



SUMMER READING

MIDDLE
SCHOOL

2020-2021

EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF READING

This summer, the Middle School faculty and administration, along with our Wellington librarian, Mrs. Dunn, invite you to experience the joy of reading! Reading should be an enjoyable, enriching experience. We love it and want you to love it too. Sharing what we read is also rewarding and enriching. That is why each teacher is sponsoring a book from the following list and facilitating a small group discussion and activity when we return in the fall. Please choose a summer reading book from the following list, and then bring your experience back to share with our community in the fall.

This list offers a diverse choice of award winning books, so we hope that each of you will find one that truly interests you. When you have

finished reading a book, write the title and author on the reading log, and rate the book on a scale of 1-5 stars. You can submit your reading log any time during the summer by emailing [this form](#) to your English/Language Arts teacher or to Mrs. Dunn. Otherwise, bring it in at the start of the school year.

Happy reading!

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RECOMMENDED TITLES:

Fifth and Sixth Grades

All of the above by Shelley Pearsall

Based on a true story, *All of the Above* is the delightful and suspenseful story of four inner city students and their quest to build the world's largest tetrahedron. Weaving together the different personal stories of the kids, their teacher, and the community that surrounds them, award-winning author Shelley Pearsall has written a vividly engaging story about the math, life and good-tasting barbecue.

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson

National Book Award and Newbery Honor Book - Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child's soul as she searches for her place in the world. Woodson's eloquent poetry also reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child. Her love of stories inspired her and stayed with her, creating the first sparks of the gifted writer she was to become.

Look both ways by Jason Reynolds

National Book Finalist and Coretta Scott King Honor Book - This story was going to begin like all the best stories. With a school bus falling from the sky. But no one saw it happen. They were all too busy walking home. Ten tales (one per block) depict what happens after the dismissal bell rings and look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life.

My Life as an Ice Cream Sandwich by Ibi Zoboi

National Book Award Finalist - Twelve-year-old Ebony-Grace Norfleet has lived with her beloved grandfather Jeremiah in Huntsville, Alabama ever since she was little. As one of the first black engineers to integrate NASA, Jeremiah has nurtured Ebony-Grace's love for all things outer space and science fiction—especially *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*. But in the summer of 1984, when trouble arises with Jeremiah, it's decided she'll spend a few weeks with her father in Harlem. Harlem is an exciting and terrifying place for a sheltered girl from Huntsville, and Ebony-Grace's first instinct is to retreat into her imagination. But soon 126th Street begins to reveal that it has more in common with her beloved sci-fi adventures than she ever thought possible, and by summer's end, Ebony-Grace discovers that Harlem has a place for a girl whose eyes are always on the stars.

New Kid by Jerry Craft

Newbery and Coretta Scott King Author Awards - Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?

Path to the Stars: My journey from Girl Scout to Rocket Scientist by Sylvia Acevedo

A meningitis outbreak in their underprivileged neighborhood left Sylvia Acevedo's family forever altered. As she struggled in the aftermath of loss, young Sylvia's life transformed when she joined the Brownies. The Girl Scouts taught her how to take control of her world and nourished her love of numbers and science. With new confidence, Sylvia navigated shifting cultural expectations at school and at home, forging her own trail to become one of the first Latinx to graduate with a master's in engineering from Stanford University and going on to become a rocket scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Reaching for the Moon: The Autobiography of NASA Mathematician Katherine Johnson

As a young girl, Katherine Johnson showed an exceptional aptitude for math. In school she quickly skipped ahead several grades and was soon studying complex equations with the support of a professor who saw great promise in her. But ability and opportunity did not always go hand in hand. As an African American and a girl growing up in an era of brutal racism and sexism, Katherine faced daily challenges. Still, she lived her life with her father's words in mind: "You are no better than anyone else, and nobody else is better than you." In the early 1950s, Katherine was thrilled to join the organization that would become NASA. She worked on many of NASA's biggest projects including the Apollo 11 mission that landed the first men on the moon.

Song for a Whale by Lynne Kelly

From fixing the class computer to repairing old radios, twelve-year-old Iris is a tech genius. But she's the only deaf person in her school, so people often treat her like she's not very smart. If you've ever felt like no one was listening to you, then you know how hard that can be. When she learns about Blue 55, a real whale who is unable to speak to other whales, Iris understands how he must feel. Then she has an idea: she should invent a way to "sing" to him! But he's three thousand miles away. How will she play her song for him?

Strange Birds: A Field Guide to Ruffling Feathers by Celia C. Pérez

When three *very* different girls find a mysterious invitation to a lavish mansion, the promise of adventure and mischief is too intriguing to pass up. Ofelia Castillo (a budding journalist), Aster Douglas (a bookish foodie), and Cat Garcia (a rule-abiding birdwatcher) meet the kid behind the invite, Lane DiSanti, and it isn't love at first sight. But they soon bond over a shared mission to get the Floras, their local Scouts, to ditch an outdated tradition. In their quest for justice, independence, and an unforgettable summer, the girls form their own troop and find something they didn't know they needed: sisterhood.

Strong Inside (Young Readers' Edition): The True Story of How Perry Wallace Broke College Basketball's Colored Line by Andrew Maraniss

Perry Wallace was born at an historic crossroads in U.S. history. He entered kindergarten the year that the Brown v. Board of Education decision led to integrated schools, allowing blacks and whites to learn side by side. A week after Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, Wallace enrolled in high school and his sensational jumping, dunking, and rebounding abilities quickly earned him the attention of college basketball recruiters from top schools across the nation. In his senior year his Pearl High School basketball team won Tennessee's first racially-integrated state tournament. The world seemed to be opening up at just the right time, and when Vanderbilt University recruited Wallace to play basketball, he courageously accepted the assignment to desegregate the Southeastern Conference. The hateful experiences he would endure on campus and in the hostile gymnasiums of the Deep South turned out to be the stuff of nightmares. Yet Wallace persisted, endured, and met this unthinkable challenge head on.

Tristan Strong Punches the Sky by Kwame Mbalia

Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book - Seventh grader Tristan Strong feels anything but strong ever since he failed to save his best friend when they were in a bus accident together. All he has left of Eddie is the journal his friend wrote stories in. Tristan is dreading the month he's going to spend on his grandparents' farm in Alabama, where he's being sent to heal from the tragedy. But on his first night there, a sticky creature shows up in his bedroom and steals Eddie's notebook. Tristan chases after it--is that a *doll*?--and a tug-of-war ensues between them underneath a Bottle Tree. In a last attempt to wrestle the journal out of the creature's hands, Tristan punches the tree, accidentally ripping open a chasm into the MidPass, a volatile place with a burning sea, haunted bone ships, and iron monsters that are hunting the inhabitants of this world. Tristan finds himself in the middle of a battle that has left black American folk heroes John Henry and Brer Rabbit exhausted. In order to get back home, Tristan and these new allies will need to entice the god Anansi, the Weaver, to come out of hiding and seal the hole in the sky. But bartering with the trickster Anansi always comes at a price. Can Tristan save this world before he loses more of the things he loves?

Front Desk by Kelly Yang

Mia Tang has a lot of secrets.

Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests.

Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed.

Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language?

It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?

Seventh and Eighth Grades**All American Boys** by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely

In this Coretta Scott King Honor Award-winning novel, two teens—one black, one white—grapple with the repercussions of a single violent act that leaves their school, their community, and, ultimately, the country bitterly divided by racial tension. A bag of chips. That's all sixteen-year-old Rashad is looking for at the corner bodega. What he finds instead is a fist-happy cop. There were witnesses: Quinn Collins and a video camera. Soon the beating is all over the news and the cop is getting threatened with accusations of prejudice and racial brutality. Simmering tensions threaten to explode as Rashad and Quinn are forced to face decisions and consequences they had never considered before.

American Like Me by America Ferrera

America Ferrera has always felt wholly American, and yet, her identity is inextricably linked to her parents' homeland and Honduran culture. She yearned to see that identity reflected in the larger American narrative. America invites thirty-one of her friends, peers, and heroes to share their stories about life between cultures. We know them as actors, comedians, athletes, politicians, artists, and writers. However, they are also immigrants, children or grandchildren of immigrants, indigenous people, or people who otherwise grew up with deep and personal connections to more than one culture. Each of them struggled to establish a sense of self, find belonging, and feel seen. And they call themselves American enthusiastically, reluctantly, or not at all.

Code Talkers: a Novel about the Navajo Marines of World War Two by Joseph Bruchac

Throughout World War II, in the conflict fought against Japan, Navajo code talkers were a crucial part of the U.S. effort, sending messages back and forth in an unbreakable code that used their native language. They braved some of the heaviest fighting of the war, and with their code, they saved countless American lives. Yet their story remained classified for more than twenty years.

But now Joseph Bruchac brings their stories to life for young adults through the riveting fictional tale of Ned Begay, a sixteen-year-old Navajo boy who becomes a code talker. His grueling journey is eye-opening and inspiring. This deeply affecting novel honors all of those young men, like Ned, who dared to serve, and it honors the culture and language of the Navajo Indians.

Harlem Summer by Walter Dean Myers

It's 1925 and Mark Purvis is a 16-yr-old with a summer to kill. He'd rather jam with his jazz band (they need the practice), but is urged by his parents to get a job. As an assistant at *The Crisis*, a magazine for the "new Negro," Mark rubs shoulders with Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen. He's invited to a party at Alfred Knopf's place. He's making money, but not enough, and when piano player Fats Waller entices him and his buddies to make some fast cash, Mark finds himself crossing the gangster Dutch Schultz.

Hoops by Walter Dean Myers

All eyes are on seventeen-year-old Lonnie Jackson while he practices with his team for a city-wide basketball Tournament of Champions. His coach, Cal, knows Lonnie has what it takes to be a pro basketball player, but warns him about giving in to the pressure. Cal knows because he, too, once had the chance—but sold out. As the tournament nears, Lonnie learns that some heavy bettors want Cal to keep him on the bench so that the team will lose the championship. As the last seconds of the game tick away, Lonnie and Cal must make a decision. Are they willing to blow the chance of a lifetime?

Mind Gym: an athlete's guide to inner excellence by Gary Mack

In *Mind Gym*, noted sports psychology consultant Gary Mack explains how your mind influences your performance on the field or on the court as much as your physical skill does, if not more so. Through forty accessible lessons and inspirational anecdotes from prominent athletes—many of whom he has worked with—you will learn the same techniques and exercises Mack uses to help elite athletes build mental "muscle." *Mind Gym* will give you the "head edge" over the competition.

Most Likely by Sarah Watson

Ava, CJ, Jordan, and Martha (listed in alphabetical order out of fairness) have been friends since kindergarten. Now they're in their senior year, facing their biggest fears about growing up and growing apart. But there's more than just college on the horizon. One of these girls is destined to become the president of the United States. The mystery, of course, is which girl gets the gig.

Is it Ava, the picture-perfect artist who's secretly struggling to figure out where she belongs? Or could it be CJ, the one who's got everything figured out...except how to fix her terrible SAT scores? Maybe it's Jordan, the group's resident journalist, who knows she's ready for more than their small Ohio suburb can offer. And don't overlook Martha, who will have to overcome all the obstacles that stand in the way of her dreams. This is the story of four best friends who have one another's backs through every new love, breakup, stumble, and success—proving that great friendships can help young women achieve anything...even a seat in the Oval Office.

Nimona by Noelle Stevenson

National Book Award Finalist - Nimona is an impulsive young shapeshifter with a knack for villainy. Lord Ballister Blackheart is a villain with a vendetta. As sidekick and supervillain, Nimona and Lord Blackheart are about to wreak some serious havoc. Their mission: prove to the kingdom that Sir Ambrosius Goldenloin and his buddies at the Institution of Law Enforcement and Heroics aren't the heroes everyone thinks they are. But as small acts of mischief escalate into a vicious battle, Lord Blackheart realizes that Nimona's powers are as murky and mysterious as her past. And her unpredictable wild side might be more dangerous than he is willing to admit.