



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

8th grade – 2026

Book List



All 8th grade students are **required** to read **one** of the following books and complete the assignment using the **REQUIRED** book. Each book on this list corresponds with a unit we study in 8th grade.

Starry Eyes by Jen Bennett

A teen girl's way-too-ordinary life is driven off the beaten path when she's abandoned in the wilderness with her worst adversary—the boy who broke her heart. Ever since last year's homecoming dance, best friends-turned-best enemies Zorie and Lennon have made an art of avoiding each other. It doesn't hurt that their families are the modern day, Californian version of the Montagues and Capulets. But when a group camping trip goes south, Zorie and Lennon find themselves stranded in the wilderness. Alone. Together. What could go wrong? As the two travel deeper into Northern California's rugged backcountry, secrets and hidden feelings surface. But can Zorie and Lennon's rekindled connection survive out in the real world? Or was it just a result of the fresh forest air and the magic of the twinkling stars?

Ten by Gretchen McNeil

Ten teens. Three days. One killer.

It was supposed to be the weekend of their lives—an exclusive house party on Henry Island. Best friends Meg and Minnie are looking forward to two days of boys, booze, and fun-filled luxury. But what starts out as fun turns twisted after the discovery of a DVD with a sinister message: Vengeance is mine. And things only get worse from there. With a storm raging outside, the teens are cut off from the outside world . . . so when a mysterious killer begins picking them off one by one, there's no escape

Blood Red, Snow White by Marcus Sedgwick

When writer Arthur Ransome leaves his unhappy marriage in England and moves to Russia to work as a journalist, he has little idea of the violent revolution about to erupt. Unwittingly, he finds himself at its center, tapped by the British to report back on the Bolsheviks even as he becomes dangerously, romantically entangled with Trotsky's personal secretary. Both sides seek to use Arthur to gather and relay information for their own purposes . . . and both grow to suspect him of being a double agent. Arthur wants only to elope far from conflict with his beloved, but her Russian ties make leaving the country nearly impossible. And the more Arthur resists becoming a pawn, the more entrenched in the game he seems to become.

White Rabbit by Caleb Roehrig

Rufus Holt is having the worst night of his life. It begins with the reappearance of his ex-boyfriend, Sebastian—the guy who stomped his heart out like a spent cigarette. Just as Rufus is getting ready to move on, Sebastian turns up out of the blue, saying they need to “talk.” Things couldn't get worse, right? Then Rufus gets a call from his sister April, begging for help. He and Sebastian find her, drenched in blood and holding a knife beside the dead body of her boyfriend, Fox Whitney. April swears she didn't kill Fox. Rufus knows her too well to believe she's telling him the whole truth, but April has something he needs



Summer Reading 8th grade – 2026 Assignment



After reading a novel from the list above, during the summer, all students are asked to share a Book Talk about the book. This book talk will be recorded on your own time and submitted in September. Although there are some requirements for the book talk, each student is asked to use their own creativity to make the video their own.

Your face must be in the video and your voice must narrate your video.

Requirements

1. You must show the book in your video.
 - This can be a picture of the cover, if digital, or hold up the physical book
2. You must share a brief, enthusiastic summary of the book
 - DO NOT RUIN THE MAJOR PARTS OR THE ENDING
3. Explain why you like or do not like the book
4. Create your own original cover for the book
 - This can be digital or drawn on paper
5. Share a word you learned or liked from your summer reading book.
 - Share the word
 - Tell the audience the definition of the word
 - Create an original sentence using the word

ALL BOOK TALKS MUST BE BETWEEN 2-5 MINUTES IN LENGTH AND SHOULD BE RECORDED TO BE TURNED IN TO YOUR ELA TEACHER IN SEPTEMBER. This is **NOT** a group assignment and should be worked on alone. You should be the only person in your book talk video. It is suggested that you write down what you would like to say and rehearse it before you record for submission. You can record on Canva or your Chromebook. Do **NOT** use your phone as it is not compatible with Google Classroom.

Book Talk Rubric - 8th grade ELA 2025 - Canva

	10	8	7	5
Book in Hand	Student has the book or picture of the cover clearly shown in video			Student does not have the book or a picture of the cover in hand.
Eye Contact	Maintains eye contact with the audience for the majority of the presentation.	Maintains eye contact with the audience for most of the presentation.	Makes some to little eye contact with the audience during the presentation.	Does not look at the camera during presentation at all.
Enthusiasm	Demonstrates enthusiasm for the book and makes others interested as well.	Demonstrates some enthusiasm for the book, but does not sway the audience.	Demonstrates very little enthusiasm for the book.	Does not show any emotional attachment / reaction to the book.
Summary	Includes a clear and concise summary of the storyline.	Includes a somewhat clear summary, but leaves the audience with a lot of questions.	Includes irrelevant plot elements when giving an unstructured summary.	Includes an unoriginal summary and/or does not provide plot information.
Likes / Dislikes	Includes what the student likes or dislikes about the book with an explanation	Includes briefly what the students likes or dislikes.	Neglects likes or dislikes.	Does not include what the student likes or dislikes about the book.
Spoiler Alert Vocalized Pauses	Shares enough about the book to peak interest without giving away any major parts. No vocalized pauses are noticeably present in the presentation. (uh, well, um)	Shares some important parts to the book, but does not ruin the ending. At least 3-4 vocalized pauses are present and affect clarity of presentation.	Shares more than is necessary and ruins a major plot line of the book. 5-9 vocalized pauses are present and seriously affect clarity of presentation.	Student gives away a major spoiler or ruins the books for those who havenot read it. 10 or more vocalized pauses are used in the presentation.
Word	Word is presented creatively & neatly for the	Word is mentioned during the presentation.	Word is mispronounced and unrehearsed during	Word is missing.

[illegible]