

# LAAA Summer Learning

~"Something magical happens every time you open a good book."~

Hi ASPIRA Families!

We have a totally new approach to supporting student learning over the summer. We are no longer asking families to track reading minutes. Instead, we hope that the students will use their time to read lots of good books. You can find a list of suggested titles here. Make sure to preview the books together before you choose one to make sure that the topic fits your reading style.

In September, you are invited to talk about the book you read with classmates at a Book Club in the library. Look for details about that in the first week of school.

*List of 16 Middle School book options for summer:*

**My Side of the Mountain (available in Spanish)** by Jean Craighead George

**Reading level: U**

Fifteen-year-old Sam Gibley has decided to run away from his crowded apartment home, but unlike most kids who rarely get beyond their block, Sam goes from New York City all the way to the ruined farm of Great-grandfather Gibley in the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York. There are no buildings or people on the old Gibley farm, so Sam sets up residence by hollowing out the trunk of an ancient Hemlock tree. He has brought only a few tools of survival with him: a penknife, a ball of cord, an ax, 40 dollars, and some flint and steel to help him make fire. Using these simple tools and his wits, Sam learns to live off the land, and in the course of a year, discovers just how much he values freedom, independence, and adventure when faced with the challenges of blizzards, loneliness and fear.

**Faceless** by Alyssa Sheinmel

**Reading level: Y**

When Maisie gets into a terrible accident, her face is partially destroyed. She's lucky enough to get a face transplant, but how do you live your life when you can't even recognize yourself anymore? She was a runner, a girlfriend, a good student...a normal girl. Now all that has changed. As Maisie discovers how much her looks did — and didn't — shape her relationship to the world, she has to redefine her own identity, and figure out what "lucky" really means.

**The Hound of the Baskervilles** by Arthur Conan Doyle

**Reading level: Y - Z (Scholastic offers lower reading levels)**

Is it true that an evil hound is haunting the lonely moors, hunting down the hapless Baskervilles through the generations? If anyone can put this chilling legend to rest, it's Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. It seems the body of the latest owner of the Baskerville estate has just been discovered in a ghastly condition, and Holmes has been called in on the case none too soon. The howls and moans that punctuate the elaborate twists of this Gothic tale will raise the hair on readers' necks and make converts of any who are not already fans of the famed detective.

**The Count of Monte Cristo** by Alexandre Dumas

**Reading level: Y/A (Z+) (Scholastic has an abridged version at level W)**

The classic tale of 19-year-old Edmond Dantes who on his wedding day is framed for a crime he did not commit. While locked away Edmond learns from another prisoner of a secret treasure on the island of Monte Cristo. Edmond concocts a daring plan to escape and find the treasure. Years later, disguised as a wealthy Count, Edmond returns to his native land to find his enemies and make them pay.

**Esperanza Renace** by Pam Munoz Ryan

**Reading level 3-8, reading A-Z, V.**

Esperanza Rising is a historical fiction novel by American writer Pam Muñoz Ryan, published in 2000. Set in Mexico and California during the Great Depression, the story follows Esperanza Ortega, who, at the opening of the novel is a wealthy girl living in a mansion with her loving family. Esperanza's father and some of his men are killed by bandits, throwing Esperanza's life into chaos. Due to a loophole in her father's will, the family's property will go to her father's stepbrother, Luis Ortega, whom Esperanza calls Tio Luis. Tio Luis is implicated in the murders, though not charged, and tries to manipulate Esperanza's mother Ramona into marrying him. Ramona and Esperanza escape to America with their loyal servants, leaving behind Esperanza's Abuelita because she is injured. Ramona and Esperanza then try to make a living in a poor Mexican labor camp in Arvin, California, while waiting to be reunited with Abuelita.

**El color de mis Palabras** by Lynn Joseph

**Reading level grade 5-9, Guided Reading U, Lexile 880L.**

Tells the story of a young girl's struggle to find her place in the world and to become a writer in a country where words are feared. *The Color of My Words* explores the pain and poetry of discovering what it means to be part of a family, what it takes to find your voice and the means for it to be heard, and how it feels to write it all down.

**Nacer bailando** by Alma Flor Ada

**Reading Level Grade 3-7. Lexile 880L.**

Mexico is the country of their parents, but not Margie's. She has managed to convince her schoolmates that she is one hundred percent American, just like them. But when Lupe, her Mexican cousin, goes to live in her house, the image of herself that she created is undone. Lupe's situation is not easy. He feels that his house in Mexico is not home since his father went north. The hope of being able to find him in the United States gives him some comfort, but learning a new language in a new school represents a great challenge. Like Margie, Lupe needs a friend.

Little by little, the steps of each girl find the rhythm of a shared dance, as they discover the true meaning of home. Following the tradition of María Isabel, Alma Flor Ada and her son Gabriel M. Zubizarreta offer an honest account of the values of the family, and of the friendship and experience that the immigrant must experience: becoming part of something new and, at the same time, preserve your own identity

**Uglies** by Scott Westerfeld

**Reading level: Z**

Tally is about to turn sixteen, and she can't wait. In just a few weeks she'll have the operation that will turn her from a repellent ugly into a stunning pretty. And as a pretty, she'll be catapulted into a high-tech paradise where her only job is to have fun. But Tally's new friend Shay isn't sure she wants to become a pretty. When Shay runs away, Tally learns about a whole new side of the pretty world-- and it isn't very pretty. The authorities offer Tally a choice: find her friend and turn her in, or never turn pretty at all. Tally's choice will change her world forever

**Drama** by Raina Telgemeier

**Reading level: U**

Callie loves theater. And while she would totally try out for her middle school's production of *Moon Over Mississippi*, she can't really sing. Instead she's the set designer for the drama department stage crew, and this year she's determined to create a set worthy of Broadway on a middle-school budget. But how can she, when she doesn't know much about carpentry, ticket sales are down, and the crew members are having trouble working together? Not to mention the onstage AND offstage drama that occurs once the actors are chosen. And when two cute brothers enter the picture, things get even crazier!

**The Maze Runner** by James Dashner

**Reading level: X**

If you ain't scared, you ain't human. When Thomas wakes up in the lift, the only thing he can remember is his name. He's surrounded by strangers—boys whose memories are also gone. Nice to meet ya, shank. Welcome to the Glade. Outside the towering stone walls that surround the Glade is a limitless, ever-changing maze. It's the only way out—and no one's ever made it through alive. Everything is going to change. Then a girl arrives. The first girl ever. And the message she delivers is terrifying. Remember. Survive. Run.

**Between Shades of Gray** by Ruta Sepetys

**Reading level: Z**

Lina is just like any other fifteen-year-old Lithuanian girl in 1941. She paints, she draws, she gets crushes on boys. Until one night when Soviet officers barge into her home, tearing her family from the comfortable life they've known. Separated from her father, forced onto a crowded and dirty train car, Lina, her mother, and her young brother slowly make their way north, crossing the Arctic Circle, to a work camp in the coldest reaches of Siberia. Here they are forced, under Stalin's orders, to dig for beets and fight for their lives under the cruelest of conditions. Lina finds solace in her art, meticulously--and at great risk--documenting events by drawing, hoping these messages will make their way to her father's prison camp to let him know they are still alive. It is a long and harrowing journey, spanning years and covering 6,500 miles, but it is through incredible strength, love, and hope that Lina ultimately survives. *Between Shades of Gray* is a novel that will steal your breath and capture your heart

**Maniac Magee** by Jerry Spinelli

**Reading level: W**

He wasn't born with the name Maniac Magee. He came into this world named Jeffrey Lionel Magee, but when his parents died and his life changed, so did his name. And Maniac Magee became a legend. Even today kids talk about how fast he could run; about how he hit an inside-the-park "frog" homer; how no knot, no matter how snarled, would stay that way once he began to untie it. But the thing Maniac Magee is best known for is what he did for the kids from the East Side and those from the West Side.

**The Lightning Thief** by Rick Riordan

**Reading level: W**

Twelve-year-old Percy Jackson is on the most dangerous quest of his life. With the help of a satyr and a daughter of Athena, Percy must journey across the United States to catch a thief who

has stolen the original weapon of mass destruction — Zeus' master bolt. Along the way, he must face a host of mythological enemies determined to stop him. Most of all, he must come to terms with a father he has never known, and an Oracle that has warned him of betrayal by a friend.

**Bud, Not Buddy** by Christopher Paul Curtis

**Reading level: U**

It's 1936, in Flint, Michigan. Ten-year-old Bud may be a motherless boy on the run, but he's on a mission. His momma never told him who his father was, but she left a clue: posters of Herman E. Calloway and his famous band, the Dusky Devastators of the Depression! Bud's got an idea that those posters will lead to his father. Once he decides to hit the road and find this mystery man, nothing can stop him.

**Where the Red Fern Grows** by Wilson Rawls

**Reading level: X**

Billy has long dreamt of owning not one, but two, dogs. So when he's finally able to save up enough money for two pups to call his own—Old Dan and Little Ann—he's ecstatic. It doesn't matter that times are tough; together they'll roam the hills of the Ozarks.

Soon Billy and his hounds become the finest hunting team in the valley. Stories of their great achievements spread throughout the region, and the combination of Old Dan's brawn, Little Ann's brains, and Billy's sheer will seems unbeatable. But tragedy awaits these determined hunters—now friends—and Billy learns that hope can grow out of despair, and that the seeds of the future can come from the scars of the past.