

Sayre Middle School Summer Reading and Writing Assignments Packet

Rising 5th through Rising 8th Grades

Summer 2026

Why summer reading and writing?

Summer reading has many benefits. It encourages students to develop reading as a lifelong habit and helps them retain their skills. Reading together as a family provides an opportunity for discussion and bonding. Finally, by completing summer reading and writing assignments, students arrive in August having built a strong foundation for the school year.

About this packet

This packet contains instructions for summer reading and writing assignments for 5th through 8th grades. At the end of the packet are a list of helpful hints, pacing guides, and an annotation guide compiled by the Academic Services team.

Where to find these books

- These titles can all be purchased from Joseph Beth Booksellers or Amazon.
- You may borrow ebook and audiobook versions from the Sayre Library via the Sora app using your Sayre credentials (your Gmail username and password).
- You may also borrow print books, ebooks, and audiobooks from the public library.
- If you have an account on Learning Ally, all of these titles are available except *Penny Draws a Best Friend* by Sara Shepard.

Rising 5th Grade

Rising 5th graders should read a total of two books.

- Required:
  - *Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales: One Dead Spy* by Nathan Hale
- Choose one from the following list:
  - *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander
  - *The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl* by Stacy McAnulty
  - *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate
  - *Penny Draws a Best Friend* by Sara Shepard
  - *Restart* by Gordon Korman

Rising 5th graders should also complete the following assignment by Thursday, August 6. Submit a Word doc, Google doc, or PDF via email to Mrs. Heil (mheil@sayreschool.org) and Ms. Calzini (kcalzini@sayreschool.org) with the subject line "[Lastname] 5th Grade Summer Reading Assignment."

- Pick one page from *Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales: One Dead Spy* by Nathan Hale that stood out to you for one of these reasons: Was it exciting, tension-filled, suspenseful, shocking, or informative?

- Write a 150-200 word paragraph to explain how the text and graphics on that one page work together to create that effect on you as the reader.
- Use as much detail as possible: names of the characters, quotes from the text, specific parts of the illustrations.
- When you submit the assignment, make sure you include a picture or a scan of the page that you wrote about.

Rising 6th Grade
Rising 6th graders should read and annotate this book. Please consult the guide at the end of this packet for instructions on how to annotate.

- *Refugee* by Alan Gratz

Rising 6th graders should also complete the following assignment by Thursday, August 6. Submit a Word doc, Google doc, or PDF via email to Mr. McGinley (cmcginley@sayreschool.org) with the subject line "[Lastname] 6th Grade Summer Reading Assignment."

Assignment:
In **three separate paragraphs** of **at least 100 words each**, discuss the reasons that Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud's families leave their homes. What are the situations in each of their lives that force them to flee? How are their situations similar and how are they different?

Also, do some quick research into refugee communities in Kentucky. Create a list of three bullet points about what refugee communities exist in Kentucky. From what countries do they come and why have they fled their homeland?

Rising 7th Grade
Rising 7th graders should read and annotate this book. Please consult the guide at the end of this packet for instructions on how to annotate

- *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins

Rising 7th graders should also complete the following assignment by Thursday, August 6. Submit a Word doc, Google doc, or PDF via email to both Mr. McGinley (cmcginley@sayreschool.org) and Ms. Tucker (mtucker@sayreschool.org) with the subject line "[Lastname] 7th Grade Summer Reading Assignment."

Choose one of the following prompts and **submit 3 well-written paragraphs** with a minimum of 300 words total.

- Analyze the significance of the mockingjay symbol. How does its meaning change throughout the story? Give evidence from the novel.
- The novel presents several examples of sacrifice. Choose a character who makes sacrifices and explain how his/her actions develop the ideas of love, loyalty, and/or survival. Give evidence through specific examples from the novel.
- How does Katniss Everdeen change emotionally and psychologically from the beginning to the end of The Hunger Games? Describe the key experiences that contribute to her transformation.
- Analyze how the author develops the ideas of survival versus morality. At what points are characters forced to choose between staying alive and doing what is morally right? Explain and give evidence from the novel.
- Analyze the role of hope in the novel. Why might hope be considered dangerous to the Capitol, and how do certain characters inspire hope in others? Explain and give evidence from the novel.

Rising 8th Grade

Rising 8th graders should read and annotate this book. Please consult the guide at the end of this packet for instructions on how to annotate.

- *Hidden Figures* (Young Readers' Edition) by Margot Lee Shetterly.

Rising 8th graders should also complete the following assignment by Thursday, August 6. Submit a Word doc, Google doc, or PDF via email to Ms. Tucker (mtucker@sayreschool.org) with the subject line "[Lastname] 8th Grade Summer Reading Assignment."

Choose **3** of the following questions to answer in **three complete, 7+ sentence paragraphs (150 words or more each)** with specific examples from the text. **Submit three well-written paragraphs answering 1 specific question of your choice in each paragraph.**

- How did racism and sexism combine to create challenges for the women in the book? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
- Which female mathematician demonstrated the greatest perseverance? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
- How does the author show the importance of education throughout the book? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
- In what ways did the women help change society beyond NASA? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
- How might history be different if these women had not contributed their talents? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
- What role did courage play in these women's accomplishments? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
- Which woman's story inspired you the most and why? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Helpful Hints for Summer Reading

From the Academic Services Team

- **Use the annotations anchor chart below to practice close reading**
    - **Hint: you will use this annotation style in your classes next year!**

- **If you find it helpful, follow the pacing guides at the very end of this packet.**

Things to think about as you read:

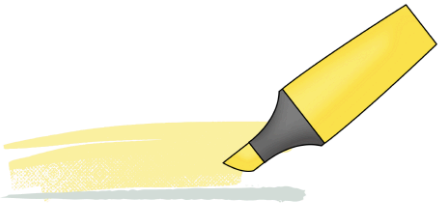
1. Feel free to read silently, listen to the audiobook, or partner read with someone in your family. If you choose to partner read, challenge yourself to build stamina each week. (For example: start by taking turns reading paragraphs, then move to a full page, then a chapter).

2. Pause every two pages to work on your annotations in the book.

3. Keep a journal or use a post–it to write brief chapter summaries. Words, phrases, bulleted lists–anything that will help spark your memory about what you read!

4. Wiggle the pacing guides around a bit to suit your summer schedule. For example: if you won't have time to read one week because of camp, add extra pages to the previous week.

Annotations

	Important Points, Key Details, and Main Ideas
	Something Is Confusing
	That's Surprising!
	Circle Words You Do Not Know (and Should)
	Underline or Highlight Things to Remember
	Write in the Margins: • Summaries • Questions • Personal Connections • Thoughts • Definitions

Pacing Guide for *Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales: One Dead Spy*

Week	Pages to Read
Week of June 1	6-17
Week of June 8	18-29
Week of June 15	30-41
Week of June 22	42-53
Week of June 29	54-65
Week of July 6	66-77
Week of July 13	78-89
Week of July 20	90-101
Week of July 27	102-113
Week of August 3	114-127

Pacing Guide for *Refugee*

Week	Pages to Read
Week of June 1	1-39
Week of June 8	40-80
Week of June 15	81-120
Week of June 22	121-163
Week of June 29	164-202
Week of July 6	203-242
Week of July 13	243-284
Week of July 20	285-324
Week of July 27	325-338
Week of August 3	Review your annotations + complete writing assignment

Pacing Guide for *The Hunger Games*

Week	Chapters to Read
Week of June 1	1-3
Week of June 8	4-6
Week of June 15	7-9
Week of June 22	10-12
Week of June 29	13-15
Week of July 6	16-18
Week of July 13	19-21
Week of July 20	22-24
Week of July 27	25-27
Week of August 3	Review annotations + complete writing assignment

Pacing Guide for *Hidden Figures* (Young Readers' Edition)

Week	Chapters to Read
Week of June 1	Timeline 227-229, Glossary 231-233, Prologue, & Chapters 1-2
Week of June 8	3 - 5
Week of June 15	6 - 8
Week of June 22	9 -10
Week of June 29	11 - 13
Week of July 6	14 - 15
Week of July 13	16 - 18
Week of July 20	19 - 21
Week of July 27	22 - 23
Week of August 3	Write 3 paragraphs in response to the 3 questions you chose. Be sure to use the evidence you annotated in the book while reading.