



## **Middle School Summer Reading Guide 2019**

May 2019

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2019 Middle School Summer Reading Guide. Here you will find a list of the book choices for English and Social Studies. 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 public library), in whatever medium you like (traditional paperback, online, iBook, Kindle, or audiobook). 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,

Erin Housiaux, English Department Co-Chair (Grades 7-12)  
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## Grade 5: Reading

*“Reading... a vacation for the mind....”*

-- Dave Barry

Mrs. Weaver will present the reading options to the 4th grade class and highlight ideal examples of each assignment. Email Mrs. Weaver with questions: [mweaver@prairieschool.com](mailto:mweaver@prairieschool.com).

**Choose any one of the following books to read and complete the assignment for only one title. Then, choose a second book of your choice. If you would like to select a “good fit” book not from this list for your second summer reading book, please have your parents email Mrs. Weaver by Thursday, August 1st with the title and their approval of your choice.**

### Fiction

- *Number the Stars* (Lois Lowry, 1989)\*
  - In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.
- *Ghosts* (Raina Telgemeier, 2016)
  - Catrina and her family have moved to the coast of Northern California for the sake of her little sister, Maya, who has cystic fibrosis — and Cat is even less happy about the move when she is told that her new town is inhabited by ghosts, and Maya sets her heart on meeting one.
- Any book from the Mr. Lemoncello’s Library series (Chris Grabenstein)
  - Twelve-year-old Kyle gets to stay overnight in the new town library, designed by his hero (the famous game-maker Luigi Lemoncello), with other students but finds that come morning he must work with friends to solve puzzles in order to escape.
- *The Thickety: A Path Begins* (J. A. White, 2014)
  - When Kara Westfall was five years old, her mother was convicted of the worst of all crimes: witchcraft. Years later, Kara and her little brother, Taff, are still shunned by the people of their village, who believe that nothing is more evil than magic...except, perhaps, the mysterious forest that covers nearly the entire island. It has many names, this place. Sometimes it is called the Dark Wood, or Sordyr’s Realm. But mostly it’s called the Thickety. The villagers live in fear of the Thickety and the terrible creatures that live there. But when an unusual bird lures Kara into the forbidden forest, she discovers a strange book with unspeakable powers. A book that might have belonged to her mother. And that is just the beginning of the story.
- *Save Me a Seat* (Sarah Weeks, 2016)
  - Ravi has just moved to the United States from India and has always been at the top of his class; Joe has lived in the same town his whole life and has learning problems—but when their lives intersect in the first week of fifth grade they are brought together by a common enemy (the biggest bully in their class) and the need to take control of their lives.
- *A Whole New Ballgame* (Phil Bildner, 2015)
  - Rip and Red are best friends whose 5th grade year is nothing like what they expected. They have a crazy new tattooed teacher named Mr. Acevedo, who doesn’t believe in tests or homework and who likes off-the-wall projects, the more “off” the better. They also find themselves with a new basketball coach: Mr. Acevedo Easy-going Rip is knocked completely out of his comfort zone. And for Red, who has autism and really needs things to be exactly a certain way, the changes are even more of a struggle. But together these two make a great duo who know how to help each other—and find ways to make a difference—in the classroom and on the court.

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

## Nonfiction

- *How They Choked: Failures, Flops, and Flaws by the Awfully Famous* (Georgia Bragg, 2014)
  - Everyone makes mistakes. Sometimes, epic failures even lead to super successes...sometimes they become deep dark secrets. But remember — to fail is human, to laugh about our shortcomings divine. From Montezuma II's mistaking a conqueror for a god to Isaac Newton turning from science to alchemy to J. Bruce Ismay's jumping the lifeboat line on the Titanic, *How They Choked* knocks fourteen famous achievers off their pedestals to reveal the human side of history.
- *Bugged: How Insects Changed History* (Sarah Albee, 2014)
  - There are about ten quintillion insects in the world and some of them have affected human history in tremendous ways! For as long as humans have been on earth, we've co-existed with insects...for better or for worse. Once you begin to look at world history through fly-specked glasses, you begin to see the mark of these minute life forms at every turn. Beneficial bugs have built empires. Bad bugs have toppled them. *Bugged* is not your everyday history book.

## Assignment:

### Pictures with Captions

(Due Friday, August 23rd, the second day of school)

- Divide a 12"x18" piece of paper into six even sections.
- Work must be neat and edited for display at school.
- Each section should include a picture and a caption. The caption should be detailed, but not take up more than half the section.
- **Fiction:** 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?
- **Nonfiction:** Include one of the following pieces of information in each of the six sections:
  - Title, author, and your name
  - Describe the subject your researched in at least four sentences
  - The most interesting fact
  - The most helpful text feature
  - One example of something the author did that you liked
  - The part of the book that you will remember most

## 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:

- *Maniac Magee* (Jerry Spinelli)\*
  - After his parents die, Jeffrey Lionel Magee's life becomes legendary, as he accomplishes athletic and other feats which awe his contemporaries.
- *The Crossover* (Kwame Alexander)
  - Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health.
- *The War that Saved My Life* (Kimberly Brubaker Bradley)
  - A young disabled girl and her brother are evacuated from London to the English countryside during World War II, where they find life to be much sweeter away from their abusive mother.
- *Ghost* (Jason Reynolds)
  - "Ghost, a naturally talented runner and troublemaker, is recruited for an elite middle school track team. He must stay on track, literally and figuratively, to reach his full potential"--Provided by publisher.
- *Among the Impostors* (Margaret Peterson Haddix) Book Two of the Shadow Children Series
  - In a future where the law limits a family to only two children, third-born Luke has been in hiding for the entire twelve years of his life, until he enters boarding school under an assumed name and is forced to face his fears.
- *City of Ember* (Jeanne DuPrau)
  - In the year 241, twelve-year-old Lina trades jobs on Assignment Day to be a Messenger to run to new places in her decaying but beloved city, perhaps even to glimpse Unknown Regions.
- *El Deafo* (Cece Bell)
  - Going to school can be tough. But going to school and making new friends while wearing a bulky hearing aid strapped to your chest? That requires superpowers!
- *Patient Zero*, (Marilee Peters, 2014)
  - Looks at the history of epidemics, focusing on the great plague epidemic of 1665, yellow fever in Cuba in 1900, ebola in Zaire in 1976, and others

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

**Assignment:**

Choose one of the projects below for **one** of the books you read

**(Due Friday, August 23rd, the second day of school)**

- 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.
- Mrs. Gasser will have explained these options in class before the summer; she will also have shared examples of past projects as well as graphic organizers. If you need any help over the summer, please feel free to email her: [agasser@prairieschool.com](mailto:agasser@prairieschool.com).

1) Literature Letter

- Write a letter addressed to Mrs. Gasser.
- Include the following information in the letter:
  - *First Paragraph (indented) should have:*
    - Title of Book (italics & spelled correctly)
    - Author's name (spelled correctly)
    - Briefly describe setting (time and place) and main characters
  - *Next paragraphs:*

- Choose four from the list of “openers” and write about what you have read:
  - “The part of the book that I will remember is...because...”
  - “I rated this book a \_\_\_\_\_ because...”
  - “I like 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...because”
  - “This story teaches a lesson about...”
  - “I was surprised that...”
  - “The problem in the story is...”
  - “The ending was too \_\_\_\_\_ (predictable, sad, happy, open), and I would change...”
- Be sure to give at least one example to support your opener
- Paragraphs should be about 4-6 sentences long
- Share your opinions, feelings, connections, experience, etc.

## 2) 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?

## 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 books to read. If you would like to select a “good fit” book not from this list, please have your parents email Mrs. Cobb at [jcobb@prairieschool.com](mailto:jcobb@prairieschool.com) by Wednesday, June 5th with the title and their approval of your choice. Contact Mrs. Cobb if you are unclear about any aspect of this assignment. You may receive extra credit for reading a second book.

Use the [8LL Graphic Organizer](#) to take notes as you read. Remember that you are expected to think deeply about the book and tell what you notice as you read. Bring these notes to school on the first day of classes to show Mrs. Cobb.

### Realistic Fiction

- *Heist Society* series (Ally Carter)
  - When Katarina Bishop was three, her parents took her to the Louvre...to case it. For her seventh birthday, Katarina and her Uncle Eddie travelled to Austria...to steal the crown jewels. When Kat turned fifteen, she planned a con of her own — scamming her way into the best boarding school in the country, determined to leave the family business behind. But now her dad's life is on the line, and Kat must go back to the world she tried so hard to escape...
- *Embassy Row* series (Ally Carter)
  - Grace Blakely is absolutely certain of three things: She is not crazy, her mother was murdered, and someday she is going to find the killer and make him pay. As certain as Grace is about these facts, nobody else believes her — so there's no one she can completely trust. Not her grandfather, a powerful ambassador. Not her new friends, who all live on Embassy Row. Not Alexei, the Russian boy next door, who is keeping his eye on Grace for reasons she neither likes nor understands. Everybody wants Grace to put on a pretty dress and a pretty smile, blocking out all her unpretty thoughts. But they can't control Grace — no more than Grace can control what she knows or what she needs to do. Her past has come back to hunt her...and if she doesn't stop it, Grace isn't the only one who will get hurt. Because on Embassy Row, the countries of the world stand like dominoes, and one wrong move can make them all fall down.
- *Long Shot* (Mike Lupica)
  - Pedro Morales has always been content helping others look great. The epitome of a point guard, he plays the game to set up his teammates; Ned, in particular, the star forward on the receiving end of Pedro's pinpoint passes. Pedro wants to make his father proud, and so he runs for class president. Yet doing so means going one-on-one against Ned, easily the most popular boy in school. And Pedro learns the hard way that being a good teammate doesn't mean that others will return the favor. Now Pedro wants to win more than ever; but this time, it's for himself.
  - Other titles by Mike Lupica that would be acceptable alternatives: *Heat*, *Walk On*, or *Summer Ball*
- *Epic Fail of Autura Zamora* (Pablo Cartaya)
  - When his family's restaurant and Cuban American neighborhood in Miami are threatened by a greedy land developer, thirteen-year-old Arturo, joined by Carmen, a cute poetry enthusiast, fight back, discovering the power of poetry and protest through untold family stories and the work of Jose Martí.
- *Free Verse* (Sarah Dooley)
  - After her brother dies in a fire, Sasha Harless has no one left and nowhere to turn, but soon discovers family she didn't know she had, and begins to heal through poetry.

- *The Guggenheim Mystery* (Robin Steven)
  - The adventure that began in Siobhan Dowd's popular and acclaimed novel *The London Eye Mystery* at long last continues with Ted, Kat, and their cousin Salim investigating a theft at the Guggenheim Museum that's been pinned on Salim's mother!

## Nonfiction

- *The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion & the Fall of the Imperial Russia* (Candace Fleming)
  - The story of the Russian Revolution as it unfolded. Describes both the luxurious lives of the Romanovs and the plight of Russia's peasants and their eventual uprising.
- *Bloody Times: The Funeral of Abraham Lincoln and The Manhunt for Jefferson Davis* (James L Swanson)
  - This suspense-filled true-crime thriller — the young readers' adaptation of Swanson's *Bloody Crimes* — explores two epic events of the Civil War era: the manhunt to apprehend Confederate president Jefferson Davis in the wake of Abraham Lincoln's assassination and the momentous twentieth-day funeral pageant that brought President Lincoln's body from Washington, DC to his home in Springfield.

## Fantasy

- *Mark of the Thief (Mark of the Thief #1)* (Jennifer A. Nielsen)
  - When Nic, a slave in the mines outside of Rome, is forced to enter a sealed cavern containing lost treasures of Julius Caesar, he finds himself in possession of an ancient amulet filled with magic once reserved for the Gods, and becomes the center of a conspiracy to overthrow the emperor and destroy Rome.
  - Other titles by Jennifer Nielsen that would be acceptable alternatives: *False Prince* or *Traitor's Game*

## Classic

- *The Outsiders* (S. E. Hinton)
  - Ponyboy can count on his brothers. And on his friends. But not on much else besides trouble with the Socs, a vicious gang of rich kids whose idea of a good time is beating up on "greasers" like Ponyboy. At least he knows what to expect until the night someone takes things too far.

## Graphic Novels

- *All's Faire in Middle School* (Victoria Jamieson)
  - Homeschooled by Renaissance Fair enthusiasts, eleven-year-old Imogene has a hard time fitting in when her wish to enroll in public school is granted.
- *Awkward* (Svetlana Chmakova)
  - After shunning Jaime, the school nerd, on her first day at a new middle school, Penelope Torres tries to blend in with her new friends in the art club, until the art club goes to war with the science club, of which Jaime is a member.
- *Brave* (Svetlana Chmakova)
  - In his daydreams, Jensen is the biggest hero that ever was, saving the world and his friends on a daily basis. But his middle school reality is very different — math is hard, getting along with friends is hard...Even finding a partner for the class project is a big problem when you always get picked last. And the pressure's on even more once the school newspaper's dynamic duo, Jenny and Akilah, draw Jensen into the whirlwind of school news, social experiment projects, and behind-the-scenes club drama. Jensen has always played the middle school game one level at a time, but suddenly, someone's cranked up the difficulty setting. Will those daring daydreams of his finally work in his favor, or will he have to find real solutions to his real life problems?

## Grade 7: Social Studies

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

- *Night Journeys* (Avi)
  - Two young indentured servants escape into Pennsylvania in the late 1700's and receive help from an unexpected source.
  - **Note:** Mr. Mills may have a limited number of paperback copies of *Night Journeys* available for purchase. If interested, send him an email at [amills@prairieschool.com](mailto:amills@prairieschool.com).
- *Chains* (Laurie Halse Anderson)
  - After being sold to a cruel couple in New York City, a slave named Isabel spies for the rebels during the Revolutionary War.

Feel free to look online to learn more about each book before making your choice. You will need to purchase a copy of the book you choose or try to find it at the library. *Night Journeys* is not available as an eBook, but can be purchased online. *Chains* is available as an eBook or in paperback.

### Assignment:

#### Character Sketch Notes

(Due Friday, August 23rd, the second day of school)

- As you read, take notes to use in writing a character sketch for one of the main characters from the novel (not Robert from *Night Journeys*!).
- These notes should include:
  - Proof of three character traits, including page numbers where the trait is seen for reference later (quiet, selfish, outgoing)
  - The goal of that character (what he/she wants to do)
  - A problem faced by that character in the book
  - A solution or possible solution to that problem
- At the start of the school year each student will complete a written character sketch for their chosen character. This character sketch **will be completed in school, not over the summer!** The only materials you may use in writing the sketch will be the notes you prepare over the summer!
- All work should be word processed or neatly on paper. Spelling counts at all times!

Here is an example of notes for Robert, another character in the novel *Night Journeys*:

1. character traits: *rigid* (p. 88 – Robert seemed indifferent, not affected at all by the fact that he was being held prisoner. He also did not respond in any way to Mr. Shinn's nonchalant attitude toward him or to Peter's stares.); *gracious* (p. 97 – Elizabeth talks about how Robert helped her when she stole from his apprentice master. Robert even got sent to prison for helping Elizabeth but still he did not abandon her. This shows how gracious Robert is.); *disheveled* (p. 88 – Peter describes Robert as having dirty clothes, no shoes, and messy hair. He describes Robert's appearance as being evidence of the journey he and Elizabeth had taken; because he was so disheveled.)
2. Robert's goal was to escape with his friend Elizabeth to Easton and find a paying job there.
3. Robert is being held prisoner in Mr. Shinn's barn and a man is soon coming from Trenton to return him to his owner, John Tolivar.
4. Peter can help Robert and Elizabeth escape to freedom.

## 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 books to read. If you would like to select a “good fit” book not from this list, please have your parents email Mrs. Cobb at [jcobb@prairieschool.com](mailto:jcobb@prairieschool.com) by Wednesday, June 5th with the title and their approval of your choice. Contact Mrs. Cobb if you are unclear about any aspect of this assignment. You may receive extra credit for reading a second book.

Use the [8LL Graphic Organizer](#) to take notes as you read. Remember that you are expected to think deeply about the book and tell what you notice as you read. Bring these notes to school on the first day of classes to show Mrs. Cobb.

### Dystopian/Fantasy

- *Jackaby* (William Ritter)
  - Newly arrived in 1892 New England, Abigail Rook becomes assistant to R. F. Jackaby, an investigator of the unexplained with the ability to see supernatural beings, and she helps him delve into a case of serial murder which, Jackaby is convinced, is due to a non-human creature.
- *Legend* (Marie Lu)
  - In a dark future, when North America has split into two warring nations, fifteen-year-old Day — a famous criminal — and prodigy June, the brilliant soldier hired to capture him, discover that they have a common enemy.

### Realistic Fiction

- Any John Feinstein book, such as *Walk On* (2014)
  - Alex Myers is a triple-threat athlete — great at football, basketball, and baseball. But he'll have to fight for a spot on the varsity team. Alex is a quarterback, but from the first day of football practice, it's clear that that position is very much filled by the coach's son, Matt. Alex finally gets a chance to show what he can do when Matt is injured, and he helps win a key game to keep the Lions' bid for the state championship alive. But just when his star is rising, Alex gets blindsided - the state has started drug testing, and Alex's test comes back positive for steroids. Alex knows that's not right. But he doesn't know if it's a mistake - or if someone wants to make sure he can't play...
- *Piecing Me Together* (Renee Watson)
  - Tired of being singled out at her mostly-white private school as someone who needs support, high school junior Jade would rather participate in the school's amazing Study Abroad program than join Women to Women, a mentorship program for at-risk girls.

### Non-fiction

- *March, Book I, II, III* (John Lewis)
  - This trilogy by Congressman John Lewis, a key figure of the civil rights movement, centers around his commitment to justice and nonviolence that has taken him from an Alabama sharecropper's farm to the halls of Congress, from a segregated schoolroom to the 1963 March on Washington, and from receiving beatings from state troopers to receiving the Medal of Freedom from the first African-American president.
- *The Boys in the Boat: the True Story of an American Team's Epic Journey to Win Gold at the 1936 Olympics*, young readers adaptation (Daniel James Brown)
  - Out of the depths of the Great Depression comes the astonishing tale of nine working-class boys from the American West who at the 1936 Olympics showed the world what true grit really meant. With rowers who were the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University

of Washington's eight-oar crew was never expected to defeat the elite East Coast teams, yet they did, going on to shock the world by challenging the German boat rowing for Adolf Hitler.

## Grade 8: Social Studies

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

- *Assassin* (Anna Myers)
  - In alternating passages, a young White House seamstress named Bella and the actor John Wilkes Booth describe the events that lead to the latter's assassination of Abraham Lincoln.
  - **Note:** Mr. Mills may have a limited number of paperback copies of *Assassin* available for purchase. If interested, send him an email at [amills@prairieschool.com](mailto:amills@prairieschool.com).
- *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate* (Jacqueline Kelly)
  - In central Texas in 1899, eleven-year-old Callie Vee Tate is instructed to be a lady by her mother, learns about love from the older three of her six brothers, and studies the natural world with her grandfather, the latter of which leads to an important discovery.

You can find both books at local bookstores, or can purchase electronic versions through Amazon (for Kindle reader) or iBooks.

### Assignment:

#### Character Sketch Notes

(Due Friday, August 23rd, the second day of school)

- As you read, take notes to use in writing a character sketch for one of the main characters from the novel (not Robert from *Night Journeys*!).
- These notes should include:
  - Proof of three character traits (reserved, egocentric, gregarious) — please use interesting and different vocabulary to impress your teacher
  - The goal of that character (what he/she wants to do)
  - A problem faced by that character in the book
  - A solution or possible solution to that problem
- At the start of the school year each student will complete a written character sketch for one of the following characters: **Bella** or **Booth** from *Assassin*, or **Calpurnia** or **Grandfather** from *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*. This character sketch **will be written in class**. The only materials you may use in writing the sketch will be the notes you prepare over the summer!
- All work should be word processed or neatly on paper. Spelling counts at all times!

Here is an example of notes for Robert, one of the main characters from the book you read last summer, *Night Journeys*, as an example of what your notes should look like:

1. character traits: *rigid* (p. 88 – Robert seemed indifferent, not affected at all by the fact that he was being held prisoner. He also did not respond in any way to Mr. Shinn's nonchalant attitude toward him or to Peter's stares.); *gracious* (p. 97 – Elizabeth talks about how Robert helped her when she stole from his apprentice master. Robert even got sent to prison for helping Elizabeth but still he did not abandon her. This shows how gracious Robert is.); *disheveled* (p. 88 – Peter describes Robert as having dirty clothes, no shoes, and messy hair. He describes Robert's appearance as being evidence of the journey he and Elizabeth had taken; because he was so disheveled.)
2. Robert's goal was to escape with his friend Elizabeth to Easton and find a paying job there.
3. Robert is being held prisoner in Mr. Shinn's barn and a man is soon coming from Trenton to return him to his owner, John Tolivar.
4. Peter can help Robert and Elizabeth escape to freedom.