

2026-2027 Middle School Summer Reading

6th grade

Students should select one book to read before the start of school, but they are welcome to read more!

- [*The Crossroads* by Alexandra Diaz](#)
- [*Pax* by Sara Pennypacker](#)
- [*Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* by Kwame Mbalia](#)
- [*Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen](#)

7th Grade

Students should select one book to read, but they are welcome to read more!

- [*The Storm Runner* by J.C. Cervantes](#)
- [*Tristan Strong Destroys the World* by Kwame Mbalia](#)
- [*Aru Shah and the End of Time* by Roshani Chokshi](#)
- [*Dragon Pearl* by Yoon Han Lee](#)
- [*Race to the Sun* by Rebecca Roanhorse](#)
- [*Mulan: Before the Sword* by Grace Lin](#)
- [*The Labors of Hercules Beal* by Gary D. Schmidt](#)

8th grade

All students should read *The 57 Bus* for Social Studies and **one** of the four listed books for English before the start of the school year. Please see the notes below for further explanation of these book choices.

Social Studies:

[*The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives*](#) by Dashka Slater

English (pick one):

- [*The Book Thief*](#)- Markus Zusak
- [*White Rose*](#)-Kip Wilson
- [*Flowers in the Gutter: The True Story of the Edelweiss Pirates, Teenagers who Resisted the Nazis*](#)- K. R. Grady

- [White Bird](#)-R.J. Palacio

Dear Families,

As part of our Social Studies program, students are asked to read *The 57 Bus* by Dashka Slater before the start of the school year. This book tells the true story of two teenagers whose lives intersect on a city bus in Oakland, California. While the event described in the book is serious and at times difficult, it offers students an opportunity to thoughtfully explore important themes such as empathy, responsibility, justice, and the complexities of real-world events.

We selected this text because it encourages students to consider multiple perspectives and to think critically about how individuals, communities, and the justice system respond when harm occurs. The story also raises important questions about how identity—including gender identity—and issues such as racial bias can shape people's experiences and the ways communities respond to conflict. The book invites discussion about accountability, compassion, and how young people can make thoughtful decisions in complicated situations. These are themes that align closely with our goals in Social Studies and English: helping students better understand the world around them and developing their ability to engage respectfully with different viewpoints.

During the first weeks of school, students will participate in guided discussions and reflective activities related to the book. Our conversations will focus on themes such as empathy, civic responsibility, identity, and how communities work toward justice and healing. As always, we will emphasize respectful dialogue, thoughtful listening, and age-appropriate discussion.

We recognize that the book addresses complex topics, and we approach these conversations with care and sensitivity. Our goal is not simply to study the event itself, but to help students practice thoughtful discussion, critical thinking, and compassion for others.

If you have any questions about the book or would like to discuss the reading in advance, please feel free to reach out. I am always happy to talk with families about our curriculum and learning goals.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Sky Jenkins and Marian Myers
8th grade Social Studies
Bosque School

Dear Families,

As part of our 8th grade English Holocaust: Writing Resistance unit, students will choose and read one of the following historical novels set during World War II: *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak, *White Rose* by Kip Wilson, *Flowers in the Gutter: The True Story of the Edelweiss Pirates*, *Teenagers Who Resisted the Nazis* by K. R. Gaddy, or *White Bird* by R. J. Palacio.

These texts share different perspectives from this time period. Some focus on young people living under Nazi rule, while others highlight individuals who resisted injustice. Through these stories, students explore themes such as courage, moral choice, empathy, and the impact of historical events on ordinary people.

Since these books take place during the Holocaust, they include references to persecution, violence, and death. In class, we will approach these topics carefully by focusing on historical understanding, empathy, and thoughtful discussion rather than graphic detail.

During the unit, students will participate in guided discussions and research-based writing connected to their reading. The goal is to help students better understand how empathy and the ability to communicate and write are the most powerful tools against injustice. If you have questions about the books or would like to discuss the unit, please feel free to reach out. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,
Jasmine "Mac" McSparren
8th grade English
Bosque School