



**COLLEGE PREPARATORY
SCHOOL**

Middle School English Department

Summer 2026

Grades 5-8 Reading Assignments

Please search for the correct UPCOMING grade level for your Gateway student! All secondary grades 5-8 are listed in this document.

*****NOTE: In addition to the summer reading book, all middle school students are required to have an independent reading book at all times during class for SSR.**

Incoming 5th Graders

Dear Student,

This summer, please read ***Because of Winn-Dixie*** by **Kate DiCamillo**. This heartwarming novel follows a young girl named Opal and an unexpected dog named Winn-Dixie as they help bring people together and teach important lessons about friendship, kindness, forgiveness, and community.

We will be using this novel during the first weeks of school, so please come prepared having already read the novel and completed your summer assignment. As you read, please **annotate and keep track of your thinking** so that you can fully express your ideas when completing the assignments that follow. Your notes and annotations will help prepare you for our class discussions and activities.

Students may read along with the **audiobook or use Learning Ally if needed**, but they should still annotate and record their thinking either directly in their book or in a **Google Document** while reading.

For each chapter, please focus on important characters, important events, and personal connections. Below is a guide to help you annotate for the following:

Character Information

Track important characters throughout the story.

Include:

- Character names
- Character traits
- Feelings and actions
- How characters change
- Relationships between characters

Ask yourself:

- What kind of person is this character?
- How do I know?
- How is this character changing?

Important Events

Track important moments and turning points in the story.

Include:

- Major events
- Problems or conflicts
- Surprising moments
- Events that change the story

Ask yourself:

- Why is this event important?
- How might it affect the characters?

Personal Connections

As you read, make connections to:

- Yourself (*Text-to-Self*)
- Another book, movie, or story (*Text-to-Text*)
- Real-life events (*Text-to-World*)

Ask yourself:

- Does this remind me of something?
- Can I relate to a character?
- Have I seen something similar before?

Helpful Annotation Symbols

C = Character information

★ = Important event

☁ = Personal connection (a cloud or thought bubble)

Remember: **Good readers think while they read!**

This assignment is due during the **first week of school and will be your first major grade**, so please complete it **before school starts**. Your notes should be either written in your book or typed in a Google Document.

Please remember that we will continue working with *Because of Winn-Dixie* together during the first weeks of school, so come prepared, do your best, and be ready to jump right in!

Happy Reading!

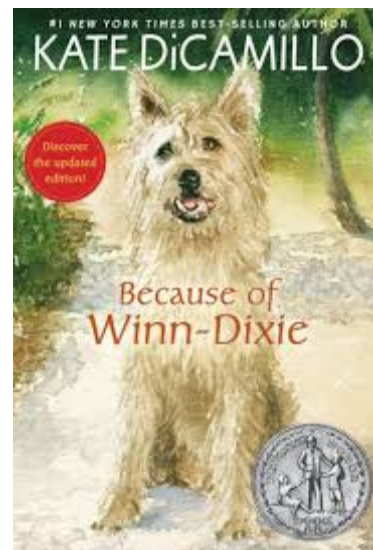
Mrs. Weber

Helpful links:

[ThriftBooks Link](#)

[Amazon Book Link](#)

[Student Annotations Guide](#)



Incoming 6th Graders

Dear Future Sixth Grader,

Please choose **ONE** of the following to read over the summer. During the first two weeks of school, you will complete a project based on the book. Please remember to annotate the book as you read. You will need to annotate your thoughts and questions as well as identify the characters, conflict and the resolution. I have included notes on annotations to help you out.

Happy Reading!

Mrs. Lisa Clift

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Counting by 7s

By Holly Goldberg Sloan

A Diamond in the Desert

By Katherine Fitzmaurice

A Fish in a Tree

By Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Code Talkers

By Joseph Bruchac

The Million Dollar Throw

By Mike Lupica

Echo

By Pam Munoz Ryan

Bud, Not Buddy

Christopher Paul Curtis

While reading, write annotations to ask questions, track information, and respond to the text.

- **Ask questions:**

- about unfamiliar words and use context clues to infer their meaning
- about confusing passages and record ideas about their meaning

- **Track:**

- the development of characters, plot events, and theme(s) in a story
- the relationship between individuals, ideas, or events in an informational text

- **Respond:**

- with connections to personal experiences
- with connections to your knowledge of other texts, history, or current events
- with inferences about the text's deeper meaning
- with evaluations about the content of the text or the effectiveness of the author's craft

STRATEGY ONE:

- *Read the section at a slower pace.*
- Don't worry about finding meaning the first time through.
- Look up vocabulary words you might be unfamiliar with. Find the definitions and write them in your reading.

STRATEGY TWO:

- *Underline/highlight/circle any words, phrases, sentences, or just language in general that attracts your attention.*
- What language do you just LOVE in this reading?
- Write down your reasons why you were attracted to that language.
- What was intriguing about your selection?

STRATEGY THREE:

- *Make predictions.*
- What do you think will happen next?
- What leads you to believe so?

STRATEGY FOUR:

- *Form an opinion.*
- What was your overall view about the reading? The narrator? The characters?
- Why do you feel that way?

STRATEGY FIVE:

- *Make connections.*
- Can you relate to this reading in any way?
- Does this reading remind you of another piece of literature, art, film, or other work?

STRATEGY SIX:

- *What questions do you have?*
- What did you find confusing?
- Why was that confusing to you?
- What else do you want answered?
- Try to formulate open-ended questions, not "yes" or "no" questions.

STRATEGY SEVEN:

- *Ask big idea questions.*
- What are some of the themes that you noticed in this reading?
- What might the author's larger purpose be?
- Why write this piece? Why read this piece? Why is this piece relevant?

Incoming 7th Graders

Dear Fabulous 7th Grade Students,

Please read **one book** of your choice from the list below. As you read, please annotate so that you can fully express your ideas when answering the questions/assignment that follows the list. I will be collecting your assignment during the first week of school, so please complete this assignment before school starts! This assignment will be submitted to Canvas, so please type up your responses to each question. This is only a portion of the assignment, the remainder will be done in class the first week of school. This will be their first **major** grade.

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- *Crash* by Jerry Spinelli
 - *Cloud and Wallfish* by Anne Nesbet
 - *Chinese Cinderella: The True Story of an Unwanted Daughter* by Adeline Yen Mah
 - *Hour of the Bees* by Lindsay Eager
 - *Stormbreaker (Alex Rider)* by Anthony Horowitz
 - *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
 - *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt
 - *The Wednesday Wars* by Gary Schmidt
 - *Crossover* by Kwame Alexander
 - *Yusuf Azeem is not a Hero* by Saadis Faruqi
 - *Merci Suarez Trilogy #2: Merci Suarez Can't Dance* by Meg Medina
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Students will need to:

- Choose one character from the novel (provide the name of the character)
- Imagine your character had a pair of crocs – what 5 charms would they put on their crocs?
- Write a sentence for each charm, explaining why that charm represents the character, their personality, relationships, and journey throughout the story (include the page number referencing supporting evidence of the direct or indirect characterization).

Charm	Sentence with page number
1.EX. Sun	The sun represents my character's cheerful personality and attitude. (pg. 25)
2.	
3.	
4.	
5	

Incoming 8th Graders

Welcome to 8th grade! You are responsible for reading **one** of the following books over the summer:

- *White Fang* by Jack London
- *Wolf Hollow* by Lauren Wolk
- *Beautiful Creatures* by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl
- *The Running Dream* by Wendelin Van Draanen
- *Refugee* by Alan Gratz
- *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *The Fire, The Water, and Maudie McGinn* by Sally J. Pla

While you are reading your book, you will keep a dialectical journal. This is a two column journal. The name of the book and author should be stated above your two column response. The direct quote from the text will be written on the left side, and your analysis will be written on the right side of the page. A thoughtful, developed analysis should be at least three sentences. Your analysis should not be a summary or paraphrasing of the text. The analysis should make an observation about the author's writing style, make an observation about the character, conflict or theme, ask questions, or make a prediction. Journal entries should be analyzing text from throughout the novel, and students must have a minimum of 20 entries. Here is an example of a dialectical journal:

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus

Dusti Bowling

<p>“On the one hand, the thought of leaving Kansas, and the only home I could ever remember, sounded worse than anything. On the other hand, Dad had lost his job nearly six months earlier, when the restaurant he’d been managing went out of business. He really needed this” (Bowling 10).</p>	<p>I think this paragraph shows Aven’s maturity. Leaving your home, friends, school and team to move to a new place you have never even visited would be difficult. However, instead of being self-centered she considers how this might be best for her family because her father has not been able to find a new job.</p>
<p>“Most of the pictures were black and white, taken a long time ago when Stagecoach Pass first opened. It looked like it was quite the place back then- crowds and rodeos and even parades on Main Street. Then I came to an empty space on the wall, where it seemed a picture had been removed. The nameplate beneath the empty space had been left up and said <i>The Cavanaugh’s</i>,</p>	<p>I wonder why the picture was removed? Normally, people remove things when they have something to hide. Would she have recognized someone in the photograph?</p>

<i>Stagecoach Pass, 2004</i> ” (Bowling 14).	
“My parents had always taught me to tackle one small goal at a time- holding a brush between my toes, lifting that brush all the way to my head, running the brush through my hair” (Bowling 19).	I’ve noticed that the author chooses to use hyphens when she is going to give more information. In this sentence, she uses a hyphen to provide a list of examples of small goals Aven has accomplished. This is the fourth time she has used a hyphen in this chapter.

I will be collecting your dialectical journal during the first week of school, so come prepared.

Enjoy your summer reading!

Mrs. Williams