

Summer Reading Assignment

7th Grade Summer Reading Recommendations

Is it OK to read more than one book on this list? YES!!!!

A = indicates the book has won major awards and honors

S= indicates the book has sophisticated style and/or content. Although all books on this list are appropriate for seventh grade readers, books marked with an S may be best suited for readers seeking a challenge.

***Before Midnight*, Cameron Dokey**

In this re-telling of the Cinderella story, Cendrillon's mother dies after giving birth to her, and her father, Etienne de Brabant, blames his newborn daughter. Wishing never to see her again, he disappears from her life for the next 15 years. The fairy godmother in the original tale here is simply the wise housekeeper who delivers Cendrillon and raises her. The stepmother is not wicked, just understandably unhappy at being forced to marry Etienne, who uproots her from her life at court and sends her off to live at his remote estate without even telling her that he has a daughter. The stepsisters are differentiated, dimensional characters as well. In fact, the entire book is filled with strong women who exert their influence on a fairy-tale world and—delightfully—with sensitive and clever young men who recognize their worth.

***Homeless Bird*, Gloria Whelan**

Like many girls her age in India, thirteen-year-old Koly faces her arranged marriage with hope and courage. But Koly's story takes a terrible turn when in the wake of the ceremony, she discovers she's been horribly misled; her life has been sold for a dowry. This powerful novel relays the story of a rare young woman, who even when cast out into a brutal current of time-worn tradition, sets out to forge her own remarkable future. Inspired by a newspaper article about the real thirteen-year-old widows in India today.

***Johnny Got His Gun*, Dalton Trumbo S**

An immediate bestseller upon its original publication in 1939, Dalton Trumbo's stark, profoundly troubling masterpiece about the horrors of World War I brilliantly crystallized the uncompromising brutality of war and became the most influential protest novel of the Vietnam era. This work continues to rivet readers with its story of an American youth who survives World War I as an armless, legless, and faceless person with his mind intact.

***The Hobbit*, J.R.R. Tolkien**

Bilbo Baggins is an upstanding member of a "little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded dwarves." He is, like most of his kind, well off, well fed, and best pleased when sitting by his own fire with a pipe and a meal to look forward to. Certainly this particular hobbit is the last person one would expect to see set off on a hazardous journey; indeed, when Gandalf the Grey stops by one morning, "looking for someone to share in an adventure," Baggins fervently wishes the wizard elsewhere. No such luck, however; soon 13 fortune-seeking dwarves have arrived on the hobbit's doorstep in search of a burglar, and before he can even grab his hat or an umbrella, Bilbo Baggins is swept out his door and into a dangerous adventure.

***Make Lemonade*, Virginia Euwer Wolff**

Written in free verse, this novel tells the story of fourteen-year-old LaVaughn, who is determined to go to college—she just needs the money to get there. When she answers a babysitting ad, LaVaughn meets Jolly, a seventeen-year-old single mother with two kids by different fathers. As she helps Jolly make lemonade out of the lemons her life has given her, LaVaughn learns some lessons outside the classroom.

***The Lions of Little Rock*, Kristin Levine**

Two girls separated by race form an unbreakable bond during the tumultuous integration of Little Rock schools in 1958. Twelve-year-old Marlee doesn't have many friends until she meets Liz, the new girl at school. Liz is bold and brave, and always knows the right thing to say, especially to Sally, the resident mean girl. Liz even helps Marlee overcome her greatest fear - speaking, which Marlee never does outside her family. But then Liz is gone, replaced by the rumor that she was a Negro girl passing as white. But Marlee decides that doesn't matter. Liz is her best friend. And to stay friends, Marlee and Liz are willing to take on integration and the dangers their friendship could bring to both their families.

***Our Town*, Thornton Wilder**

Our Town was first produced and published in 1938 to wide acclaim. This Pulitzer Prize-winning drama of life in the town of Grover's Corners, an allegorical representation of all life, has become a classic. It is Thornton Wilder's most renowned and most frequently performed play.

***Lord of the Flies*, William Golding S**

William Golding's compelling story about a group of very ordinary small boys marooned on a coral island has become a modern classic. At first it seems as though it is all going to be great fun; but the fun before long becomes furious and life on the island turns into a nightmare of panic and death. As ordinary standards of behaviour collapse, the whole world the boys know collapses with them—the world of cricket and homework and adventure stories—and another world is revealed beneath, primitive and terrible.

***Samurai Shortstop*, Alan Gratz A**

Tokyo, 1890. Toyo is caught up in the competitive world of boarding school, and must prove himself to make the team in a new sport called *besuboru*. But he grieves for his uncle, a samurai who sacrificed himself for his beliefs, at a time when most of Japan is eager to shed ancient traditions. It's only when his father decides to teach him the way of the samurai that Toyo grows to better understand his uncle and father. And to his surprise, the warrior training guides him to excel at baseball, a sport his father despises as yet another modern Western menace. Toyo searches desperately for a way to prove there is a place for his family's samurai values in modern Japan. Baseball might just be the answer, but will his father ever accept a "Western" game that stands for everything he despises?

***Shakespeare Bats Cleanup*, Ron Koertge**

When MVP Kevin Boland gets the news that he has mono and won't be seeing a baseball field for a while, he suddenly finds himself scrawling a poem down the middle of a page in his journal. To get some help, he cops a poetry book from his dad's den - and before Kevin knows it, he's writing in verse about stuff like, Will his jock friends give up on him? What's the deal with girlfriends? Surprisingly enough, after his health improves, he keeps on writing, about the smart-talking Latina girl who thinks poets are cool, and even about his mother, whose death is a still-tender loss.

***Summerland*, Michael Chabon S**

Ethan Feld is bad at baseball. Hopeless, even. But when his father mysteriously disappears, Ethan is recruited to save him and the world by traveling the baseball-obsessed Summerlands to stop Coyote, the trickster, from unmaking existence. With help from a ragtag group of friends he meets along the way, Ethan must not only find his father and stop Coyote, but also master his position on the field. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Michael Chabon

has created a distinctly American fantasy experience combining Norse and Native American mythology with baseball at its heart.

***The Thief Lord*, Cornelia Funke**

Two orphaned brothers, Prosper and Bo, have run away to Venice, where crumbling canals and misty alleyways shelter a secret community of street urchins. Leader of this motley crew of lost children is a clever, charming boy with a dark history of his own: He calls himself the Thief Lord. Prosper and Bo relish their new "family" and life of petty crime. But their cruel aunt and a bumbling detective are on their trail. And posing an even greater threat to the boys' freedom is something from a forgotten past: a beautiful magical treasure with the power to spin time itself.

***Toning the Sweep*, Angela Johnson A**

Fourteen-year-old Emily learns the ritual of "toning the sweep," a way of drumming a plow to create a sound that honors the deceased, in this tale of mourning and healing. Emily, her mother and terminally ill grandmother, Ola, meet at Ola's home in the desert to pack her up for a move to Cleveland, where Ola will live out the rest of her days. The three extraordinarily strong females reveal stories of grief and hardship--including the lynching of Ola's husband in 1964 Alabama--that have undoubtedly fostered the inspirational resilience in each of their personalities. Narrated by all three, this bittersweet tale offers hope, humor and insight.

***A Wrinkle In Time*, Madeleine L'Engle A**

Meg and Charles Wallace Murry's father has disappeared while working on secret government research. When they and their friend Calvin O'Keefe learn that Mr. Murry has been captured by the Dark Thing, they time travel to Camazotz, where they must face the leader IT in the ultimate battle between good and evil—a journey that threatens their lives and our universe.