

The Shelter Island School Summer Reading Assignment, grade 8

"We read to find ourselves, more fully and more strangely than otherwise we could hope to find. Reading well is one of the great pleasures that solitude can afford you."
- Harold Bloom, How to Read and Why

Dear Students and Families,

At the Shelter Island School, two components of our mission statement assert that students should become "creative and analytical thinkers" and "knowledgeable and literate readers, writers, mathematicians and scientists." In order to achieve these goals, it is imperative that our students constantly read and write, both in and out of school. Consequently, we believe that reading during summer vacation is necessary for maintaining one's skills, so that when the students return in September, they will be mentally prepared for the rigor of their classwork and homework assignments.

All students entering grade 8 will be required to read at least **TWO** age-appropriate books over the summer. In addition, *at least one* of the books that the students select must be taken from a **nonfiction** sub-genre (history books, memoirs/ biographies/ autobiographies, essays, etc.). An attached list is provided for you with suggested titles, but you **do not** have to choose from this list. Students may read any two books of their choosing, so long as they are appropriately challenging and - most of all - enjoyable!

The final page of this packet includes the instructions that each student will follow to complete the writing assignment required to be done after reading the books. This assignment will be turned in on the first day of school, *Thursday, September 10th*. There will be additional copies of this letter and the book suggestion list available at the Shelter Island Public Library, and a digital copy is available on the school's website. Thank you for supporting our summer reading program!

"Books are the perfect entertainment: no commercials, no batteries, hours of enjoyment for each dollar spent."
- Stephen King

Sincerely,

Debra Sears

Potential Titles: Fiction

1. Nancy Farmer - *The Sea of Trolls* (series)
2. J.R.R. Tolkien - *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings* (series)
3. C.S. Lewis - *The Chronicles of Narnia* (series)
4. Lemony Snicket - *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (series)
5. J.K. Rowling - *Harry Potter* (series)
6. Suzanne Collins - *The Hunger Games* (series)
7. James Patterson - *Maximum Ride* (series)
8. Madeleine L'Engle - *A Wrinkle in Time* (series)
9. Joan Bauer – *Best Foot Forward*
10. Joan Bauer - *Peeled*
11. Joan Bauer - *Close to Famous*
12. R.J. Palacio – *Wonder*
13. Wendy Mass – *Mango Shaped Space*
14. Jenny Han- *Shug*
15. Jennifer Bryant – *Pieces of Georgia*
16. Laurie Halse Anderson – *Fever 1793*
17. Michael D. Beil- *Red Blazer Girls: The Ring of Rocamadour* (series).
18. Ingrid Law- *Savvy*
19. Wendy Mass – *11 Birthdays* (series)
20. Marie Lu – *Legend*

Potential Titles: Nonfiction

1. *10,000 Days of Thunder: A History of the Vietnam War* by Philip Caputo
2. *Bill Gates: A Twentieth-Century Life* by Marc Aronson
3. *Black Gold: The Story of Oil in Our Lives* by Albert Marrin
4. *Black & White* by Larry Bane Brimmer
5. *Bomb: The Race to Build and Steal the World's Most Dangerous Weapon* by Steve Sheinkin
6. *Born Free and Equal* by Ansel Adams
7. *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* by James Swanson
8. *Chew on This: Everything you Don't want to Know about Fast Food* by Eric Schlosser
9. *Children of the Great Depression* by Russell Freedman
10. *Cleopatra Rules: The Amazing Life of the Original Teen Queen* by Vicky Shecter
11. *The Crossing: How George Washington Saved the American Revolution* by Jim Murphy
12. *Dear Miss Breed : true stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian who Made a Difference* by Joanne Oppenheim
13. *Denied, Detained, Deported: Stories from the Dark Side of American Immigration* by Ann Bausum
14. *Flesh and Blood So Cheap: the Triangle Fire and its Legacy* by Albert Marrin
15. *Forbidden Schoolhouse: the True and Dramatic Story of Prudence Crandall and her Students, The* by Suzanne Jurmain.
16. *George Washington, Spymaster: How the Americans Outspied the British and Won The Revolutionary War* by Thomas Allen.
17. *Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case* by Chris Crowe.
18. *A Girl Named Faithful Plum: The True Story of a Dancer from China and How She Achieved Her Dream,* by Richard Bernstein.
19. *Good Brother, Bad Brother: the Story of Edwin Booth and John Wilkes Booth* by James Giblin.
20. *Hitler's Youth: Growing up in Hitler's Shadow* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti
21. *Hungry Planet: What the World Eats* by Faith D'Alusio
22. *I am Scout: The Biography of Harper Lee* by Charles J. Shields
23. *I'll Pass for Your Comrade: Women Soldiers in the Civil War* by Anita Silvey
24. *Jack the Ripper: Letters from Hell* by Stewart Evans

25. *Lincoln's flying spies: Thaddeus Lowe and the Civil War Balloon Corps* by Gail Jarrow
26. *Master of Deceit: J. Edgar Hoover and America in the Age of Lies* by Marc Aronson
27. *Memories of Survival* by Esther Nisenthal Krinitz
28. *Moonbird: a Year on the Wind with the Great Survivor* by Phillip Hoose
29. *Mr. Lincoln's High Tech War* by Thomas & Roger Allen
30. *Notorious Benedict Arnold* by Steve Sheinkin
31. *An Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan; adapted by Richie Chevat
32. *Photo by Brady: a Picture of the Civil War* by Jennifer Armstrong
33. *Race: A History Beyond Black and White* by Marc Aronson
34. *The Real Benedict Arnold* by Jim Murphy
35. *Rescuing the Children: The Story of the Kindertransport* by Deborah Hodge
36. *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance* by Jennifer Armstrong
37. *Shout, Sister, Shout: Ten Girl Singers who Shaped a Century* by Roxane Orgill
38. *Signing their lives away: the fame and misfortune of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence* by Denise Kiernan & Joseph D'Agnes
39. *Spies of Mississippi: The True Story of the Spy Network that Tried to Destroy the Civil Rights Movement* by Rick Bowers
40. *Terezin: Voices from the Holocaust* by Ruth Thomson
41. *To The Mountaintop: My Journey Through the Civil Rights Movement* by Charlayne Hunter-Gault
42. *Trapped: How the World Rescued 33 Miners from 2,000 Feet Below the Chilean Desert* by Marc Aronson
43. *Traveling the Freedom Road: From Slavery & the Civil War through Reconstruction* by Linda Osborne
44. *Under Siege! Three Children at the Civil War Battle for Vicksburg* by Andrea Warren

New Additions

1. The Reappearance of Rachel Price (YA) by Holly Price: Mystery/thriller, author of popular A Good Girl's Guide to Murder series.

2. Such Charming Liars by Karen M. McManus (YA): stand alone mystery/thriller by author of popular One of us is Lying series.

3. Threads that Bind by Kika Hatzopoulou (YA): Adventure, fantasy. For mythology lovers...main character is a descendant of the Greek Fates and was born with special abilities. She lives in a world where ancient worlds and gods/goddesses come to life.

4. The Gilded Ones by Namina Forna (YA): Fantasy/adventure: 16 year old Deka (female) lives in a tribal community and during the coming of age "blood ceremony" when her blood runs gold it becomes clear that she is a warrior. As she begins her training, she realizes nothing is as it seems in her village home.

*5. A First Time for Everything by Dan Santat (YA): Graphic novel: *Winner of Best YA Caldecott Medal: An awkward middle schooler's trip to Europe changes everything.*

6. A Whisper in the Walls by Scott Reintgen (YA): Fantasy, adventure: Described as "Game of Thrones" meets "dark academia."

Name: _____

Mrs. Sears

Date: _____

Shelter Island Summer Reading, grade 8

Summer Reading Project: Writing Assignment

Below are the tasks you will need to complete by September 10th to receive full credit for the Summer Reading project, which will count as a test grade for the first quarter of the 2026-2027 school year.

Fiction –

- o Please write a thorough and proper CDEDEC paragraph about the book's **theme**. As a reminder, the theme of a story is its underlying message or lesson (also known as the “central idea”).

Nonfiction –

- o Please write a thorough and proper CDEDEC paragraph exploring the **author's purpose**. In other words, consider what the author is trying to accomplish in writing the book. Is the writer attempting to persuade the reader to do something or change his or her mind on a specific issue? Is he or she merely entertaining the reader? Is he or she informing the reader about a topic that he or she is unfamiliar with? Explain.

Checklist for Summer Reading Assignment –

- ☐ **Read 1 Fiction Novel**
- ☐ **Write a CDEDEC about the fiction novel's theme**
- ☐ **Read 1 Nonfiction Novel**
- ☐ **Write a CDEDEC for the author's purpose of your nonfiction novel**

Some Important Considerations –

- o Do not use self-referential expressions like, “In my paragraph, I will write about...” or “Today I will be talking about...”
- o Be sure to capitalize the beginning of each sentence and all proper nouns.
- o Titles of books should be underlined (or *italicized*, if you are typing).
- o Indent the first line of each paragraph.
- o Punctuate properly (to the best of your ability). Avoid run-on sentences and sentence fragments.