



2026 SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT FOR ALL INCOMING 7TH GRADERS

Summer reading is an important way to keep your reading skills sharp and fresh, and prepare you for the exciting literary adventures that await you in the 8th grade. However, summer reading is also about the joy of discovering new worlds, meeting fascinating characters, and getting lost in a good book. So, while this assignment will help you maintain and enhance your reading abilities, it's also an opportunity to explore new genres, authors, and ideas, and to have fun!

Here's what you need to do:

- 1.) Review the following [book list](#) carefully - it contains a diverse assortment of texts and should contain at least one title that speaks to your personal interests.
- 2.) Select ONE text from the list and obtain a copy from the library, a local bookseller (like JosephBeth), or an online retailer (like Amazon).
- 3.) Read the book in its entirety.
- 4.) Complete the [Summer Reading Graphic Organizer](#) that asks you to provide important information about the text, as well as your rating/review of it.
 - a.) If you can print it out, you can write your answers on the printed document
 - b.) If you can't print, [open this PDF version](#) and use Kami to annotate it/type your answers.
 - c.) Or you could [make a copy of the Google Doc](#) and type your answers on that. Be sure to rename the document with your last name and remember where you save it!
- 5.) Bring your completed Graphic Organizer (and your copy of the book - if you purchased it) with you on the 1st day of school (**Wednesday, August 20th**).

During the first week of the school year, you will meet with classmates who read the same book/same genre text and discuss your impressions.

I will check my email weekly over the summer, so feel free to send me a message with any questions (smythmi@cpsboe.k12.oh.us).

ENJOY SUMMER!! - Mr. Smyth

SPENCER CENTER FOR GIFTED AND EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

7TH GRADE SUMMER READING LIST

ADVENTURE

Bowling, Dusti. *Across the Desert*

Travel enthusiast Jolene uses the library computers to watch the livestream adventures of another twelve-year-old, Addie Earhart, who explores the Arizona deserts in an ultralight plane as "The Desert Aviator." While watching her livestream one day, Jolene sees Addie crash-land her plane and decides to use her knowledge of map-making and desert topography to find her.

Wallace, Brandon. *Wilder Boys*

After their father disappears, Jake and Taylor Wilder begin taking care of themselves, as their mother is too busy juggling them and her boyfriend, Bull. Jake and Taylor like spending time outdoors, especially with their dog, Cody. One night they discover a dangerous secret about Bull, one that hurts their mother. With nowhere else to go, Jake, Taylor, and Cody head out into the wilderness to search for their father.

Craighead, Jean. *My Side of the Mountain*

Imagine running away from it all—no parents, no school, no crowded city, just you, a mountain, and a treehouse to call home. For 12-year-old Sam Gibley, this dream becomes reality as he leaves NYC to live in the Catskills. With only a pocketknife, a few tools, and a falcon named Frightful, Sam learns to survive the wild.

HISTORICAL FICTION

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Fever, 1793*

It is August 1793, and in Philadelphia, the capital of the new United States, fourteen-year-old Mattie Cook wants to turn the family coffeehouse into the finest business in the city. Meanwhile, fever is spreading quickly from the docks and into the city. Suddenly, Mattie's struggle to build a better life becomes a struggle to stay alive!

Williams Garcia, Rita. *One Crazy Summer*

It's 1968, and 11-year-old Delphine is responsible for her two younger sisters on a plane to California to meet the mother who abandoned them. Instead of a California dream, they get a cold shoulder and a "summer camp" run by the radical Black Panthers. This funny and powerful story about family secrets, unexpected bravery, and finding your voice during a revolution is a must-read.

Collier, Tim and Christopher. *My Brother Sam is Dead*

Imagine having to choose between your dad and your brother when they are on opposite sides of a brutal war. For Tim Meeker, the American Revolution isn't just about independence—it's about survival. While his brother Sam fights for glory, Tim is stuck in the middle, realizing that war is less about heroes and more about watching your family fall apart.

MYSTERY

Delany, Rachelle. *Clara Voyant*

Clara can't believe her no-nonsense grandmother has just up and moved to Florida, leaving Clara and her mother on their own for the first time. When a mystery unfolds at school, she finds herself in a strange

situation: having an opportunity to prove herself as an investigative journalist . . . with the help of her mystical powers.

Frederick, Heather Vogel. *Absolutely Truly*

Unusually tall 12-year-old Truly Lovejoy moves with her family to the tiny town of Pumpkin Falls, New Hampshire, and uncovers a mysterious letter in an old book at her family's bookstore that leads her and her friends on a dangerous treasure hunt around town.

Konigsburg, E.L. *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* Imagine running away from home to live in the world's most luxurious hiding spot: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. When 12-year-old Claudia Kincaid and her brother, Jamie, escape their boring suburb, they outwit security guards, sleep in an antique bed, and bathe in a fountain. But their adventure turns into a high-stakes mystery when they try to uncover the secret of a priceless statue possibly created by Michelangelo.

REALISTIC FICTION:

Saeed, Aisha. *Amal Unbound*

Life is quiet in Amal's Pakistani village, but she had no complaints, and besides, she's busy pursuing her dream of becoming a teacher one day. Her dreams are temporarily dashed when--as the eldest daughter--she must stay home from school to take care of her siblings. Then the unimaginable happens--after an accidental run-in with the son of her village's corrupt landlord, Amal must work as his family's servant to pay off her own family's debt.

Sloan, Holly Goldberg. *The Elephant in the Room*

Missing her mother who has returned to Turkey to resolve an immigration problem, sixth-grader Sila welcomes a very large distraction in her life when she helps a surprising new friend rescue a circus elephant.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Before the Ever After*

For as long as ZJ can remember, his dad has been everyone's hero. As a charming, talented pro football star, he's as beloved to the neighborhood kids he plays with as he is to his millions of adoring sports fans. But lately life at ZJ's house is anything but charming. His dad is having trouble remembering things and seems to be angry all the time.

SCIENCE FICTION

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Found (The Missing, Book 1)*

Thirteen-year-old Johan and Chip, who are both adopted, learn they were discovered in a plane that appeared out of nowhere, full of babies with no adults on board. They realize they are in the middle of a mystery involving time travel and two opposing forces that are trying to repair the fabric of time.

Holm, Jennifer L. *The Lion of Mars*

Eleven-year-old Mars colonist Bell, lives with his American family in a self-sustaining, but isolated community. Warned numerous times by the adults not to interact with colonies from other countries, Bell has obeyed, content with caring for his cat and eating cake. When the adults suddenly get sickened with

an unknown ailment, Bell and the other kids living in the community must decide how important breaking the rules are in order to survive.

Madeleine L'Engle *A Wrinkle in Time*

Meg Murry is a misfit at school, but she's about to travel through the cosmos to save her father from the ultimate evil. Joined by her genius little brother and friend Calvin, Meg must "tesser" (fold space and time) to fight a darkness threatening the universe. Get ready for a cosmic adventure about courage, friendship, and embracing what makes you different

SPORTS

Lupica, Mike. *Heat*

Pitching prodigy Michael Arroyo is on the run from social services after being banned from playing Little League baseball because rival coaches doubt he is only twelve years old, and he has no parents to offer them proof.

Reynolds, Jason. *Ghost*

Ghost, a naturally talented runner and troublemaker, is recruited for an elite middle school track team. He must stay on track literally and figuratively, to reach his full potential.

FANTASY

Bardugo, Leigh. *Shadow and Bone*

Orphaned Alina Starkov never expected much from life, until a deadly attack in the war-torn Shadow Fold reveals a dormant power she never knew she possessed. As the legendary Sun Summoner, she is thrust into a world of magic, dangerous royal intrigue, and a dark, seductive leader who might be her ruin.

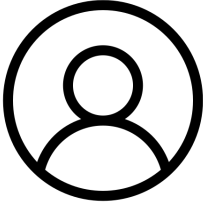
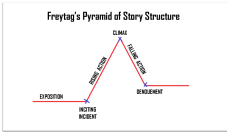
Pratchett, Terry. *Wee Free Men*

Armed with only a frying pan, a sharp mind, and a book on sheep diseases, nine-year-old Tiffany Aching must save her little brother from the Queen of the Fairies. In this hilarious adventure, she teams up with the Nac Mac Feegle—tiny, blue, sword-wielding men who love to fight, drink, and steal. It's a fast-paced, witty, and empowering coming-of-age story that turns fairy tales on their head

Lewis, C.S. *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*

Four siblings, one old wardrobe, and a world trapped in eternal winter. When Lucy steps through the fur coats, she discovers Narnia—a land of talking beasts, epic battles, and a terrifying witch. With Edmund, Peter, and Susan joining her, they must team up with the majestic lion Aslan to break the curse.

**SPENCER CENTER
7TH GRADE SUMMER READING
GRAPHIC ORGANIZER**

STUDENT NAME:			
AUTHOR:		TITLE:	
 MAJOR CHARACTERS	(include brief descriptions of personality, appearance, etc.) ★ ★ ★ ★ ★		
 SETTING	TIME	PLACE	
	(describe qualities of the time period the story is set in)	(describe features of the physical location(s) the story is set in)	
 CONFLICT	MAIN CONFLICT	MINOR CONFLICTS	
	Is the MAIN CONFLICT resolved by the end of the story? If so, what is the outcome? Who or what is responsible for resolving it?		
 PLOT	Provide 5 important plot points (events) from each section of the text		
	Beginning (1st 1/3 of book)	Middle (2nd 1/3 of book)	End (last 1/3 of book)
	1.)	1.)	1.)
	2.)	2.)	2.)
	3.)	3.)	3.)
	4.)	4.)	4.)
	5.)	5.)	5.)

PLEASE RATE THIS BOOK ON THE FOLLOWING:

	AWESOME! 	VERY GOOD 	GOOD 	MEH 	BOO! 
Plot Development					
Character Development					
Setting Development					
Author's Writing/ Language Use					
OVERALL					
Provide a 2-3 sentence explanation for your "OVERALL" rating:					

On a separate sheet of paper/document **handwrite or type** a letter to me featuring your deep thinking about the novel you read. I do not want a summary of the book and will take off points if too much is summary.

Ideas for deep thinking...

Share thoughts/ opinions about characters or plot or topic.

Share connections you have

Share some things the writer did well or some things you didn't like about the text.

Share your questions or things you are wondering about.

More questions

- What are the characters like? (personality, motivations etc..)
- How your thinking is changing about characters or events
- Predictions
- Personal connections
- What do you think about how the author has written the text? (language, organization, character development, etc..)
- Do you think this is a good example of its genre?
- Why do you like it or not like it?
- Who do you think would really enjoy this text? Why?

Use the sample letter to help you.

MUST BE A LETTER: Start with Dear Ms. Rampa. End with "Your student, Name"

Dear Class,

I really liked the book, Last Stop on Market Street. I like the way the book is written for kids and adults. The book tells the story of a young boy, CJ and his Nana that take a trip to the soup kitchen on the book. CJ complains about having to ride the bus and all of the things associated with the bus and city such as the noise, the dirt and the people. His grandmother helps him to see the city in a whole new light by helping him see the beauty and fun of the adventure.

One thing that I really liked was the way the author helps us to see the city in a whole new light. The grandmother always has something positive to say and always sees the happy or bright side of things. I like the way she points out that he would miss the bus driver, who takes out a coin magically from behind his ear. I also like how he gets to hear a man play guitar after he complains about not having an ipod. There is a sense of celebrity status in each of the characters that he creates. It seems that all have magical talents, which lends itself to the theme of recognizing the beauty around us. In a typical situation, these people would seem ordinary, but Matt De la Pena allows us to see people and the world differently through the eyes of the grandmother.

The description of the blind man on the bus is wonderful. She says that he sees with his ears and with his eyes. I thought this was a great way to help me think about a person who is blind. It captures how we can see people's abilities rather than their disabilities.

The pictures in the book seemed flat. I wasn't sure why it won the Caldecott Award for best pictures. There didn't seem to be a special style to me. I liked the way he used the symbol of a rainbow to change the mood of the poem. It seemed to be the turning point of the book for me. CJ was just starting to see things differently.

Sincerely,

Ms. Rampa