

Strath Haven Middle School Summer Reading 2026

Middle school students should maintain their reading lives over the summer months. **Each middle school student is required to read one book from the list below for summer reading and complete the graphic organizer for their grade level.** Graphic organizers can be found [here](#). Students may complete the graphic organizer digitally or by hand.

8th grade students wishing to complete work at the Black Diamond Level should read 2 books. One of these two books should come from the list below, and the other book can be one of choice.

We offer a list of books organized alphabetically by title, with genre. We recommend students explore and read with consideration of both interest and reading level. With parent guidance, students may choose any book from the list to use for their summer reading.

Due Date:

Students will engage in learning activities related to their summer reading in the first two weeks of school.

To Our Middle School Students,
Happy reading! We absolutely cannot wait to meet you!



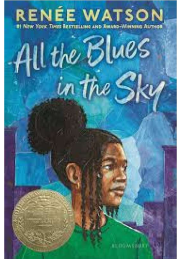
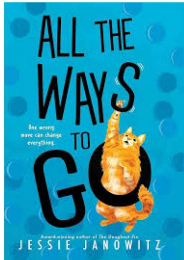
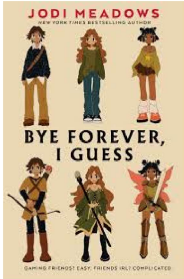
With enthusiasm,
Your SHMS Language Arts Teachers

Suggestions for choosing a summer reading book that is perfect for you!


- ★ **Consider Genre** - Think about books you have enjoyed in the past. Is there a certain genre you enjoy reading the most? Would you like to read more books of that style? If so, start by looking at books offered in that genre.
- ★ **Consider Author** - Is there a certain author whose writing you have enjoyed? Are any of their other books on the list?
- ★ **Stay Open-Minded** - Is there a book that you might not usually select, but that someone has recommended or that has caught your attention? Try it! You may always switch if the book does not work for you.
- ★ **Select a “Just right” book**- we encourage readers to choose books by **interest**, because if you are interested in a text, you will be more likely to do the work to understand the story and its meaning. However, be mindful if a text is too difficult for you to understand. Be willing to put it down and say, “I’ll try this one again in a few months!” Your teachers will support you with this work throughout the school year

Strath Haven Middle School Language Arts Book Options Grades 6-8

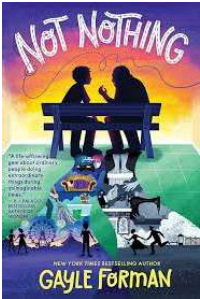
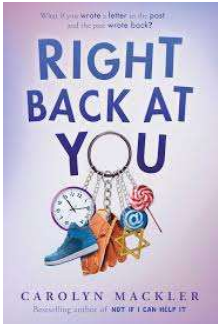
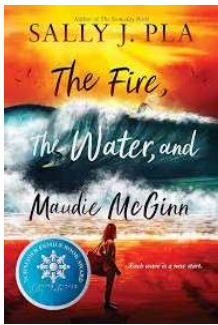
2026-2027 Mount Laurel Book Award Nomination Middle Grades List sponsored by the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association

Book Title & Author & Publication Year	Description	Genre & Notes
<p><i>All the Blues in the Sky</i> Renee Watson Published in 2025</p> 	<p>A novel in verse and prose. Sage's thirteenth birthday was supposed to be about movies and treats, staying up late with her best friend and watching the sunrise together. Instead, it was the day her best friend died. Without the person she had to hold her secrets and dream with, Sage is lost. In a counseling group with other girls who have lost someone close to them, she learns that not all losses are the same, and healing isn't predictable. There is sadness, loneliness, anxiety, guilt, pain, love. And even as Sage grieves, new, good things enter her life—and she just may find a way to know that she can feel it all.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Realistic Fiction</p>
<p><i>All the Ways to Go</i> Jessie Janowitz Published in 2024</p> 	<p>Milo Bloom, chess prodigy, has a secret: he doesn't want to play chess anymore. So he blows a major tournament on purpose instead of telling anyone. If no one knows he wants to quit, then no one can be disappointed.</p> <p>The problem is, winning that tournament was a ticket to chess camp, and the loss means his summer plans are shot. Enter Roxie, a girl he's never met, who shows up at his door to tell him he and his mom will be spending the summer at her house. Surprise! Before Milo knows what's hit him, he's living at Roxie's house, where creepy cats rule, meat products are banned, and Roxie, who doesn't seem to understand the concept of personal space, won't give him a second alone.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Realistic Fiction</p>
<p><i>Bye Forever, I guess</i> Jodi Meadows Published in 2025</p> 	<p>Thirteen-year-old Ingrid's been living a double life. At school, she's the Girl With Dead Parents, her popular friend Rachel's charity case. Online, things are different: she crushes it in her favorite MMORPG, geeks out in her favorite fantasy fandom, and runs a popular social media account. If only real life were that easy. But when Ingrid finally stands up to Rachel and "starts drama," it suddenly feels like she has no life at <i>all</i> . . . and nowhere to sit at lunch.</p> <p>Until she gets a supersweet wrong-number text from a mystery boy at her school, and everything starts to go right. Spending time together playing Ancient Tomes Online as "Stitches" and "Traveler" makes her feel like she's really <i>connecting</i> with someone. But when she begins to suspect that Traveler may be a popular classmate who is WAY above her in the cool-kid food chain—and whose original text was actually intended for <i>Rachel</i>—she faces a difficult choice.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Realistic Fiction</p>
<p><i>History Smashers: Salem Witch Trials</i> Kate Messner Published in 2024</p>	<p>In 1692, a few paranoid Puritans accused their neighbors of being witches, sending the town flying off the (broomstick) handle. Before it was all over, dozens of women in Salem, Massachusetts were executed—burned at the stake. RIGHT?</p> <p>WRONG! There was some serious witch worry, but no one in the United</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Nonfiction</p>


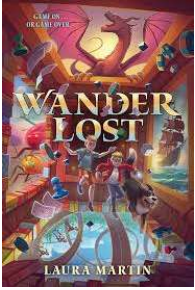

Please Note: As children mature, book content does as well. It is recommended that parents/guardians review student book choices.

	<p>States was put on a pyre (though the truth isn't much better). And women weren't the only ones caught in crossfire...maybe don't read this one aloud to your dog.</p> <p>What <i>really</i> happened? The truth is historians aren't totally sure. But it is certain that religious beliefs, a changing world, and a few <i>super</i> nosy neighbors collided to spell disaster for one New England town. No joke!</p>	
<p>Isle of Ever Jen Calonita Published in 2025</p> 	<p>Everly "Benny" Benedict and her mom have always managed to get by, though they're broke most of the time. But all that could change. Benny's just learned she's the sole heir to the vast fortune of Evelyn Terry, a mysterious ancestor from the 1800s!</p> <p>There's a catch, though. First Benny needs to play—and win—a game: following clues that are more than a century old, she must find her way to the tiny island Evelyn wrote about in her diary. It was somewhere off the shoreline of Evelyn's home town, but according to legend, it vanished long ago and hasn't appeared on maps for hundreds of years. Yet Benny has only a couple weeks to locate it.</p> <p>If she's successful, she'll collect the inheritance. But what if there's more than a fortune at stake in this game? What if Benny has to break an ancient curse to win?</p>	<p>Fantasy</p>
<p>It Watches in the Dark Jeff Strand Published in 2024</p> 	<p>Twins Oliver and Trisha love going on adventures with their dad. Canoeing and camping on the Champion River will be their best trip yet! But when they capsize in rapids, their father is knocked unconscious. Alone and without cell phone reception, their only choice is to continue down river for help.</p> <p>Hours of paddling brings them to an old dock, and a narrow path leads them to a small village. The townspeople are kind and helpful, but strangely focused on the giant scarecrow in the village square. "He watches over us," the twins are told in whispers. "He keeps us safe."</p> <p>An old woman warns the twins not to spend the night in the village. Not if they ever want to leave. But with the sun soon to set and their father not well enough to be moved, how can they escape? More importantly, can they survive?</p>	<p>Thriller</p>
<p>Keeping Pace Laurie Morrison Published in 2024</p> 	<p>Grace has been working for years to beat her former friend Jonah Perkins's GPA so she can be named top scholar of the eighth grade. But when Jonah beats her for the title, it feels like none of Grace's academic accomplishments have really mattered.</p> <p>They weren't enough to win or to impress her dad. And then the wide, empty summer looms. With nothing planned and no more goals or checklists, she doesn't know what she's supposed to be working toward.</p> <p>Eager for something to occupy her days, Grace signs up for a half-marathon race that she and Jonah used to talk about running together. Jonah's running it, too. Maybe if she can beat Jonah on race day, she'll feel OK again. But as she begins training with Jonah and checking off a new list of summer goals, she starts to question what and who really matters to her. Is winning at all costs really worth it?</p>	<p>Realistic Fiction</p>

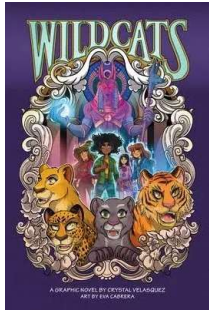
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<p>Not Nothing Gayle Foreman Published in 2025</p> 	<p>Alex is twelve, and he did something very, very bad. A judge sentences him to spend his summer volunteering at a retirement home where he's bossed around by an annoying and self-important do-gooder named Maya-Jade. He hasn't seen his mom in a year, his aunt and uncle don't want him, and Shady Glen's geriatric residents seem like zombies to him.</p> <p>Josey is 107 and ready for his life to be over. He has evaded death many times, having survived ghettos, dragnets, and a concentration camp—all thanks to the heroism of a woman named Olka and his own ability to sew. But now he spends his days in room 206 at Shady Glen, refusing to speak and waiting (and waiting and waiting) to die. Until Alex knocks on Josey's door...and Josey begins to tell Alex his story.</p> <p>As Alex comes back again and again to hear more, an unlikely bond grows between them. Soon a new possibility opens up for Alex: Can he rise to the occasion of his life, even if it means confronting the worst thing that he's ever done?</p>	<p>Historical Fiction</p>
<p>Right Back at You Carolyn Mackler Published in 2025</p> 	<p>Mason lives in 2023. His parents have just split up, and there's a guy at school who won't get off his case. As part of an assignment, he writes a letter to Albert Einstein and it ends up getting a little too personal. He throws the letter into his closet...</p> <p>...and the next day he gets a letter back from a girl named Talia, who lives in 1987. She has problems of her own, including classmates who make jokes because she's Jewish. She thought her friends would have her back. But it ends up the only person she really has to talk to is... a random boy from the future?</p> <p>In the tradition of such beloved novels as <i>When You Reach Me</i> and <i>Save Me a Seat</i>, Carolyn Mackler has written a funny, all-too-relatable story about finding the friend you need... even if that friend happens to live in another year.</p>	<p>Realistic Fiction</p>
<p>The Fire, The water, and Maudie McGinn Sally Pla Published in 2024</p> 	<p>Maudie always looks forward to the summers she spends in California with her dad. But this year, she must keep a troubling secret about her home life—one that her mom warned her never to tell. Maudie wants to confide in her dad about her stepdad's anger, but she's scared.</p> <p>When a wildfire strikes, Maudie and her dad are forced to evacuate to the beach town where he grew up. It's another turbulent wave of change. But now, every morning, from their camper, Maudie can see surfers bobbing in the water. She desperately wants to learn, but could she ever be brave enough?</p> <p>As Maudie navigates unfamiliar waters, she makes friends—and her autism no longer feels like the big deal her mom makes it out to be. But her secret is still threatening to sink her. Will Maudie find the strength to reveal the awful truth—and maybe even find some way to stay with Dad—before summer is over?</p>	<p>Realistic Fiction</p>
<p>The Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman Gennifer Choldenko Published in 2024</p>	<p>When eleven-year-old Hank's mom doesn't come home, he takes care of his toddler sister, Boo, like he always does. But it's been a week now. They are out of food and mom has never stayed away this long... Hank knows he needs help, so he and Boo seek out the stranger listed as their</p>	<p>Realistic Fiction</p>

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	<p>emergency contact.</p> <p>But asking for help has consequences. It means social workers, and a new school, and having to answer questions about his mom that he's been trying to keep secret. And if they can't find his mom soon, Hank and Boo may end up in different foster homes--he could lose everything.</p> <p>Gennifer Choldenko has written a heart-wrenching, healing, and ultimately hopeful story about how complicated family can be. About how you can love someone, even when you can't rely on them. And about the transformative power of second chances.</p>	
<p>Wander Lost Laura Martin Published in 2026</p> 	<p>Rhett and his brother, Nash, have never been allowed to play board games. It's their mom's most important rule; the twins don't know why, but they know not to push her on it.</p> <p>When their mom suddenly disappears, they're reunited with Ace, their long-lost grandfather, who reveals that their family is descended from a board game character who escaped his game and lived in the real world. Their family now has the ability to enter the world of any game they want—but this gift also comes with a price. A game character who's wanted revenge against their mom for decades has finally caught her and is holding her hostage in the world of a game. Which game? That's up to Rhett and Nash to figure out, even if it means breaking Mom's most important rule.</p> <p>But as they learn to use their newly discovered ability, exploring new worlds and facing new challenges and risks, the brothers quickly realize that saving Mom won't be all fun and games. It's game on... or game over.</p>	<p>Fantasy</p>
<p>Westfallen Ann and Brad Brashares Published in 2025</p> 	<p>Henry, Frances, and Lukas are neighbors, and they used to be best friends. But in middle school Frances got emo, Lukas went to private school, and Henry just felt left behind. When they come together again for the funeral of a pet gerbil, the three ex-friends make a mind-blowing discovery: a radio, buried in Henry's backyard, that allows them to talk to another group of kids in the same town...in the same backyard...eighty years in the past.</p> <p>The kids in 1944 want to know about the future: Are there laser guns? Flying cars? Jetpacks, at least? Most of all, they want to know about the outcome of the world war their dad and brothers are fighting in. Though Henry is cautious—he's seen movies about what happens when you disrupt the fabric of time—soon the present-day kids are sending their new friends on a mission to rescue a doomed candy store. What harm could that do? But one change leads to another, and when the six friends alter history in the biggest way possible, it's up to them to change it back.</p>	<p>Historical fiction and science fiction</p>
<p>Wildcats Crystal Velasquez Published in 2025</p>	<p>As Mina struggles to navigate the cliques of her new school she is taken under the wing of Miss Benitez, a mysterious but kind history teacher. She tells Mina and three other girls—Lin, Ana, and Shani—that their families gifted the priceless objects housed in the school's museum. Ms. Benitez thinks it's important that the girls understand their ancestry.</p> <p>It turns out that Ms. Benitez is the curator of the museum, and it sits on top of a mysterious temple, the ancient meeting place of a dangerous group called the Brotherhood of Chaos. When one of the priceless</p>	<p>Graphic Novel</p>

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objects is shattered, the girls find out exactly why their heritage is so important: it gives them the power to turn into wildcats. Now, in the form of a jaguar, a tiger, a puma, and a lion, they must work together to fight the chaos spirits that were unleashed when the object was shattered... and uncover the terrifying plans of those who want to resurrect the Brotherhood of Chaos.

Will's Race for Home

Jewell Parker Rhodes
Published in 2025



It's 1889, barely twenty-five years after the Emancipation Proclamation, and a young Black family is tired of working on land they don't get to own.

So when Will and his father hear about an upcoming land rush, they set out on a journey from Texas to Oklahoma, racing thousands of others to the place where land is free—if they can get to it fast enough. But the journey isn't easy—the terrain is rough, the bandits are brutal, and every interaction carries a heavy undercurrent of danger.

And then there's the stranger they encounter and befriend: a mysterious soldier named Caesar, whose Union emblem brings more attention—and more trouble—than any of them need.

All three are propelled by the promise of something long denied to them: freedom, land ownership, and a place to call home—but is a strong will enough to get them there?

**Historical
Fiction**