

MIDDLE SCHOOL
Summer Reading
2021



THE
WESTFIELD
SCHOOL

Middle School English Required Summer Reading

Students should take notes as they read, in preparation for class discussion and an assignment with due date to be announced by teacher at the start of school.

*Students must have a copy of the book (paperback or hardback) on first day of class.
Electronic copies (iPad/Kindle versions) are not acceptable.*

Rising 6th Grade

Required Reading:

***The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne**

Rising 7th Grade

Required Reading:

***The Wednesday Wars* by Gary Schmidt**

Rising 8th Grade

Required Reading:

***The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom**

Suggested Middle School Summer Reading List (Not Required)

Any biography or non-fiction

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Summer of the Swans by Betsy Byars

The Black Stallion by Walter Farley (or other books by this author)

My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George

Old Yeller by Fred Gipson

King of the Wind by Marguerite Henry (or other books by this author)

Anne of Green Gables by L.M. Montgomery

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen (or other books by this author)

Black Beauty: the Autobiography of a Horse by Anna Sewell

Miracles on Maple Hill by Virginia Sorensen

Mary Poppins by Pamela L. Travers

Little House in the Big Woods and others in the series by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Additional Suggested Reading (not required)

Below are some suggested summer reading titles for upcoming eighth graders. None of the titles listed below is required.

Souder by William H. Armstrong

When the sharecropper who has raised Souder from birth is hauled off to jail for stealing a hog, his family must suffer their humiliation and crushing loss with no recourse. To make matters worse, Souder is shot and disappears. The eventual return of a tattered and emaciated Souder doesn't change the fact that the sharecropper's oldest son is forced to take on man's work to help support the family. His transition to adulthood is paved by the rocks and taunts hurled at him by convicts and guards as he searches for his father. But along this rough road he ultimately finds salvation. A moving portrayal of resilience and hope in the face of profound human tragedy, *Souder* is the bittersweet story of strong-spirited individuals who must battle the ongoing evils of prejudice.

City of Bones by Cassandra Clare

Clary Fray witnesses the murder of another teen, but she is unable to prove the crime because the victim disappears right in front of her eyes. To add insult to this bizarre and horrifying injury, no one else can see the killers. Clary soon learns that these criminals are Shadowhunters and that she actually should not be able to see them either. Shortly after this discovery, her mother, Jocelyn, is kidnapped. Jocelyn is the only person who knows the whereabouts of The Mortal Cup, a dangerous magical item that turns humans into Shadowhunters. Clary must find the cup and keep it from a renegade sector of Shadowhunters bent on eliminating all nonhumans – especially the good ones.

Song of the Sparrow by Lisa Ann Sandel

Since the days of King Arthur, there have been poems and paintings created in her name. She is Elaine of Ascolat, the Lady of Shalott, and now there is a book all her own. The year is 490 A.D., and 16-year-old Elaine has a temperament to match her fiery red hair. Living on a military base with her father, her brothers, and the rest of Arthur's army, Elaine pines for the handsome Lancelot and longs for a female friend. But when the cruel, beautiful Gwynivere arrives, Elaine is confronted with startling emotions of jealousy and rivalry. Can Elaine find the strength to survive the birth of a kingdom?

The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane

During the Civil War, Henry Fleming is eager to demonstrate his patriotism in a glorious battle, but when the slaughter starts, he is overwhelmed with fear and flees the battlefield. Ironically, he receives his "red badge of courage" when he is slightly wounded by an assault from a deserter. He witnesses a friend's gruesome death and becomes enraged at the injustice of war. The courage of common soldiers and the agonies of death cause him to return to his regiment, and he chooses to continue to fight with true courage instead of with any romantic illusions of the desolate destruction of war.

Sunshine by Robin McKinley

Rae Seddon, a.k.a. Sunshine, lives a quiet life working at her stepfather's bakery. One night, she goes out to the lake for some peace and quiet. Big mistake. She is set upon by vampires, who take her to an old mansion. They leave her in chains with another vampire prisoner. Unaccustomed to the basic humane reassurance of the sound of another voice, her fellow prisoner Constantine then implores her to tell him stories to keep them both sane. Realizing she will have to save herself, Sunshine calls on the long-forgotten powers her grandmother began to cultivate in her when she was a child. She transforms her pocketknife into a key and unchains herself – and Constantine. Surprised, he agrees to flee with her when she offers him protection from the sun with magic. They escape back to town, but Constantine knows his enemies won't be far behind, which means that he and Sunshine will have to face them together. A luminous, entrancing novel...this enthralling pair of characters will win every reader's heart.

Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie

Peter, a boy who refuses to grow up, lives in Neverland with a fairy, Tinkerbell, and their companions the Lost Boys. Upon a visit to the nursery of Wendy, Michael, and John Darling to hear Wendy's marvelous stories, he loses his pesky shadow. When Peter comes back for his shadow and attempts to reattach it, Wendy discovers this new boy in their nursery and soon learns about his amazing lifestyle. Entranced by thoughts of pirates, mermaids, and fairies, Wendy, Michael, and John embark on an amazing adventure into a world so unlike our own that Barrie's mystifying words are able to give it a wonderful justice. It's bittersweet, it's insightful, it's magical, and it's simply everything and more that a child or an adult could ask for in a story. You won't want to leave Neverland, and you may even find yourself staring out the window, looking for that hint of light that is Tinkerbell or that nimble boy effortlessly flying between trees and buildings. Without a doubt this is the greatest children's story of all time, and yes, it is one that we've all heard; however, the real, true magic can be found only in Barrie's brilliant novel about the boy who would not grow up.

Green Angel by Alice Hoffman

An impressive story of survival with that all-powerful focus on the need to cherish the here and now...the heroine is the temperamental, introspective Green, 15, who stays at home while her parents and younger sister travel to the city to sell their produce. Her disappointment at being left behind causes her to be cold and not say good-bye. Then the city is engulfed in flames, and ashes hover in the atmosphere for a long time. Green is left with her guilt over her sullen behavior and the solitude of her ruined garden. This multilayered, believable protagonist sucks readers in to suffer along with her and share in her very real fears as she tries to pick up the pieces of her life. The contrast between her original faith in the promise of the future and her later acknowledgment of the tentative nature of reality is vividly and eloquently portrayed. This is not an easy read...powerfully written and most definitely thought-provoking.

Uprising by Margaret P. Haddix

Meet Bella, an Italian immigrant teen...Yetta, a Russian Jewish immigrant...and Jane, the daughter of an upper-class American businessman. Yetta, opinionated and fully aware of how immigrants, especially women, are mistreated, is outspoken and ready to work toward improving conditions. Bella, a new immigrant, is naïve and gullible. She only wants to earn money to send home so that the rest of her family can join her in America. Though from a background of privileged wealth, Jane is influenced by college girls who are starting the long-suffering work for women's rights. The three girls meet during the strike at the Triangle factory. Jane bravely leaves home when she learns that her father was involved in trying to break the strike. Immigration, the struggle for women's rights, the beginnings of the organized labor movement, and the horrific Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911 all resound with depth in this story that will amaze its readers.

Scat by Carl Hiaasen

When their unpopular biology teacher goes missing in a suspicious fire during a field trip to the Black Vine Swamp, Nick and Marta don't buy the headmaster's excuse for her absence and decide to do some investigating of their own. Eco-avengers; an endangered, hunted panther; illegal pipelines in the Everglades; and an underachieving student with the nickname "Smoke" all play a part in this gripping novel. The teens' dangerous detective work, with a bit of help from some unlikely sources, and the ethics of environmental awareness are well balanced. The emotional and personal changes that Nick goes through due to his father's injury in Iraq are on their own a worthy study of the struggles that military families are facing today.

Waiting for Normal by Leslie Connor

Meet 12-year-old Addie, who lives with Mommers in a trailer on a busy street in Schenectady after her adored stepfather and half-sisters move upstate. Mommers has lost custody of the "littles" because of neglect, and although she and Addie can laugh together, Mommers is not much for good times—though she most assuredly brings the bad times home. Addie finds solace in occasional visits to see her sisters. She also discovers reassurance from her neighbors, especially Soula, who is ill from her chemotherapy treatments. This author takes a familiar plot and elevates it with smartly-written characters and unexpected moments. Addie starts out as a kid who thinks she has to go along to get along, but as Mommers' actions become more egregious, her spine stiffens. And though Addie loves her time upstate, she is willing to forgo it when the normality she has there is more painful than positive. This is a meaningful story that will touch many.

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

In the future, firemen don't put out fires – they start them in order to burn books. Guy Montag is a book-burning fireman undergoing a crisis of faith. His wife spends all day with her television “family,” imploring Montag to work harder so that they can afford a fourth TV wall. Their dull, empty life sharply contrasts with that of his next-door neighbor Clarisse, a young girl thrilled by the ideas in books, who is more interested in what she can see in the world around her than in the mindless chatter of the tube. When Clarisse disappears mysteriously, Montag is moved to make some changes and starts hiding books in his home. Eventually, his wife turns him in, and he must answer the call to burn his secret cache of books. After fleeing to avoid arrest, Montag winds up joining an outlaw band of scholars who keep the contents of books in their heads, waiting for the time society will once again need the wisdom of literature. Bradbury's vividly painted society holds up the appearance of happiness as the highest goal – a place where trivial information is good...and knowledge and ideas are bad.

The Folded Leaf by William Maxwell

In the suburbs of Chicago in the 1920s, two boys initiate an unusual friendship: Lymie Peters, a skinny and somewhat clumsy boy who always gets good grades, and newcomer Spud Latham, a star athlete and mediocre student. Spud accepts Lymie's devotion without questioning it, but once high school ends and the boys enter college, tensions begin to arise between them. Lymie is the first to meet Sally Forbes, but she will fall in love with Spud, and this will mark the beginning of the rift between them. But this rupture will be more than Lymie can bear. William Maxwell provides the reader with a moving portrayal of adolescence and the shift from youth into adulthood.

The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver

Clear-eyed and spirited, Taylor Greer grew up poor in rural Kentucky with the goals of avoiding pregnancy and getting away. But when she heads west with high hopes and a barely functional car, she meets the human condition head-on. By the time Taylor arrives in Tucson, Arizona, she has acquired a completely unexpected child, a three-year-old American Indian girl named Turtle, and must somehow come to terms with both motherhood and the necessity for putting down roots. Hers is a story about love and friendship, abandonment and belonging, and the discovery of surprising resources in apparently empty places.