer. Lexile level 970

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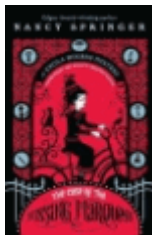
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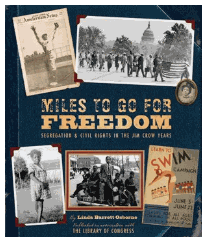
ON LEVEL- cluster 3



The Ruins of Gorlan (Ranger's Apprentice Series) by John Flanagan (fiction)
When fifteen-year-old Will is rejected by battleschool, he becomes the reluctant apprentice to the mysterious Ranger Halt, and winds up protecting the kingdom from danger! 920 L



The Case of the Missing Marquess: an Enola Holmes Mystery by Nancy Springer (fiction)
Enola Holmes, much younger sister of detective Sherlock Holmes, must travel to London in disguise to unravel the disappearance of her missing mother. 1020 L



Miles to Go for Freedom by Linda Barrett Osborne (nonfiction)

Non-fiction description of the lives of African Americans during the Jim Crow years, a period of legal segregation and discrimination from the 1890s through the 1950s, including photographs and interviews with African Americans who were young during this time and other primary resources. 560 L



Patient Zero: Solving The Mysteries of Deadly Epidemics by Marilee Peters (nonfiction)

Throughout history, more people have died in disease epidemics than in wars or other disasters. The courageous, trail-blazing defenders against these diseases faced a terrifying personal gamble. Often they were ignored, laughed at, or even fired from their jobs. But they kept hunting for answers, putting the pieces of the epidemic puzzle together. As they looked for clues to the origin of a disease, scientists searched for the unknown “patient zero”—the first person to have contracted it. In nineteenth-century London, Dr. John Snow’s mapping of an epidemic found that patient zero was a six-month-old baby, whose cholera-laden diarrhea had contaminated the water of a local pump. It led to the death of 10,000 inhabitants exposed to the dirty water. 571 L

****There are 2 non-fiction choices for this cluster- you must read 1 non-fiction book.**

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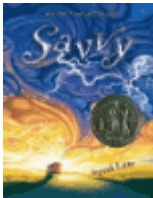
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ABOVE LEVEL- cluster 4



Million Dollar Throw by Mike Lupica (fiction)

Eighth-grade star quarterback Nate Brodie's family is feeling the stress of the troubled economy, and Nate is frantic because his best friend Abby is going blind, so when he gets a chance to win a million dollars if he can complete a pass during the halftime of a New England Patriot's game, he is nearly overwhelmed by the pressure to succeed. Lexile level 960 (F)



Savvy by Ingrid Law (fiction)

Recounts the adventures of Mibs Beaumont, whose thirteenth birthday has revealed her "savvy"--a magical power unique to each member of her family--just as her father is injured in a terrible accident. Lexile level 1070 (F)



Revenge of the Witch (The Last Apprentice series) by Joseph Delaney (fiction)

Capturing witches, Old Gregory has been the Spook for the county, ridding the local villages of evil. Now his time is coming to an end. But who will take over for him? Twenty-nine apprentices have tried--some floundered, some fled, some failed to stay alive. Only Thomas Ward is left. He's the last hope; the last apprentice. Can Thomas succeed? Will he learn the difference between a benign witch and a malevolent one?

Does the Spook's warning against girls with pointy shoes include Alice? And what will happen if Thomas accidentally frees Mother Malkin, the most evil witch in the county. 840 L



The President Has Been Shot!: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy by James L. Swanson (nonfiction- required to read in this cluster)

Looks at the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and related events, including his funeral and the apprehension of his killer. 1080 L

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	<u>Non-Fiction Prompts/Questions</u>
Remembering <u>CHOOSE ONE</u>	1. What is the main idea of the book? 2. Give a one paragraph summary of any chapter in the book. 3. What problems does the person have, and how does he or she solve it?
Understanding <u>CHOOSE ONE</u>	4. Name five facts from the text and justify how you know they are facts. 5. Tell in your own words how the setting (time the book took place) affected the person the book is about. 6. Describe the mood of a specific scene from the book using at least two relevant details.
Applying <u>CHOOSE ONE</u>	7. Could you relate the book to yourself? Why or why not? 8. Write a letter to a friend recommending this book. 9. Identify a situation in which the central person showed courage. Describe how you would have reacted in the same situation.
Analyzing <u>CHOOSE ONE</u>	10. In the cluster you chose, compare and contrast the fiction book to the non-fiction book. 11. The summer book choices give you insight to history. What surprised you as you were reading? 12. Find an Internet article from a primary source connected to an issue from the book. Record your source (title of article, title of publication, the Web site, author, and date of publication). Write a minimum 10-sentence summary of the article. (Wikipedia, Google, etc., are <u>not</u> primary sources)
Evaluating <u>CHOOSE ONE</u>	13. Did you like the non-fiction book? Why or why not? 14. Would you like to meet the person the book was about? Why? What questions would you ask him? 15. Why do you think the author wanted to write this book? What was the intention?
Creating <u>CHOOSE ONE</u>	16. Think of ONE gift you would like to give the person your read about based on that character's specific needs. Explain why you gave that gift. 17. If a biography/ memoir was written about you in the future, what would it tell us about you?

	<p>18. Choose a short paragraph from the book that stands out to you. Explain why you chose it and what made it stand out.</p>
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	<u>Fiction Prompts/Questions</u>
<p>Remembering <u>CHOOSE ONE</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the main setting of the novel? List the places mentioned in the book. 2. Who is the protagonist? Who or what is the main antagonist? (see example above) 3. What problems does one of the characters have, and how does he or she solve it?
<p>Understanding <u>CHOOSE ONE</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Give an example of indirect characterization: personality traits shown through actions and dialogue. (For example: <i>Jimmy walked down the street frowning</i>. Reader infers Jimmy is upset.) 5. Tell in your own words how the setting of the story affected a character. 6. Describe the mood of a specific scene from the novel using at least two relevant details.
<p>Applying <u>CHOOSE ONE</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Did this book give you any new ideas about yourself? Why or why not? 8. Write a letter to a friend recommending this book. 9. Identify a situation in which the protagonist showed courage. Describe how you would have reacted in the same situation. 10. Tell 5 ways in which you are like the main character.
<p>Analyzing <u>CHOOSE ONE</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Compare and contrast two of the characters in this book. 12. Compare the novel you read this summer to a novel you read last year. 13. The summer book choices are realistic novels. Which event in the novel you read seems most unbelievable? 14. Find an Internet article from a primary source connected to a social issue from the novel (i.e. bullying, abuse, mental illness, etc.). Record your source (title of article, title of

	<p>publication, the Web site, author, and date of publication). Write a minimum 10-sentence summary of the article. (Wikipedia, Google, etc., are <u>not</u> primary sources)</p>
<p>Evaluating <u>CHOOSE ONE</u></p>	<p>15. Do you like the way the story ended? Why or why not?</p> <p>16. Which character would you most like to meet and why?</p> <p>17. Describe a situation in which a character is treated unfairly and explain how it is unfair to that character.</p>
<p>Creating <u>CHOOSE ONE</u></p>	<p>18. Choose a character from your book, then think of ONE gift you would like to give him/her based on that character's specific needs. Explain why you gave that gift.</p> <p>19. Choose a character from the novel and write a creative continuation of his/her story.</p> <p>20. Choose a character from the novel and think of a shape that fits that character's traits. Draw the shape, describe the character inside the shape, and explain why you chose the shape outside of it.</p>