

# MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER READING GUIDE

## 2015

May 2015

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the **Middle School Summer Reading Guide 2015**. Here, you will find a **list of the book choices for English and Social Studies**, with Amazon links. You will also find instructions and expectations for the activities/projects we would like you to complete for the beginning of next school year.

As we've asked you to do in the past, **please acquire your summer reading choices on your own**, from wherever you like, at whatever price point you like (new or used, purchased or borrowed from a friend or the good ol' public library), in whatever medium you like (traditional paperback, online, iBook, Kindle, or book on tape). Unless a particular edition or translation is indicated, any copy will suffice.

As with last year, you will find that there is a **wide variety of choices**, both in fiction and nonfiction, reading level and subject matter. We hope you are all able to find something on your list that attracts you in some way.

Initiated by the English Department in 1975, required summer reading has long been **a tradition at The Prairie School**. The Department believes that reading and learning should end neither in June nor with the curriculum, and strongly encourages students to take advantage of the time to read literature of their choosing--even above and beyond what we ask them to read for school. No matter the grade, required and independent reading helps students practice and improve their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. It provides, too, a common reading experience among students in the same class and enhances future classroom activities.

Your teachers are thankful to have the opportunity to share in reading experiences with you even during the summer, and we hope that you are thankful, as well, for **the right and opportunity that you have to read, to write, and to think**. Have a wonderful summer of reading!

Sincerely,

Susan Holum, Chair, Grades K-6  
[sholum@prairieschool.com](mailto:sholum@prairieschool.com)

Dominic Inouye, Chair, Grades 7-12  
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# Grade 5: Reading

*"Reading... a vacation for the mind..."*

-- Dave Barry

Choose any **TWO** \* of the following books to read:

- [Number the Stars](#) (Lois Lowry)
- [Cardboard](#) (Doug TenNapel)
- [The Breadwinner](#) (Deborah Ellis)
- [A Wrinkle in Time](#) (Madeleine L'Engle)
- [Holes](#) (Louis Sachar)
- [Hatchet](#) (Gary Paulsen)
- [There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom](#) (Louis Sachar)
- [Last Summer with Maizon](#) (Jacqueline Woodson)
- [Mockingbird](#) (Kathryn Erskine)

\* Note: If you are taking the summer course "Getting Started on Summer Reading," you must read ***Number the Stars*** by Lois Lowry.

## General Directions:

- DUE: 2nd day of school in the fall
- Choose one of the projects below to do for ONE of the books you read.
  - The written work for the project may be done on a computer or neatly handwritten.
  - Carefully edit your work for display at school.
- You will report on the SECOND book you read when you return to school in the fall.

## Project Options:

Ms. Barbian will have explained these options in class before the summer; she will also have shared examples of past projects.

- [Informative Letter](#)
  - Write a letter addressed to Ms. Barbian.
  - Include the following information in the letter:
    - 1st paragraph should include the book title, author, and setting.
    - 2nd paragraph should be a detailed description of the main character.
    - 3rd paragraph should be about major problems and solutions.
    - 4th paragraph should be a rating of the book from 1-10 (10 is best) and a recommendation of the book to someone, with reasons for both.
- [Pictures with Captions](#)
  - Fold a large piece of drawing paper (suggestion: 12"x18") into six even sections.

- Each section will include a picture and a caption. The caption should be detailed and not take up more than half the section.
- Include one of the following pieces of information in each of the six sections:
  - Title, author, and your name
  - Setting (where and when)
  - Main character
  - Most important event
  - Problem and solution
  - Why you liked or disliked the book

● Poster

- Design a poster advertising the book, on paper no larger than 12"x18".
- Include the title, author, and a short summary somewhere on the poster.

# Grade 6: English

*I think of life as a good book. The further you get into it, the more it begins to make sense.*  
-- Harold Kushner

Choose any TWO \* of the following books to read:

- [The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963](#) (Christopher Paul Curtis)
- [So B. It](#) (Sarah Weeks)
- [The One and Only Ivan](#) (Katherine Applegate)
- [Life As We Knew It](#) (Susan Beth Pfeffer)
- [Maniac Magee](#) (Jerry Spinelli)
- [The Raft](#) (S.A. Bodeen)
- [Slob](#) (Ellen Potter)
- [A Single Shard](#) (Linda Sue Parks)

\* Note: If you are taking the summer course “Getting Started on Summer Reading,” you must read **Maniac Magee** by Jerry Spinelli.

You can find out more about these books at Mrs. Gasser’s blog:

<http://mrsGasserclassroom.blogspot.com>

## General Directions:

- DUE: 2nd day of school in the fall
- Choose one of the projects below to do for ONE of the books you read.
  - The written work for the project may be done on a computer or neatly handwritten.
  - Carefully edit your work for display at school.
- You will report on the SECOND book you read when you return to school in the fall.

## Project Options:

Mrs. Gasser will have explained these options in class before the summer; she will also have shared examples of past projects.

- Informative Letter
  - Write a letter addressed to Mrs. Gasser.
  - Include the following information in the letter:
    - 1st paragraph should include the book title, author, and setting.
    - 2nd paragraph should be a detailed description of the main character.
    - 3rd paragraph should be about major problems and solutions.
    - 4th paragraph should be a rating of the book from 1-10 (10 is best) and a recommendation of the book to someone, with reasons for both.
- Pictures with Captions
  - Fold a large piece of drawing paper (suggestion: 12”x18”) into six even sections.

- Each section will include a picture and a caption. The caption should be detailed (two or more sentences) and not take up more than half the section.
- Include one of the following pieces of information in each of the six sections:
  - Title, author, and your name
  - Setting (where and when)
  - Main character--describe the character in at least four sentences.
  - One major problem the character had and the solution
  - Two events that helped solve this problem.
  - What did the character learn?
- After the Story Ends
  - Write what comes next: what happened, in your mind, after the last chapter ends.
  - Make sure to use correct spelling, capital letters, punctuation, and paragraphs. Dialogue would also be a plus in this creative piece!
  - This creative piece should be at least 2 pages and no more than 3 pages.

# Grade 7: English

*Reading is the sole means by which we slip, involuntarily, often helplessly, into another's skin, another's voice, another's soul.*

-- Joyce Carol Oates

For your English class, choose **ONE \*** of the following fiction books to read and complete a Literature Letter (see directions below) for that novel.

- [The Selection](#) (Kiera Cass, 2015)
- [The Eye of the Minds \(The Mortality Doctrine\)](#) (James Dashner, 2014)
- [The Graveyard Book](#) (Neil Gaiman, 2008)
- [Alex Rider Series](#) (10 books in a series from 2000–2012) (Anthony Horowitz)
- [The Outsiders](#) (S. E. Hinton, 1967)
- [When Zachary Beaver Came to Town](#) (Kimberly Willis Holt, 2001)
- [Treasure Island](#) (Robert Louis Stevenson, 1883)
- [Thickety: A Path Begins](#) (J.A. White, 2015)
- [Dairy Queen](#) (Catherine Gilbert Murdock, 2006)
- [Little Women](#) (Louisa May Alcott, 1868)
- [Between Shades of Gray](#) (Ruta Sepetys, 2011)
- [Chasing Lincoln's Killer](#) (James L. Swanson, 2009)
- Any Mike Lupica novel that you have not read (such as [The Big Field](#), [Million Dollar Throw](#), . . .)

**\* Note:** If you are taking the summer “English Workshop for 7th Grade,” you must read *When Zachary Beaver Came to Town* by Kimberly Willis Holt.

## Literature Letter Directions:

Dear Soon-To-Be 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Readers,

Your assignment is to write me a “literature letter” about your summer reading choice. In the letter you will tell me what you noticed about the book. It should be written as a personal, critical response to one book. Think deeply about the book as you read it and after you have finished it. It is NOT a summary of the story. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are not important in this writing. Your ideas are most important and I will grade your letters using the checklist below. Come to see me in M-11 or email me at [jcobb@prairieschool.com](mailto:jcobb@prairieschool.com), if you are unclear about any aspect of this assignment.

Your literature letter should:

- \_\_\_\_\_ have the **date** on the upper right corner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ begin with a **greeting** (“Dear Mrs. Cobb,”).
- \_\_\_\_\_ include the **title of the book (underlined)**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ include the **author’s name (spelled correctly)**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ use at least **5-6 “openers”** from the list of “openers” (see below).

\_\_\_\_\_ be at least **2 handwritten notebook pages (one side equals one page) or 1 ½ pages, typed in 12 pt font and single-spaced.**

\_\_\_\_\_ should **end with a salutation** (“Sincerely,” or “Happy Reading.”).

\_\_\_\_\_ and **your signature.**

Please bring it with you on the first day of class in the fall.

Enjoy reading,

MRS. COBB

### **OPENERS LIST**

“The part of the book that I will remember is... because ...”

“I rated this book a \_\_\_\_\_ because...”

“I liked the way the author...”

“I wonder why the author...”

“The book reminded me of ...” or “What I read makes me think about...”

“The character I liked the most was \_\_\_\_\_, because...” or “I think the character feels...”

“If I could hang out with a character, it would be....because...”

“I noticed that the author uses...” (notice any literary devices such as simile or metaphor?)

“ This story teaches a lesson about...”

“I was surprised that...”

“The problem in the story is ...”

“The ending was too predictable and I would change...”

## **Grade 7: Social Studies**

**For your Social Studies class, read one of the following books:**

- [Night Journeys](#) (Avi)
  - **Note: Mr. Mills may have a limited number of paperback copies of *Night Journeys* available for purchase.**
- [Chains](#) (Laurie Halse Anderson)

**Directions:**

- [Instructions](#)

# Grade 8: English

A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies... The man who never reads lives only one.

--George R. R. Martin

For your English class, choose **ONE** \* of the following fiction books to read and write a Literature Letter (see directions below) for that novel.

- [Red Kayak](#) ( Priscilla Cummings 2004)
- [Unwind](#) (Neal Shusterman, 2007)
- [Code Name Verity](#) ( Elizabeth Wein, 2012)
- [The Outsiders](#) (S.E. Hinton, 1967)
- [Treasure Island](#) (Robert Louis Stevens, 1883)
- [Little Women](#) (Louisa May Alcott, 1868)
- [The Compound](#) (S.E. Bodeen, 2009)
- [Safekeeping](#) (Karen Hesse, 2012)
- [The Eye of the Minds \(The Mortality Doctrine\)](#) (James Dashner, 2014)
- [Eleanor and Park](#) (Rainbow Rowell, 2013 )
- [Bomb: The Race to Build--and Steal--the World's Most Dangerous Weapon](#) (Steve Sheinkin, 2012)
- Any Mike Lupica novel that you have not read (such as [The Big Field](#), [Million Dollar Throw](#), . . . )

\* Note: If you are taking the summer “English Workshop for 8th Grade” you must read *The Red Kayak* by Priscilla Cummings.

## Directions:

Dear Soon-To-Be 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Readers,

You know the drill. Your assignment is to write us a “literature letter” about your summer reading choice. In the letter you will tell me what you noticed about the book. It should be written as a personal, critical response to one book. Think deeply about the book as you read it and after you have finished it. It is NOT a summary of the story. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are not important in this writing. Your ideas are most important and we will grade your letters using the checklist below. Come to see Mrs. Cobb in M-11 or email me at [jcobb@prairieschool.com](mailto:jcobb@prairieschool.com), if you are unclear about any aspect of this assignment.

Your literature letter should:

- \_\_\_\_\_ have the **date** on the upper right corner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ begin with a **greeting** (“Dear Mrs. Cobb,”).
- \_\_\_\_\_ include the **title of the book (underlined)**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ include the **author’s name (spelled correctly)**.
- \_\_\_\_\_ use at least **6 “openers”** from the list of “openers” (see below).
- \_\_\_\_\_ include a 1-5 sentence **passage** from the book that you liked with an explanation of why you chose that passage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ be at least **3 handwritten notebook pages (one side equals one page) or 2 pages typed, in 12 pt**

font, single-spaced.

\_\_\_\_\_should **end with a salutation** (“Sincerely,” or “Happy Reading,”).

\_\_\_\_\_ and **your signature**.

Bring it with you on the first day of class in the fall.

Enjoy reading.

MRS. COBB

### **OPENERS LIST**

“The part of the book that I will remember is... because ...”

“I rated this book a \_\_\_\_\_ because...”

“If I could hang out with any character, it would be....because...”

“I liked the way the author...”

“I wonder why the author...”

“The book reminded me of ...” or “What I read makes me think about...”

“The character I liked the most was\_\_\_\_\_, because...” or “I think the character feels...”

“I noticed that the author uses...” (notice any literary devices such as simile or metaphor?)

“ This story teaches a lesson about...”

“I was surprised that...”

“The problem in the story is ...”

“The ending was too predictable and I would change...”

## **Grade 8: Social Studies**

**For your Social Studies class, read ONE of the following books:**

- [Assassin](#) (Anna Myers)
  - **Note: Mr. Mills may have a limited number of paperback copies of *Assassin* available for purchase.**
- [The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate](#) (Jacqueline Kennedy)

**Directions:**

- [Instructions](#)