



Summer Reading  
2026  
David E. Owens Middle School  
New Milford, New Jersey



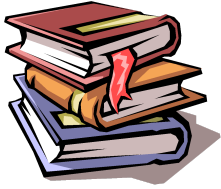
*Summer is a time that should find us looking forward to reading and remembering that a good book can be fun as well as informative. David E. Owens Middle School encourages all students and their families to engage in reading together this summer by exploring literature of all kinds. Research has shown that students who read during the summer months retain more learning and move into the new school year more prepared than do students who do not engage in reading. We want students to build time during the day to read independently. By encouraging students to read independently over the summer, we support the goal of creating lifelong readers. **Our district mission is to have all students read at least 20 minutes each day this summer.***

*This year's summer reading format allows students to read one required book from a short list, at least one free choice book, and an unlimited number of additional reading choices. By clicking on the appropriate level for next year's grade, students and their families can find information to assist with this selection. Each grade level also includes details about the learning opportunity for the **required** book that will be due in September. Students are encouraged to read all different genres and forms of written expression including newspapers, magazines, fiction, historical fiction, biographies, non-fiction and poetry. **There is no limit on what a student can read this summer---Just Read!***

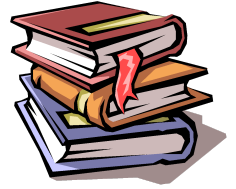
*All students, including those who are new to David E. Owens Middle School are included in the summer reading program and are encouraged to participate fully in it.*

*Enjoy the summer, and be sure to read!*

*Mr. DeLalla  
Principal*

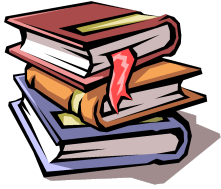


## Summer Reading 7<sup>th</sup> Grade – 2026 Book List

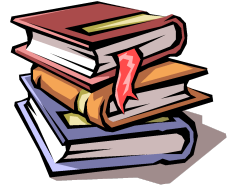


All 7<sup>th</sup> grade students are required to read one of the following books:

- ***Hope Was Here*** by Joan Bauer  
When Hope and her aunt move to small-town Wisconsin to take over the local diner, Hope's not sure what to expect. But what they find is that the owner, G.T., has decided to run for mayor against a corrupt candidate. And as Hope starts to make her place at the diner, she also finds herself caught up in G.T.'s campaign--particularly his visions for the future. After all, as G.T. points out, "everyone can use a little hope to help get through the tough times" . . . even Hope herself.
- ***The Boy on the Wooden Box*** by Leon Leyson  
Leon was only ten years old when the Nazis invaded Poland and his family was forced to relocate to the Krakow ghetto. With incredible luck, perseverance, and grit, Leyson was able to survive the concentration camp outside Krakow. However, it was the generosity and cunning of one man, a man named Oskar Schindler, who saved Leon Leyson's life. By adding his and his family's names to his list of workers in his factory—a list that became world renowned as Schindler's List, many lives were saved.
- ***The Lost Hero*** by Rick Riordan  
After saving Olympus from the evil Titan lord, Kronos, Percy and friends have rebuilt their beloved Camp Half-Blood, where the next generation of demigods must now prepare for a chilling prophecy of their own: Seven half-bloods shall answer the call, To storm or fire the world must fall. An oath to keep with a final breath, And foes bear arms to the Doors of Death. Now, in a brand-new series from blockbuster best-selling author Rick Riordan, fans return to the world of Camp Half-Blood. Here, a new group of heroes will inherit a quest. But to survive the journey, they'll need the help of some familiar demigods.
- ***So B.It*** by Sarah Weeks  
Heidi knows her mom loves her, but because of her mother's mental disability, she is unable to care for herself or her daughter. Their loving neighbor, Bernadette, helps out and is a vital part of their family. Bernadette finally manages to teach Mama how to open cans, but tying shoes is beyond her capabilities. Mama can't read or tell time. She knows 23 words. One of Mama's words, "soof," is a mystery --- no one knows what it means, and Mama is unable to define it. This word in her mother's vocabulary begins to haunt her, and Heidi's thirst for the truth leads her on a cross-country journey in search of the secrets of her past.



## Summer Reading 7<sup>th</sup> grade – 2026 Assignment



After reading the novel of their choice during the summer all students are required to write a letter regarding their experience with the book. Their letter should be addressed to a parent, or other guardian, following the format outlined below. These letters will be graded.

### Format

#### Your letter

- Each letter must follow the proper letter writing conventions
- Must be 1 ½ to 2 pages
- Must be typed (Times New Roman, 12 pt font, double spaced)
- Include the title of the book (underlined) and author's name
- Must be at least 5 paragraphs long
- Write about your feelings, thoughts, reactions, characters, settings, symbols, theme, and any other elements of the book that interest you
- Do NOT merely retell the plot

You must use at least 4 of the following lead-ins in your body paragraphs:

- I really like/dislike the idea of \_\_\_\_\_ because...
- This character reminds me of...
- This character reminds me of myself because...
- This setting is important because...
- This scene reminds me of a similar scene in (title of the book) because...
- This part is very realistic/unrealistic because...
- My favorite chapter of this book is \_\_\_\_\_ because...
- I think the relationship between (character) and (character) is interesting because...
- I like/dislike this character (name) because...

## Friendly Letter Rubric

| CATEGORY                                    | 4                                                                                                                      | 3                                                                                                                                                     | 2                                                                                                                              | 1                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Proper Letter Format</b>                 | Uses proper letter format, including a Salutation (greeting) and closing. See example below.                           | Mostly uses proper letter format, including a Salutation (greeting) and closing. Some errors with formatting may appear.                              | Attempts to use proper letter format, although a Salutation (greeting) and/or closing may be missing.                          | Does not use letter format. No greeting or closing present.                                                                 |
| <b>Ideas</b>                                | Ideas were expressed in a clear and organized fashion. It was easy to figure out what the letter was about.            | Ideas were expressed in a pretty clear manner, but the organization could have been better.                                                           | Ideas were somewhat organized, but were not very clear. It took more than one reading to figure out what the letter was about. | The letter seemed to be a collection of unrelated sentences. It was very difficult to figure out what the letter was about. |
| <b>Sentences &amp; Paragraphs</b>           | Sentences and paragraphs are complete, well constructed and of varied structure. Each new idea starts a new paragraph. | All sentences are complete and well constructed (no fragments, no run ons). Paragraphing is generally done well. Most new ideas start new paragraphs. | Most sentences are complete and well constructed. Paragraphing needs some work. Some new ideas start new paragraphs.           | Many sentence fragments or run-on sentences OR paragraphing needs lots of work. All ideas are grouped into one paragraph.   |
| <b>Grammar &amp; Spelling (conventions)</b> | Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling.                                                                         | Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar and/or spelling.                                                                                                   | Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar and/or spelling                                                                             | Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar and/or spelling.                                                                 |
| <b>Capitalization and Punctuation</b>       | Writer makes no errors in capitalization and punctuation.                                                              | Writer makes 1-2 errors in capitalization and punctuation.                                                                                            | Writer makes 3-4 errors in capitalization and punctuation.                                                                     | Writer makes more than 4 errors in capitalization and punctuation.                                                          |

## SAMPLE LETTER FORMAT

### Your Name

123 Your Street  
Your City, ST 12345  
(123) 456-7890  
no\_reply@example.com

4th September 20XX

Dear Mom/Dad (pick one!),

This is a sample introduction paragraph. Here is where you will GREET the person you're writing to - ask about their summer, how things are going, etc, and let them know how you've been doing as well - remember, this is a personal letter). THEN, tell the person you're writing the letter to what book you read, who the author was, and what you thought about the book AS A WHOLE.

Here is your first body paragraph. Pick one element of the novel to discuss (a part you really liked, a character you related to, etc) - discuss IN DETAIL why you feel the way you do about this element.

Here is your second body paragraph. Pick one element of the novel to discuss (a part you really liked, a character you related to, etc) - discuss IN DETAIL why you feel the way you do about this element.

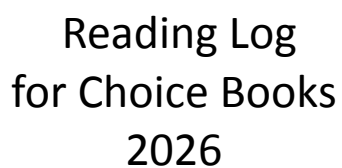
Here is your third body paragraph. Pick one element of the novel to discuss (a part you really liked, a character you related to, etc) - discuss IN DETAIL why you feel the way you do about this element.

Here is your concluding paragraph. Summarize here your overall reaction to the book (please do NOT just repeat your introduction - be sure to add something new).

Sincerely, (sign your name here)

### Your Name

NOTE: The above letter consists of five paragraphs - that is the MINIMUM requirement. Your letter should be 1 ½ to 2 full pages in length. You can, of course, include more than 3 body paragraphs in your letter - each time you discuss a different element of your novel, you should start a new paragraph.



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