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Suggested Summer Reading for Middle School Students

Dear **Students** and **Parents**,

The American novelist George R.R. Martin once said that “*A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only once*”. It is beyond any doubt that reading has a tremendous impact on students’ English language and critical thinking skills, as well as their holistic development as individuals and internationally minded citizens. Because of the value we place on reading, the **English Department** has put together a **Reading List** wherefrom you may select books for your extracurricular reading over the summer:

Ansari, K.S. Rebecca. *The In-Between* (2021)

A dark, twisty adventure about the forgotten among us and what it means to be seen, from the acclaimed author of *The Missing Piece of Charlie O'Reilly*.

Dassu, A.M. *Boy, Everywhere* (2020)

It chronicles the harrowing journey taken by Sami and his family from privilege to poverty, across countries and continents, from a comfortable life in Damascus to a prison in Manchester. A story of survival, of family, of bravery.

Higuera, Donna Barba. *The Last Cuentista* (2021)

The Last Cuentista is a dystopian novel. The story follows Petra Peña who, along with her family and a few hundred others, leave Earth to continue the human race after a comet strikes the planet.

Sachar, Louis. *Holes* (1998)

Dig deep in this award-winning, modern classic that will remind readers that adventure is right around the corner--or just under your feet! Stanley Yelnats is under a curse. A curse that began with his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather and has since



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followed generations of Yelnatses. Now Stanley has been unjustly sent to a boys' detention center, Camp Green Lake...

[Palacio, R.J.](#) *Wonder* (2012)

R. J. Palacio's *Wonder* was inspired by an incident where her son started to cry after noticing a girl with a severe facial deformity. Fearing her son would react badly, Palacio attempted to remove him from the situation so as not to upset the girl and her family but ended up worsening the situation. Natalie Merchant's song of the same name made her realize that the incident could illustrate a valuable lesson

[Malley, Gemma.](#) *The Declaration trilogy* (2008-2010)

The first book in a YA trilogy set in a reproductively dystopian future. Reminiscent of Margaret Atwood and Aldous Huxley, but for teens. It's the year 2140 and Anna shouldn't be alive. Nor should any of the children she lives with at Grange Hall. The facility is full of kids like her, kids whose parents chose to recklessly abuse Mother Nature and have children despite a law forbidding them from doing so as long as they took longevity drugs. To pay back her parents' debt to Mother Nature, Anna will have to work for the rest of her life. But then Peter appears at the hall, and he tells a very different story about the world outside of the Grange. Peter begs Anna to escape Grange Hall, and to claim a life for herself outside its bleak walls. But even if they get out, they still have to make their way to London, to Anna's parents, and to an underground movement that's determined to bring back children and rid the world of longevity drugs.

[Khor, Shing Yun.](#) *The Legend of Auntie Po* (2021)

A national book award finalist, part historical fiction, part fable, and 100 percent adventure. Thirteen-year-old Mei reimagines the myths of Paul Bunyan as starring a Chinese heroine while she works in a Sierra Nevada logging camp in 1885.

[Holiday, Kate Albus.](#) *A Place to Hang the Moon* (2021)

A heartwarming story about three siblings, evacuated from London to live in the countryside, looking for a permanent home--and a new meaning for family.



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[Brown, T. Waka](#). *While I Was Away* (2021)

When twelve-year-old Waka's parents suspect she can't understand the basic Japanese they speak to her, they make a drastic decision to send her to Tokyo to live for several months with her strict grandmother. Forced to say goodbye to her friends and what would have been her summer vacation, Waka is plucked from her straight-A- student life in rural Kansas and flown across the globe, where she faces the culture shock of a lifetime.

[Schlitz, Laura Amy](#). *Amber and Clay* (2021)

The Newbery Medal–winning author of *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!* gives readers a virtuoso performance in verse in this profoundly original epic pitched just right for fans of poetry, history, mythology, and fantasy.

[Sheinkin, Steve](#). *Fallout: Spies, Superbombs, and the Ultimate Cold War Showdown* (2021)

New York Times bestselling author Steve Sheinkin presents a follow up to his award-winning book *Bomb: The Race to Build--and Steal--the World's Most Dangerous Weapon*, taking readers on a terrifying journey into the Cold War and our mutual assured destruction.

[Gibbons, Alan](#). *Shadow of the Minotaur* (2000)

“Real life” or the death defying adventures of the Greek myths, with their heroes and monsters, daring deeds and narrow escapes - which would you choose? For Phoenix it's easy. He hates his new home and the new school where he is bullied. He's embarrassed by his computer geek dad...

[Adams, Douglas](#). *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1978)

Arthur Dent is trying to prevent his house from being bulldozed when his friend Ford Prefect whisks him into outer space. It turns out Ford is an alien who has just saved Arthur from Earth's total annihilation. Ford introduces Arthur to his myriad friends. Arthur makes his way across the stars while seeking the meaning of life, or something close to it.

[Speare, Elizabeth George](#). *The Sign of the Beaver* (1983)

Left alone to guard the family's wilderness home in eighteenth-century Maine, a boy is hard-pressed to survive until local Indians teach him their skills.



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[Rawls, Wilson](#). *Where the Red Fern Grows* (1961)

The story is about a boy who buys two hunting dogs. The book is a work of autobiographical fiction based on Rawls' own childhood in the Ozarks.

[Reynolds, Jason](#). *Long Way Down* (2017)

A novel in free verse that tells the story of an African American teen boy at a crossroads. Determined to avenge his 19-year-old brother's death, Will, age 15, takes his brother's gun out of their shared bedroom to kill the person he's certain is the murderer, but it's a long way down in the elevator.

[Griffin, John](#). *Black Like Me* (1961)

A nonfiction book by journalist John Howard Griffin recounting his journey in the Deep South of the United States, at a time when African Americans lived under racial segregation.

[Frank, Anne](#). *The Diary of a Young Girl* (1947)

The Diary of a Young Girl, also known as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, is a book of the writings from the Dutch-language diary kept by Anne Frank while she was in hiding for two years with her family during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.

[Jordan, Michael](#). *Rare Air* (1993)

In *Rare Air*, a unique photographic autobiography, Michael Jordan opens the doors to his inner sanctum. In his own words, Jordan describes his life as the world's most celebrated sports personality - the pressures and pains, the triumphs and tribulations, the risks and the rewards.

[Bradbury, Ray](#). *The Illustrated Man* (1951)

A collection of 18 science fiction short stories. A recurring theme throughout the stories is the conflict of the cold mechanics of technology and the psychology of people.

[Bradbury, Ray](#). *Dandelion Wine* (1957)

The title refers to a wine made with dandelion petals and other ingredients, commonly citrus fruit. In the story, dandelion wine, as made by the protagonist's grandfather, serves as a



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metaphor for packing all of the joys of summer into a single bottle. The main character of the story is Douglas Spaulding, a 12-year-old boy loosely patterned after Bradbury. Most of the book is focused upon the routines of small-town America, and the simple joys of yesterday.

[King, Stephen](#). *It* (1986)

A horror novel by American author Stephen King. It was his 22nd book and his 17th novel written under his own name. The story follows the experiences of seven children as they are terrorized by an evil entity that exploits the fears of its victims to disguise itself while hunting its prey. "It" primarily appears in the form of Pennywise the Dancing Clown to attract its preferred prey of young children.

[Doyle, Arthur Conan](#). *Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902)

Originally serialised in "The Strand" Magazine from August 1901 to April 1902, it is set largely on Dartmoor in Devon in England's West Country and tells the story of an attempted murder inspired by the legend of a fearsome, diabolical hound of supernatural origin. Holmes and Watson investigate the case.

[Christie, Agatha](#). *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934)

The elegant train of the 1930s, the Orient Express, is stopped by heavy snowfall. A murder is discovered, and Poirot's trip home to London from the Middle East is interrupted to solve the case. The opening chapters of the novel take place in Istanbul. The rest of the novel takes place in Yugoslavia, with the train trapped between Vinkovci and Brod.

[Bell, William](#). *Forbidden City* (1990)

A novel based on the events of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. It is a story of maturation/coming of age.

[Kipling, Rudyard](#). *Kim* (1901)

Kim is a novel by Nobel Prize-winning English author Rudyard Kipling. The story unfolds against the backdrop of the Great Game, the political conflict between Russia and Britain in Central Asia. The novel popularized the phrase and idea of the Great Game.



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[Pullman, Philip](#). *The Golden Compass* a.k.a. *The Northern Lights* (1995)

A fantasy novel set in a parallel universe. It follows the journey of Lyra Belacqua to the Arctic in search of her missing friend, Roger Parslow, and her imprisoned uncle, Lord Asriel, who has been conducting experiments with a mysterious substance known as “Dust”.

[Pratchett, Terry](#). *Mort* (1987)

A fantasy novel - the fourth *Discworld* novel and the first to focus on the character Death, who only appeared as a side character in the previous novels. The title is the name of its main character, and is also a play on words: in French and Catalan, mort means "death".