

Summer Reading 2026

Incoming 8th Grade

Parents,

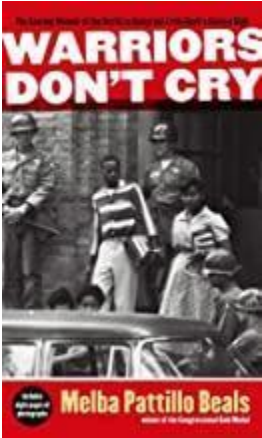
Our summer reading program affords our students choice in what they read, hoping that students can find a book that is a true page-turner. Our goal has always been to keep students reading through the summer months, but getting students to put down the phone and pick up a book is even more challenging. In expanding our recommended list, we hope to ensure there is something for everyone, and that the summer read is a positive experience and a fun adventure. Our English Department invested time developing reading lists per grade level, to include a few classics, nonfiction, realistic and historical fiction, science fiction, fantasy, and dystopia.

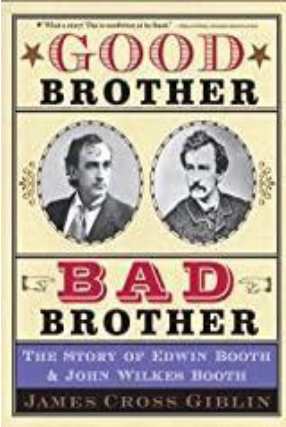
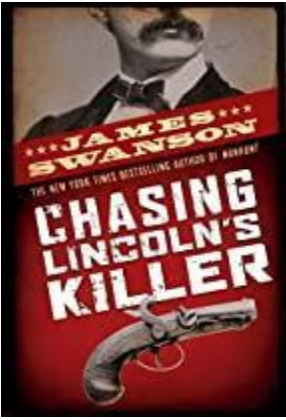
Take time with your student(s) to peruse the list, making sure their book choice meets with your parental approval. A synopsis is included with each title to assist with selection. If you are not sure where to look for more information regarding the content of the text for your child, you can consult [Common Sense Media](http://www.commonsensemedia.org) (www.commonsensemedia.org) or look at the publisher's recommendations. We will ask students to respond to a written prompt referencing their title once they are back in the classroom in late August.

We wish your family a safe and fun-filled summer, and invite all of you to pick up one of the titles listed to enjoy on the beach, by the pool, on a long car ride, or in a shady chair in the backyard. Happy reading, everyone!

Mrs. Kathy Hand
Principal

Choose one of the following books to read during the summer. When you return to school in August, your chosen book will be the topic of your first writing.

Genre	Title/Author	Summary
<p>Nonfiction</p> <p><i>Warriors Don't Cry</i></p> <p>Melba Pattillo Beals</p>		<p>In 1957, well before Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, Melba Pattillo Beals and eight other teenagers became iconic symbols for the Civil Rights Movement and the dismantling of Jim Crow in the American South as they integrated Little Rock’s Central High School in the wake of the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling, <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>. Throughout her harrowing ordeal, Melba was taunted by her schoolmates and their parents, threatened by a lynch mob’s rope, attacked with lighted sticks of dynamite, and injured by acid sprayed in her eyes. Through it all, she acted with dignity and courage, and refused to back down.</p>
<p>Nonfiction</p> <p><i>Gifted Hands: The Story of Ben Carson</i></p> <p>Ben Carson</p>		<p>As a boy, he did poorly in school and struggled with anger. If it were not for the persistence of his mother, a single parent who worked three jobs and pushed her sons to do their best, his story may have ended tragically. Join Dr. Carson on his journey from a struggling inner-city student to the pinnacle of his career as a world-renowned neurosurgeon. A man of humility, decency, compassion, courage, and sensitivity, he now serves as a role model for everyone who wants to achieve their God-given potential.</p>


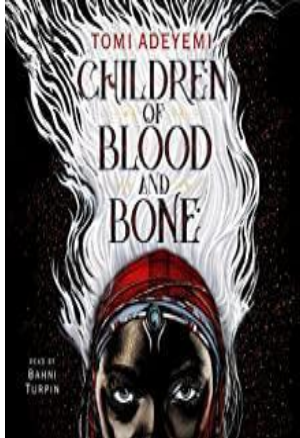
<p>Nonfiction</p> <p><i>Good Brother, Bad Brother: The Story of Ethan Booth and John Wilkes Booth</i></p> <p>James Giblin</p>		<p>Edwin Booth and his younger brother John Wilkes Booth were, in many ways, two of a kind. They were among America’s finest actors, having inherited their father’s commanding stage presence along with his penchant for alcohol and impulsive behavior. In other respects, the two brothers were very different. Edwin was more introspective, while John was known for his passionate intensity. They stood at opposite poles politically, as well: Edwin voted for Abraham Lincoln; John was an ardent advocate of the Confederacy.</p>
<p>Nonfiction/ Memoir</p> <p><i>Chasing Lincoln’s Killer</i></p> <p>James Swanson</p>		<p>New York Times bestselling author James Swanson delivers a riveting account of the chase for Abraham Lincoln's assassin. Based on rare archival material, obscure trial manuscripts, and interviews with relatives of the conspirators and the manhunters, <i>Chasing Lincoln's Killer</i> is a fast-paced thriller about the pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth: a wild twelve-day chase through the streets of Washington, D.C., across the swamps of Maryland, and into the forests of Virginia.</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p><i>Watership Down</i></p> <p>Richard Adams</p>		<p><i>Watership Down</i> is the compelling tale of a group of wild rabbits struggling to hold onto their place in the world. Set in England's Downs, a once idyllic rural landscape, this stirring tale of adventure, courage and survival follows a band of very special creatures on their flight from the intrusion of man and the certain destruction of their home. Led by a stouthearted pair of brothers, they journey forth from their native Sandleford Warren through the harrowing trials posed by predators and adversaries, to a mysterious promised land and a more perfect society.</p>

<p>Classics</p> <p><i>The Secret Garden</i></p> <p>Frances Hodgson Burnett</p>		<p>The novel tells the story of young Mary Lennox, who is sent to live in her uncle's estate in Yorkshire, England. As she explores the grounds, she discovers a walled-off garden, which she soon begins to tend and nurture. Through her care, the garden becomes a place of wonder and healing, transforming the lives of those around her.</p>
<p>Classics</p> <p><i>Call of the Wild</i></p> <p>Jack London</p>		<p><i>The Call of the Wild</i>, considered by many to be Jack London's greatest novel, is a gripping survival story of a heroic dog that, thrust into the brutal life of the Alaska Gold Rush, ultimately faces a choice between living in man's world and returning to nature. Adventure and animal-story enthusiasts, as well as students and devotees of American literature, will find this classic work a thrilling, memorable reading experience.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Chains</i></p> <p>Laurie Halse Anderson</p>		<p>As the Revolutionary War begins, 13-year-old Isabel wages her own fight for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate, become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom.</p>

<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Tangerine</i></p> <p>Edward Bloor</p>		<p>Paul Fisher sees the world from behind glasses so thick he looks like a bug-eyed alien. But he's not so blind that he can't see there are some very unusual things about his family's new home in Tangerine County, Florida.</p> <p>Where else does a sinkhole swallow the local school, fire burn underground for years, and lightning strike at the same time every day? The chaos is compounded by constant harassment from his football-star brother.</p> <p>Adjusting to life in Tangerine isn't easy for Paul—until he joins the soccer team at his middle school. With the help of his new teammates, Paul begins to discover what lies beneath the surface of his strange new hometown. And he also gains the courage to face up to some secrets his family has been keeping from him for far too long.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Code Orange</i></p> <p>Caroline Cooney</p>		<p>Walking around New York City was what Mitty Blake did best. He loved the city, and even after 9/11, he always felt safe. Mitty was a carefree guy—he didn't worry about terrorists or blackouts or grades or anything, which is why he was late getting started on his Advanced Bio report. Mitty does feel a little pressure to hand something in—if he doesn't, he'll be switched out of Advanced Bio, which would be unfortunate since Olivia's in Advanced Bio. So, he considers it good luck when he finds some old medical books in his family's weekend house that focus on something he could write about, but when he discovers an old envelope with two scabs in one of the books, the report is no longer about the grade—it's about life and death. His own.</p>

<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Whale Talk</i></p> <p>Chris Crutcher</p>	 <p>(Available at Barnes and Noble)</p>	<p>T.J. Jones hates the blatant preferential treatment jocks receive at his high school, and the reverence paid to the varsity lettermen. When he sees a member of the wrestling team threatening an underclassman, T.J. decides he's had enough. He recruits some of the biggest misfits at Cutter High to form a swim team. They may not have very much talent, but the All-Night Mermen prove to be way more than T.J. anticipated. As the unlikely athletes move closer to their goal, these new friends might learn that the journey is worth more than the reward.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Red Kayak</i></p> <p>Priscilla Cummings</p>		<p>Brady loves life on the Chesapeake Bay with his friends J.T. and Digger, but developers and rich families are moving into the area, and while Brady befriends some of them, like the DiAngelos, his parents and friends are bitter about the changes. Tragedy strikes when the DiAngelos' kayak overturns in the bay, and Brady wonders if it was more than an accident. Soon, Brady discovers the terrible truth behind the kayak's sinking, and it will change the lives of those he loves forever. Priscilla Cummings deftly weaves a suspenseful tale of three teenagers caught in a wicked web of deception.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Scat</i></p> <p>Carl Hiaassen</p>		<p>Bunny Starch, the most feared biology teacher ever, is missing. She disappeared after a school field trip to Black Vine Swamp. To be honest, the kids in her class are relieved, but when the principal tries to tell the students that Mrs. Starch has been called away on a "family emergency," Nick and Marta just don't buy it. They figure the class delinquent, Smoke, has something to do with her disappearance, and he does, but not in the way they think. There's a lot more going on in Black Vine Swamp than any one player in this twisted tale can see. It's all about to reach a boiling point, and when it does, the bad guys better scat.</p>

<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Million Dollar Throw</i></p> <p>Mike Lupica</p>		<p>Everyone calls Nate Brodie "Brady" because he's a New England quarterback, just like his idol, Tom Brady. Now he's got a chance to win a million dollars by throwing one pass through a target at halftime in the Patriots' Thanksgiving night game. More than anything, Nate's family needs the money—his dad's been downsized, his mom's working two jobs, and they're on the verge of losing their house. The worry is more weight than a 13-year-old can bear, and it's affecting his playing for his own football team. Suddenly the boy with the golden arm is having trouble completing a pass, but can he make the one that really counts?</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction (Mystery)</p> <p><i>Trash</i></p> <p>Andy Mulligan</p>		<p>In an unnamed Third World country, in the not-so-distant future, three “dumpsite boys” make a living picking through the mountains of garbage on the outskirts of a large city. One unlucky-lucky day, Raphael finds something very special and very mysterious, so mysterious that he decides to keep it, even when the city police offer a handsome reward for its return. That decision brings with it terrifying consequences, and soon the dumpsite boys must use all of their cunning and courage to stay ahead of their pursuers. It’s up to Raphael, Gardo, and Rat—boys who have no education, no parents, no homes, and no money—to solve the mystery and right a terrible wrong.</p>
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>The Wednesday Wars</i></p> <p>Gary D. Schmidt</p>		<p>Seventh grader Holling Hoodhood isn't happy. He is sure his new teacher, Mrs. Baker, hates his guts. Holling's domineering father is obsessed with his business image and disregards his family. Throughout the school year, Holling strives to get a handle on the Shakespeare plays Mrs. Baker assigns him to read on his own time, and to figure out the enigmatic Mrs. Baker. As the Vietnam War turns lives upside down, Holling comes to admire and respect both Shakespeare and Mrs. Baker, who have more to offer him than he imagined, and when his family is on the verge of coming apart, he also</p>

		discovers his loyalty to his sister, and his ability to stand up to his father when it matters most.
<p>Realistic/ Historic Fiction</p> <p><i>Love is a Revolution</i></p> <p>Renee Watson</p>		<p>When Nala Robertson reluctantly agrees to attend an open mic night for her cousin-sister-friend Imani's birthday, she finds herself falling in instant love with Tye Brown, the MC. He's perfect, except Tye is an activist and is spending the summer putting on events for the community when Nala would rather watch movies and try out the new seasonal flavors at the local creamery. In order to impress Tye, Nala tells a few tiny lies to have enough in common with him. As they spend more time together, sharing more of themselves, some of those lies get harder to keep up. As Nala falls deeper into keeping up her lies and into love, she'll learn all the ways love is hard, and how self-love is revolutionary.</p>
<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>Chasing Blood and Bone</i></p> <p>Tomi Adeyemi</p>		<p>Zélie Adebola remembers when the soil of Orísha hummed with magic. Burners ignited flames, Tiders beckoned waves, and Zélie's Reaper mother summoned forth souls, but everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, Maji were killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope. Now Zélie has one chance to bring back magic and strike against the monarchy. With the help of a rogue princess, Zélie must outwit and outrun the crown prince, who is hell-bent on eradicating magic for good. Danger lurks in Orísha, where snow leoponaires prowl and vengeful spirits wait in the waters. Yet the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to control her powers and her growing feelings for an enemy.</p>

Science Fiction/Fantasy

City of Ember

Jeanne DuPrau

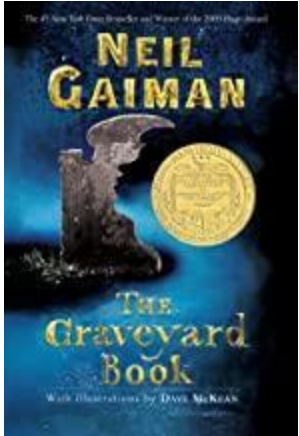


The city of Ember was built as a last refuge for the human race. Two hundred years later, the great lamps that light the city are beginning to flicker. When Lina finds part of an ancient message, she's sure it holds a secret that will save the city. She and her friend Doon must race to figure out the clues before the lights go out on Ember forever!

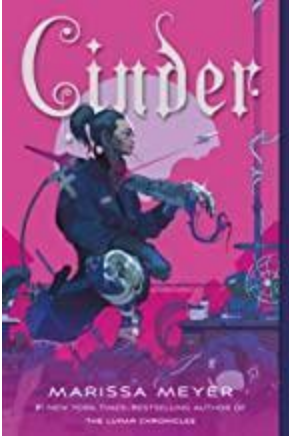

**Science Fiction/
Fantasy/
Dystopia**

The Graveyard Book

Neil Gaiman



Bod is an unusual boy who inhabits an unusual place—he's the only living resident of a graveyard. Raised from infancy by the ghosts, werewolves, and other cemetery denizens, Bod has learned the antiquated customs of his guardians' time as well as their ghostly teachings—such as the ability to Fade so mere mortals cannot see him. Can a boy raised by ghosts face the wonders and terrors of the worlds of both the living and the dead?

<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>Cinder</i></p> <p>Marissa Meyer</p>	 <p>(Spanish edition available on Amazon)</p>	<p>Humans and androids crowd the raucous streets of New Beijing. A deadly plague ravages the population. From space, a ruthless lunar people watch, waiting to make their move. No one knows that Earth's fate hinges on one girl, Cinder, a gifted mechanic, and a cyborg. She's a second-class citizen with a mysterious past, reviled by her stepmother and blamed for her stepsister's illness. When her life becomes intertwined with the handsome Prince Kai's, she suddenly finds herself at the center of an intergalactic struggle, and a forbidden attraction. Caught between duty and freedom, loyalty and betrayal, she must uncover secrets about her past in order to protect her world's future.</p>
<p>Science Fiction/ Fantasy/ Dystopia</p> <p><i>Eragon</i></p> <p>Christopher Paolini</p>		<p>When fifteen-year-old Eragon finds a polished blue stone in the forest, he thinks it is the lucky discovery of a poor farm boy, but when the stone brings a dragon hatchling, Eragon soon realizes he has stumbled upon a legacy nearly as old as the Empire itself. Overnight his simple life is shattered, and, gifted with only an ancient sword, a loyal dragon, and sage advice from an old storyteller, Eragon is soon swept into a dangerous tapestry of magic, glory, and power. Now his choices could save—or destroy—the Empire.</p>