

June 12, 2017

Dear rising 7th and 8th grade families--

I hope this finds you and your children enjoying these first sweet days of summer! Over the summer, I've given all middle school students (rising 5th-8th grade students) a summer reading assignment. I've asked the rising 7th and 8th grade students to choose at least one of the novels from the attached list. Of course, I also hope they will read their favorite texts (novels, magazines, non-fiction books, graphic novels) throughout the summer to keep their reading muscles in shape!

This assignment serves several important purposes. First, I want to foster students' lifelong engagement with reading and encourage them to read on their own, not just within the confines of the academic year. Second, it's essential that students keep up their stamina as readers over the summer months. Third, it's helpful for me as I come to know each of my students as readers and thinkers to have them spend the first days of the school year interacting with a text we've both read.

I've chosen the quintessential idea of the journey as the focus for summer reading and our first conversations in September. These are novels that I feel students can experience independently and explore on their own in the summer months, without immediate guidance and support from a teacher. Your child should take some time to consider the different books and choose the one they think they'd most enjoy.

It will be most helpful for students to arrive ready to discuss these books in the first full week of school. To that end, if your child chooses to do their summer reading in the early weeks of the summer, please help them make a plan to review the book in the week or so before the school year begins. I've asked students to create visual "map" of the journey in their novel. This will serve as a helpful way to review the novel in September.

Please feel free to borrow or purchase your own copy of the book your child chooses; several copies of each book are also available to borrow from the school. You can sign out a copy of the book for your child from the Main Office, which is staffed during the summer from 9am-3pm, Monday- Friday.

I look forward to working with your child in September and continuing to know him/her as a reader and thinker. Best wishes for a wonderful summer!

Best,

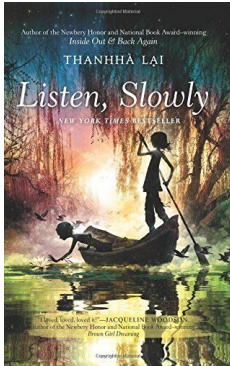
Liza Ewen

MS English teacher and Dean of Students

HIT THE ROAD:

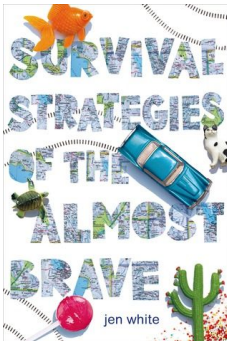
7th and 8th Grade Summer Reading 2017

Choose at least ONE of the following books to read over the summer, and complete the short assignment described at the end of this list! The books are arranged from easier to more challenging reads. Have a GREAT summer!



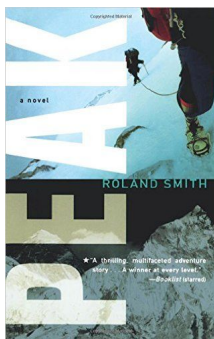
***Listen, Slowly* by Thanhha Lai**

Mai's idea of a perfect summer vacation includes spending most afternoons on the beach; instead, she finds herself on a journey to Vietnam with her grandmother in search of answers about Mai's grandfather fate in the Vietnam War.



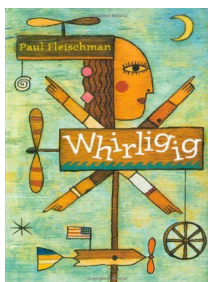
***Survival Strategies of the Almost Brave* by Jen White**

Sent to live with the father they haven't seen in years, Liberty and Billie find themselves on their own and try to make it back to the place they call "home."



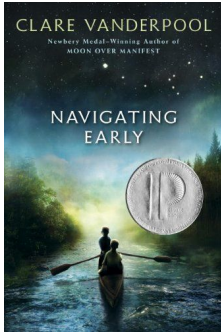
***Peak* by Roland Smith**

After getting in trouble for trying to climb skyscrapers, Peak Marcello goes to Thailand to spend time with his long-lost father who runs a climbing and expedition company. Their next climb: Mount Everest. Will Peak rise to the challenge and be the youngest person to reach the top?



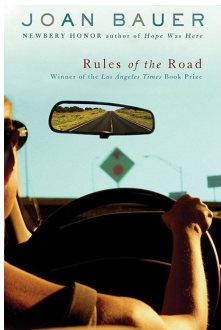
***Whirligig* by Paul Fleischman**

After a terrible car crash with fatal consequences, Brent finds himself on a journey to understand who he is and what he wants out of life. Along the way, he builds whirligigs and connects with people he might not have otherwise known.



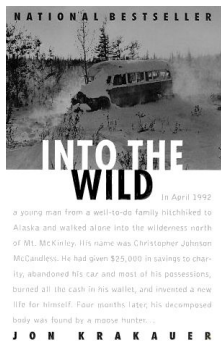
***Navigating Early* by Clare Vanderpool**

When Jack Baker meets Early Auden at boarding school, he's not sure what to make of the odd young man who thinks the digits in the number pi tell a particular story. The two find themselves on the Appalachian Trail together and their time on the trail leads them to connection with a series of strange, sometimes unbelievable characters.



***Rules of the Road* by Joan Bauer**

Jenna's job: to drive her boss across the country to save her shoe store chain. The two unlikely companions bond as they travel across the country and encounter more adventure they had originally anticipated.



***Into the Wild* by John Krakauer**

In 1992, Christopher J. McCandless walked away from a comfortable life and into the Alaskan wilderness. Four months later, Chris is found dead on the Stampede Trail. This nonfiction book is an attempt to understand Chris' decision to leave everything behind and to figure out why his life ended too soon.

Assignment:

For the novel you've chosen, make a MAP of the main character's journey by charting what he or she learns over the course of the novel. Be creative and have fun--how can you visually represent all that happens to your character in the novel? Bring your map with you on the first day of school :)