

Westside Neighborhood School Middle School Summer Reading List 2015

Required Reading: Please read the following required book for your incoming grade level. When you return to school in the fall, make sure you have a hard copy of the book on hand (no eBooks, please.) For the first few weeks, be prepared to engage in the curriculum designed around the novel.

6th Grade

***Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli**

Jeffrey Lionel "Maniac" Magee might have lived a normal life if a freak accident hadn't made him an orphan. After living with his unhappy and uptight aunt and uncle for eight years, he decides to run--and not just run away, but run. This is where the myth of Maniac Magee begins, as he changes the lives of a racially divided small town with his amazing and legendary feats.

7th Grade

***The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis**

Since the Taliban took over Afghanistan, 11-year-old Parvana has rarely been outdoors. Barred from attending school, shopping at the market, or even playing in the streets of Kabul, the heroine of Deborah Ellis's engrossing children's novel *The Breadwinner* is trapped inside her family's one-room home. That is, until the Taliban hauls away her father and Parvana realizes that it's up to her to become the "breadwinner" and disguise herself as a boy to support her mother, two sisters, and baby brother. Set in the early years of the Taliban regime, this topical novel for middle readers explores the harsh realities of life for girls and women in modern-day Afghanistan.

8th Grade

***Bad Boy* by Walter Dean Myers**

In a memoir that is gripping, funny, and ultimately unforgettable, New York Times bestselling author Walter Dean Myers travels back to his roots in the magical world of Harlem during the 1940s and 1950s. As a boy, Myers was quick-tempered and physically strong, always ready for a fight. He also read voraciously—he would check out books from the library and carry them home, hidden in brown paper bags in order to avoid other boys' teasing. He aspired to be a writer. But while growing up in a poor family in Harlem, his hope for a successful future diminished as he came to realize fully the class and racial struggles that surrounded him. He began to doubt himself and the values that he had always relied on, attending high school less and less, turning to the streets and to his books for comfort.

In addition to the required book, **please read AT LEAST THREE BOOKS from the list below**; then go on to read as many other books as you like. The books on this list have been selected for their variety, quality, and interest, and they may lead you to others you find interesting. Choose different **genres** of books; don't read all the same genre. If you have already read some of these books, choose new ones for this summer. The important thing is to **keep reading quality books!**

Some of the books on this list are easier to read; some are more challenging. Try to select books that are **appropriate for you as a reader**. Remember that "easier" books can offer wonderful stories and writing; don't avoid them. At least one book you read this summer should be challenging for you.

Additional Summer Reading Book Choices

TASK #1: Be prepared to complete a worksheet on one of your chosen reading books when you come to school in September. This worksheet will help guide you through discussion in your book groups.

TASK #2: We will be dividing middle schoolers into small, mixed grade-level groups for literature discussion circles. Ms. Snow, Mrs. Jones, and Ms. Barry will work with students and faculty to put together the book groups.

*****PLEASE LET MRS. SNOW (8th) (jsnow@wnsk8.com), MRS. JONES (7th) (ajones@wnsk8.com), OR MS. BARRY (6th) (cbarry@wnsk8.com) KNOW WHAT BOOKS YOU ARE PLANNING TO READ BY MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2015.**

Realistic Fiction

***The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander**

"With a bolt of lightning on my kicks . . . The court is SIZZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. Cuz tonight I'm delivering," announces dread-locked, 12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood from Kwame Alexander (*He Said, She Said* 2013). Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

***Phoenix Rising* by Karen Hesse**

Nyle's life with her grandmother on their Vermont sheep farm advances rhythmically through the seasons until the night of the accident at the Cookshire nuclear power plant. Without warning, Nyle's modest world fills with protective masks, evacuations, contaminated food, disruptions, and mistrust. Things become even more complicated when Ezra Trent and his mother, refugees from the heart of the accident, take temporary shelter in the back bedroom of Nyle's house. The back bedroom is the dying room: It took her mother when Nyle was six; it stole away her grandfather just two years ago. Now, Ezra is back there and Nyle doesn't want to open her heart to him. Too many times she's let people in, only to have them desert her. If she lets herself care for Ezra, she knows he'll end up leaving her, too.

***Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt (6th grade)**

"Everybody is smart in different ways. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid." Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the troublemaker. With his help, Ally learns not to be so hard on herself and that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. As her confidence grows, Ally feels free to be herself and the world starts opening up with possibilities. She discovers that there's a lot more to her—and to everyone—than a label, and that great minds don't always think alike.

***Every Day* by David Levithan ** (7th and 8th grade)**

A "wise, wildly unique" love story about A, a teen who wakes up every morning in a different body, living a different life. Every day a different body. Every day a different life. Every day in love with the same girl. There's never any warning about where it will be or who it will be. A has made peace with that, even established guidelines by which to live: Never get too attached. Avoid being noticed. Do not interfere. It's all fine until the morning that A wakes up in the body of Justin and meets Justin's girlfriend, Rhiannon. From that moment, the rules by which A has been living no longer apply. Because finally A has found someone he wants to be with—day in, day out, day after day.

***The Red Pencil* by Andrea Davis Pinkney. illus. by Shane W. Evans. Little, Brown.**

Finally, Amira is twelve. Old enough to wear a *toob*, old enough for new responsibilities. And maybe old enough to go to school in Nyala-- Amira's one true dream. But life in her peaceful Sudanese village is shattered when the Janjaweed arrive. The terrifying attackers ravage the town and unleash unspeakable horrors. After she loses nearly everything, Amira needs to dig deep within herself to find the strength to make the long journey-- on foot-- to safety at a refugee camp. Her days are tough at the camp, until the gift of a simple red pencil opens her mind-- and all kinds of possibilities.

Science Fiction, Mystery, and Fantasy

***Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams**

Join Douglas Adams's hapless hero Arthur Dent as he travels the galaxy with his intrepid pal Ford Prefect, getting into horrible messes and generally wreaking hilarious havoc. Dent is grabbed from Earth moments before a cosmic construction team obliterates the planet to build a freeway. You'll never read funnier science fiction; Adams is a master of intelligent satire, barbed wit, and comedic dialogue. *The Hitchhiker's Guide* is rich in comedic detail and thought-provoking situations and stands up to multiple reads. Required reading for science fiction fans, this book (and its follow-ups) is also sure to please fans of Monty Python, Terry Pratchett's Discworld series, and British sitcoms.

***Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* by Chris Grabenstein**

The world's most famous gamemaker, Luigi Lemoncello, has just designed a brand-new, state-of-the-art library in his hometown, and he's invited 12 lucky seventh graders to stay the night just before its grand opening. Avid gamer Kyle Keeley jumps at the chance to meet his idol and see a real live library. After the previous library's demolition, this is the first library this small town has had in 12 years. Kyle is elated when his essay is chosen, and he gets to be among the first to wander the halls of one of the most interactive libraries ever. Kyle and the other

contestants have 24 hours to find a secret exit out of the building and win a spectacular prize, and when the doors shut, the games really begin. Love of literature is a must if you want to escape.

***The Island of Dr. Libris* by Chris Grabenstein**

What if your favorite characters came to life? Billy's spending the summer in a lakeside cabin that belongs to the mysterious Dr. Libris. But something strange is going on. Besides the security cameras everywhere, there's Dr. Libris's private bookcase. Whenever Billy opens the books inside, he can hear sounds coming from the island in the middle of the lake. The clash of swords. The twang of arrows. Sometimes he can even feel the ground shaking. It's almost as if the stories he's reading are coming to life! But that's impossible . . . isn't it?

***The Fourteenth Goldfish* by Jennifer L. Holm**

Galileo. Newton. Salk. Oppenheimer. Science can change the world . . . but can it go too far? Eleven-year-old Ellie has never liked change. She misses fifth grade. She misses her old best friend. She even misses her dearly departed goldfish. Then one day a strange boy shows up. He's bossy. He's cranky. And weirdly enough . . . he looks a lot like Ellie's grandfather, a scientist who's always been slightly obsessed with immortality. Could this pimply boy really be Grandpa Melvin? Has he finally found the secret to eternal youth?

***Enders (7th and 8th grade only)* by Lissa Price**

The riveting conclusion to the sci-fi thriller STARTERS! Someone is after Starters like Callie and Michael—teens with chips in their brains. They want to experiment on anyone left over from Prime Destinations—Starters who can be controlled and manipulated. With the body bank destroyed, Callie no longer has to rent herself out to creepy Enders. But Enders can still get inside her mind and make her do things she doesn't want to do. Like hurt someone she loves. Having the chip removed could save her life—but it could also silence the voice in her head that might belong to her father. Callie has flashes of her ex-renter Helena's memories, too . . . and the Old Man is back, filling her with fear. Who is real and who is masquerading in a teen body? No one is ever who they appear to be, not even the Old Man. Determined to find out who he really is and grasping at the hope of a normal life for herself and her younger brother, Callie is ready to fight for the truth. Even if it kills her.

***The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman**

Lyra Belacqua is content to run wild among the scholars of Jordan College, with her daemon familiar always by her side. But the arrival of her fearsome uncle, Lord Asriel, draws her to the heart of a terrible struggle—a struggle born of Gobblers and stolen children, witch clans and armored bears. And as she hurtles toward danger in the cold far North, Lyra never suspects the shocking truth: she alone is destined to win, or to lose, this more-than-mortal battle.

***Echo* by Pam Muñoz Ryan**

"Long before enchantment was eclipsed by doubt," a young boy named Otto lost in the woods is rescued by three sisters imprisoned there by a witch's curse. In return, he promises to help break the curse by carrying their spirits out of the forest in a mouth harp and passing the instrument along when the time is right. The narrative shifts to the 20th century, when the same mouth harp (aka harmonica) becomes the tangible thread that connects the stories of three children: Friedrich, a disfigured outcast; Mike, an impoverished orphan; and Ivy, an itinerant farmer's child. Their personal struggles are set against some of the darkest eras in human history: Friedrich, the rise of Nazi Germany; Mike, the Great Depression; Ivy, World War II. The children are linked by musical talent and the hand of fate that brings Otto's harmonica into their lives. Each recognizes something unusual about the instrument, not only its sound but its power to fill them with courage and hope.

***Bigger than a Bread Box* by Laura Snyder**

A magical breadbox that delivers whatever you wish for—as long as it fits inside? It's too good to be true! Twelve-year-old Rebecca is struggling with her parents' separation, as well as a sudden move to her Gran's house in another state. For a while, the magic bread box, discovered in the attic, makes life away from home a little easier. Then suddenly it starts to make things much, much more difficult, and Rebecca is forced to decide not just where, but who she really wants to be.

***The Shadow Thieves (Cronus Chronicles #1)* by Anne Ursu**

Forget heaven and hell, the Greek underworld isn't a myth! When it's time to leave the corporeal world, everyone makes the journey to Hades' realm, where they spend eternity as a Shade, first waiting in line to cross the river Styx, and thereafter roaming aimlessly. All is status quo until power-hungry Philonecron resolves to reanimate the dead with blood from the living, create an army from the shadows of living children, and usurp Hades' throne. Enter Charlotte Mielswetzski, unwitting accomplice; her cousin Zee, a boy with an unusual bloodline and an unusual shadow; and a kitten named Mew. The cousins come to understand they are at the center of a nefarious underworldly plot, and must protect themselves, foil Philonecron, and reunite the children with their shadows. This story is charmingly silly, but has enough serious moments to carry the plot forward. It unwinds with such unabashed cheerfulness and gusto that readers will find much to enjoy, especially if they can connect with its mythological base.

Historical Fiction

***Emma* by Jane Austen**

When her former governess finds happiness as the bride of a local widower, the brilliant and beautiful Emma Woodhouse — one of Jane Austen's immortal creations — flatters herself that she alone has secured the marriage and that she possesses a special talent for bringing lovers together. The young heiress next busies herself with finding a suitable husband for her friend and protégé, Harriet Smith, setting off an entertaining sequence of comic mishaps and misunderstanding in this sparkling comedy of English-village romance. Beneath its considerable wit, the novel is also the story of a young woman's progress toward self-understanding

***City of Orphans* by Avi**

The streets of 1893 New York are full of life: crowded, filthy, and dangerous. If you are a newsboy like thirteen-year-old Maks Geless, you need to watch out for Bruno, leader of the Plug Ugly Gang whose shadowy, sinister boss is plotting to take control of all the newsies on the lower East Side. With Bruno's boys in fierce pursuit, Maks discovers Willa, a strange girl who lives alone in an alley. It is she, stick in hand, who fights off the Plug Uglies—but further dangers await. Maks must find a way to free his sister Emma from The Tombs, the city jail where she has been imprisoned for stealing a watch at the glamorous new Waldorf Hotel. Maks, believing her innocent, has only four days to prove it. Fortunately, there is Bartleby Donck, the eccentric lawyer (among other employments) to guide Maks and Willa in the art of detection. Against a backdrop alive with the sights and sounds of tenement New York, Maks, as boy detective, must confront a teeming world of wealth and crime, while struggling against powerful forces threatening new immigrants and the fabric of family love

***Crispin: The Cross-of Lead* by Avi**

"Asta's Son" is all he's ever been called. The lack of a name is appropriate, because he and his mother are but poor peasants in 14th century medieval England. But this thirteen-year-old boy who thought he had little to lose soon finds himself with even less - no home, no family, or possessions. Accused of a crime he did not commit, he may be killed on sight, by anyone. If he wishes to remain alive, he must flee his tiny village. All the boy takes with him is a newly revealed name - Crispin - and his mother's cross of lead

***Between Shades of Grey* by Ruta Sepetys**

A New York Times Notable Book

An International Bestseller

A Carnegie Medal Nominee

Fifteen-year-old Lina is a Lithuanian girl living an ordinary life—until Soviet officers invade her home and tear her family apart. Separated from her father and forced onto a crowded train, Lina, her mother, and her young brother make their way to a Siberian work camp, where they are forced to fight for their lives. Lina finds solace in her art, documenting these events by drawing. Risking everything, she imbeds clues in her drawings of their location and secretly passes them along, hoping her drawings will make their way to her father's prison camp. But will strength, love, and hope be enough for Lina and her family to survive?

Nonfiction-Memoir

***El Deafo* by Cece Bell (A 2015 Newbery Honor Book)**

Going to school and making new friends can be tough. But going to school and making new friends while wearing a bulky hearing aid strapped to your chest? That requires superpowers! In this funny, poignant graphic novel memoir, author/illustrator Cece Bell chronicles her hearing loss at a young age and her subsequent experiences with the Phonic Ear, a very powerful—and very awkward—hearing aid. The Phonic Ear gives Cece the ability to hear—sometimes things she shouldn't—but also isolates her from her classmates. She really just wants to fit in and find a true friend, someone who appreciates her as she is. After some trouble, she is finally able to harness the power of the Phonic Ear and become “El Deafo, Listener for All.” And more importantly, declare a place for herself in the world and find the friend she's longed for.

***Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson**

Jacqueline Woodson, one of today's finest writers, tells the moving story of her childhood in mesmerizing verse.

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.

***I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai**

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she became a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize. *I Am Malala* is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons. *I Am Malala* will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world

Nonfiction - History and Science

***Lewis and Clark (Graphic Novel)* by Nick Bertozzi**

Two of America's greatest explorers embark on the adventure that made their names—and sealed their fates. In 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark departed St. Louis, Missouri, for one of the greatest adventures this nation has ever known. Appointed and funded by President Jefferson himself, and led by a cadre of experts (including the famous Sacajawea), the expedition was considered a success almost before it had begun. From the start, the journey was plagued with illness, bad luck, unfriendly Indians, Lewis's chronic depression, and, to top it all, the shattering surprise of the towering Rocky Mountains and the continental divide. But despite crippling setbacks, overwhelming doubts, and the bare facts of geography itself, Lewis and Clark made it to the Pacific in 1806. Nick Bertozzi brings the harrowing—and, at times, hilarious—journey to vivid life on the pages of this oversized black-and-white graphic novel. With his passion for history and his knack for characterization, Bertozzi has made an intimate tale of a great American epic

***Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines* by Paul Fleischman**

Fleishman issues a wake-up call - and a challenge - to today's teens about the environmental crisis. He begins with a call to arms to see through "the everyday world's two biggest illusions: 'it's always been this way' and 'everything's fine,'" urging teens to critically examine the information fed to them through advertising, politics, and "the whole culture we're part of." The book homes in on five "key fronts" - population, consumption, energy, food, and climate - and explores historical and sociological contexts. Fleischman writes urgently, conversationally, and inspirationally as he connects the dots between major social, political, psychological, economic, and scientific concepts and his personal experiences and thoughts. This is a refreshingly opinionated approach to informed action, encouraging young people to think and act critically, communally, and responsibly.

***Guilty?: Crime, Punishment, and the Changing Face of Justice* by Teri Kanefield**

In this discussion of the American criminal justice system, the author uses a series of case studies that allows her to present issues to middle school students in the same way that a lawyer or law student might learn about them. The book is divided into three parts: what constitutes criminal behavior; punishment; and due process. Kanefield allows readers to understand how notions of right and wrong change over time and across cultures, helping them to begin to understand the complexities of crime and punishment and leaves them eager to find out more.

***Because They Marched: The People's Campaign for Voting Rights That Changed America* by Russell Freedman**

With clear prose sprinkled liberally with primary source quotes and carefully selected photographs, Freedman documents the historic 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march that sparked the passing of the Voting Rights Act, "the crowning achievement of the civil rights movement." The opening chapter focuses on the teachers' march to the courthouse as a major trigger for the movement.

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