

7th Grade SUMMER READING

Dear Parents and Students,

The followings are the guidelines and a list of recommended books to read during the summer. All incoming 7th grade students will be required to read at least **THREE BOOKS** during the summer. Because students' maturity and reading levels vary, I encourage parents to participate actively in selecting their children's reading.

The ability to read is a fundamental life skill. Reading can also be one of the most rewarding and pleasurable activities in which we engage. The goal is to teach students to appreciate and enjoy quality literature and take ownership of their reading and independence.

I. Students are **REQUIRED** to read and analyze *Catherine Called Birdy* by Karen Cushman.

- **Complete the attached handout for this book and bring it to school on the first day.**
- **All students must be prepared to share and evaluate the books they read soon after school begins in August.**
- **Assignments in class will include in-class writing, a book talk, or special projects.**

II. Students can **choose TWO (or more)** additional books from the selected list below. (You may choose a book that is not on the list!)

- For each of the two additional books, write a well-developed paragraph of five sentences or more that answers **two** of the following choices. **Please attach your paragraph written on a separate piece of paper to this page.**
 1. What most impressed you about this book? What least impressed you? How would you change what is weak?
 2. Which character was most believable? Why? Which was the most memorable? Why? How do these characters (or character) help move the plot and theme of the story along?
 4. Why did you choose this particular book? What facts did you learn from this book?
 5. What is the basic theme/message that the author is sending? What universal appeal does this book have? What conclusions can you draw about any comment (implicit or explicit) that is made on our society or culture? Explain.
 5. Why did you choose a book that was not on the suggested reading list? What literary merit/value does your choice achieve? Explain why you would recommend this book to others.

Have a great summer!

Mrs. Leonard
7th Grade Homeroom, Literature and Writing, P.E.

Summer Reading List

Rick Yancy. *The Extraordinary Adventures of Alfred Kropp.* Through a series of dangerous and violent misadventures, teenage loser Alfred Kropp rescues King Arthur's legendary sword Excalibur from the forces of evil.

Blue Balliett. *Chasing Vermeer; The Wright Three; The Calder Game.* When seemingly unrelated and strange events start to happen and a precious Vermeer painting disappears, eleven-year-olds Petra and Calder combine their talents to solve an international art scandal.

Baseball Crazy: Ten Short Stories That Cover All the Bases. A collection of ten short stories from popular, contemporary authors that celebrate the joys of America's favorite pastime and the wonder, frustration, and delight of its fans.

Ally Carter. *I'd Tell You I Love You, But Then I'd Have to Kill You; Cross My Heart and Hope to Spy; Don't Judge a Girl By Her Cover; Only the Good Spy Young.* (Gallagher Girls series) (only one from this series can count)

Eoin Colfer. *Airman.* This is a fast-paced, highly entertaining tale of flying machines, criminals, martial arts, swordplay, princesses, poisons, and evil villains, mixed with themes of justice, revenge, romance, good triumphing over evil, realizing one's dreams, blackmail, conspiracy, corruption, and betrayal. From the author of *Artemis Fowl*.

Suzanne Collins. *The Hunger Games; Catching Fire.* Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen accidentally becomes a contender in the annual Hunger Games, a grave competition hosted by the Capitol where young boys and girls are pitted against one another in a televised fight to the death.

Gary Paulsen. *Hatchet. (or other novels from Paulsen)* The survival adventures of 13-years-old Brian Robeson in *Hatchet* have sparked the imagination of millions of young readers. Following a plane crash, Brian was stranded alone in the Canadian wilderness with nothing but a small hatchet and painful memories of his parents' recent breakup. Facing hunger, wild animals and harsh weather, Brian acquires inspiring survival techniques and on the same time develops as a human being.

Neil Gaiman. *The Graveyard Book.* Newbery Award Winner. The orphan Bod, short for Nobody, is taken in by the inhabitants of a graveyard as a child of eighteen months and raised lovingly and carefully to the age of eighteen years by the community of ghosts and otherworldly creatures.

Margaret Peterson Haddix. *Among the Hidden; Among the Betrayed; Among the Imposters; Among the Barons; Among the Brave; Among the Enemy.* (The Shadow Children Series) In a society that allows only two children per family, the third child is a "shadow child", illegal and forbidden. Luke is "among the hidden" in this chilling novel.

Ann Halam. *Dr. Franklin's Island.* When their plane crashes over the Pacific Ocean, three science students are left stranded on a tropical island and then imprisoned by a doctor who is performing horrifying experiments on humans involving the transfer of animal genes.

Karen Hesse. *The Music of the Dolphins.* After rescuing an adolescent girl from the sea, researchers learn she has been raised by dolphins and attempt to rehabilitate her to the human world.

F. E. Higgins. *The Black Book of Secrets; The Bone Magician; The Eyeball Collector.* When Ludlow Fitch runs away from his thieving parents in the City, he meets up with the mysterious Joe Zabbidou, who calls himself a secret pawnbroker, and who takes Ludlow as an apprentice to record the confessions of the townspeople of Pagus Parvus, where resentments are many and trust is scarce.

Mary Hoffman. *The Falconer's Knot: a Story of Friars, Flirtation, and Foul Play.* Silvano and Chiara, teens sent to live in a friary and a nunnery in Renaissance Italy, are drawn to one another and dream of a future together, but when murders are committed in the friary, they must discover who is behind the crimes before they can realize their love.

Jennifer L. Holm. *Middle School is Worse than Meatloaf.*

Ginny makes a to do list for her seventh grade year, which includes landing a role in the school play, trying to make friends, ignoring her horoscope, and going to see her grandpa Joe in Florida; but she always seems to come up short in accomplishing any of it.

Tonya Hurley. *Ghostgirl; Ghostgirl Homecoming; Ghostgirl 3 Lovesick.* Charlotte Usher has always struggled to fit in at her high school, and when Charlotte finds herself living in a parallel spiritual world after choking to death on a gummy bear, she tries to reconnect with the physical world while making new friends at her new school for the dead.

Catherine Jinks. *The Reformed Vampire's Support Group.* Fifteen-year-old vampire Nina has been stuck for fifty-one years in a boring support group for vampires, and nothing exciting has ever happened to them--until one of them is murdered and the others must try to solve the crime.

Cynthia Kadohata. *Kira-Kira.*

Chronicles the close friendship between two Japanese-American sisters growing up in rural Georgia during the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the despair when one sister becomes terminally ill. Newbery Medal winner

E. L. Konigsburg. *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place.* (or other novels from Konigsburg)

Upon leaving an oppressive summer camp, twelve-year-old Margaret Rose Kane spearheads a campaign to preserve three unique towers her grand uncles have been building in their back yard for over forty years.

Gordon Korman. *No More Dead Dogs.* Eighth-grade football hero Wallace Wallace is sentenced to detention attending rehearsals of the school play where, in spite of himself, he becomes wrapped up in the production and begins to suggest changes that improve not only the play but his life as well.

Amy Goldman Koss. *The Girls.* Realistic portrayal of a popular middle school clique's devolution unfolds though six narrators think twice before sacrificing their individuality for the sake of popularity.

Cynthia Lord. *Rules.*

Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules--from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to "keep your pants on in public"--in order to stop his embarrassing behaviors. But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a paraplegic boy, and Kristi, the next-door friend she's always wished for, it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal? Newbery Honor Book

Mike Lupica. *Travel Team; Summer Ball.*

After he is cut from his travel basketball team--the very same team that his father once led to national prominence--twelve-year-old Danny Walker forms his own team of cast-offs that might have a shot at victory.

Henry H. Neff. *The Hound of Rowan; The Second Siege.* (The Tapestry series) After glimpsing a hint of his destiny in a mysterious tapestry, twelve-year-old Max McDaniels becomes a student at Rowan Academy where he trains in "mystics and combat" in preparation for war with an ancient enemy that has been kidnapping children like him.

Gary Paulsen. *Harris and Me: a Summer Remembered.*

Sent to live with relatives on their farm because of his unhappy home life, an eleven-year-old city boy meets his distant cousin, Harris, and is given an introduction to a whole new world.

Susan Runholt. *The Mystery of the Third Lucretia; Rescuing Seneca Crane.* (Kari + Lucas Mystery) (only one from this series can count.) 2010 Kyle Likover Memorial Visiting Author. While traveling in London, Paris, and Amsterdam, fourteen-year-old best friends Kari and Lucas solve an international art forgery mystery.

Rebecca Stead. *When You Reach Me.* Newbery Award Winner

As her mother prepares to be a contestant on the 1980s television game show, "The \$20,000 Pyramid," a twelve-year-old New York City girl tries to make sense of a series of mysterious notes received from an anonymous source that seems to defy the laws of time and space.

Stephanie Tolan. *Surviving the Applewhites.*

Jake, a budding juvenile delinquent, is sent for home schooling to the arty and eccentric Applewhite family's Creative Academy, where he discovers talents and interests he never knew he had

Virginia Euwer Wolff. *Bat 6.*

In a small town, post World War Oregon, twenty-one sixth-grade girls recount the story of an annual softball game, during which one girl's bigotry comes to the surface.

Realistic

Flake, Sharon - *The Skin I'm In.* Thirteen-year-old Maleeka, uncomfortable because her skin is extremely dark, meets a new teacher with a birthmark on her face and makes some discoveries about how to love who she is and what she looks like.

Schmidt, Gary D. *THE WEDNESDAY WARS.* While his Catholic and Jewish classmates attend religious school on Wednesday afternoons, Protestant Holling Hoodhood is stuck behind with his unfriendly English teacher, Mrs. Baker. Through many humorous escapades, Holling begins to grow up and discover there is more to Mrs. Baker than he first realized.

Hinton, S.E. - *The Outsiders.* Ponyboy is 14, tough, confused, yet sensitive - when his best friend kills a rival gang member, a nightmare of violence begins.

Flake, Sharon. *THE SKIN I'M IN.* Thirteen-year-old Maleeka, an excellent student who is choosing the wrong friends, meets a new teacher who helps her discover who she is and what she believes.

Baskin, Nora Raleigh. *Anything but*

Jason, an autistic teenager with a talent for creative writing, struggles to find acceptance in his middle school community.

Sarah Weeks. *So B. It: a Novel.*

After spending her life with her mentally retarded mother and agoraphobic neighbor, twelve-year-old Heidi sets out from Reno, Nevada, to New York to find out who she is.

Draper, Sharon. *DOUBLE DUTCH.* Three eighth grade friends cope with problems while preparing for the International Double Dutch jump rope competition.

Holm, Jennifer L. *MIDDLE SCHOOL IS WORSE THAN MEATLOAF: A YEAR TOLD THROUGH STUFF.* Ginny uses “stuff” to share the ups and downs of her seventh grade year. Her stuff includes unique items such as to do lists, email, notes, receipts, diary entries, and much more.

Johnson, Angela. *BIRD.* Bird is a runaway. Ethan is adjusting to a heart transplant. Jay mourns his brother’s death. The fate of these three characters intertwines as each works through life’s difficulties.

Ryan, Pam Munoz - *Becoming Naomi Leon.* When Naomi's absent mother resurfaces to claim her, Naomi runs away to Mexico with her great-grandmother and younger brother in search of her father.

Soto, Gary - *Local News.* A collection of thirteen short stories about the everyday lives of Mexican American young people in California's Central Valley.

Spinelli, Jerry - *Loser.* Even though his classmates from first grade on have considered him strange and a loser, Daniel Zinkoff's optimism and exuberance and the support of his loving family do not allow him to feel that way about himself.

Van Draanen, Wendelin - *Flipped.* In alternating chapters, two teenagers describe how their feelings about themselves, each other, and their families have changed over the years.

Woodson, Jacqueline - *Miracle's Boys.* Twelve-year-old Lafayette's close relationship with his older brother Charlie changes after Charlie is released from a detention home and blames Lafayette for the death of their mother.

Sports

Deuker, Carl - *On the Devil's Court.* Struggling with his feelings of inadequacy and his failure to make the basketball team at his new school, seventeen-year-old Joe Faust finds himself willing to trade his soul for one perfect season of basketball.

Lupica, Mike - *Heat.* Twelve-year-old Michael Arroyo is a star pitcher who struggles with his father’s death as he pursues his dream of leading his South Bronx All-Stars to the Little League World Series.

Myers, Walter Dean - *SLAM!* Sixteen-year-old "Slam" Harris is counting on his noteworthy basketball talents to get him out of the inner city and give him a chance to succeed in life, but his coach sees things differently.

Myers, Walter Dean. ANTARCTICA: JOURNEYS TO THE SOUTH POLE. Through personal adventures, photos, and documents, Myers tells the stories of those who faced the hardships of exploration to discover this harsh continent. (NF)

Historical

Avi - *Crispin: the Cross of Lead*. Falsely accused of theft and murder, an orphaned peasant boy in fourteenth-century England flees his village and meets a larger-than-life juggler who holds a dangerous secret.

Curtis, Christopher Paul - *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*. The ordinary interactions and everyday routines of the Watsons, an African American family living in Flint, Michigan, are drastically changed after they go to visit Grandma in Alabama in the summer of 1963.

Murphy, Jim. TRUCE: THE DAY THE SOLDIERS STOPPED FIGHTING. This is a close-up view of the Great War, WWI, and the extraordinary story of the December 25, 1914 truce between German and British soldiers as they laid down their weapons and met in No Man's Land to celebrate Christmas. (NF)

Namioka, Lensey - *Ties that Bind, Ties that Break*. Ailin's life takes a different turn when she defies the traditions of upper class Chinese society by refusing to have her feet bound.

Park, Linda Sue - *A Single Shard*. Tree-ear, a thirteen-year-old orphan in medieval Korea, lives under a bridge near a potters' village, and longs to learn how to throw the delicate celadon ceramics himself.

Bruchac, Joseph. CODE TALKERS: A NOVEL ABOUT THE NAVAJO MARINES OF WORLD WAR TWO. After being taught in a boarding school run by whites that Navajo is a useless language, Ned Begay is recruited by the Marines to become a Code Talker, sending urgent messages during WWII in his native tongue.

Mystery & Adventure

Balliett, Blue - *Chasing Vermeer*. When seemingly unrelated and strange events start to happen and a precious Vermeer painting disappears, eleven-year-olds Petra and Calder combine their talents to solve an international art scandal.

Blackwood, Gary - *The Shakespeare Stealer*. A young orphan boy is ordered by his master to infiltrate Shakespeare's acting troupe in order to steal the script of "Hamlet," but he discovers instead the meaning of friendship and loyalty.

Hoobler, Dorothy - *In Darkness, Death*. In eighteenth-century Japan, young Seikei becomes involved with a ninja as he helps Judge Ooka, his foster father, investigate the murder of a samurai.

Paulsen, Gary - *Brian's Winter*. Brian is forced to survive a winter in the wilderness with only his survival pack and hatchet.

Biography & Autobiography

Jimenez, Francisco - *Breaking Through*. Having come from Mexico to California ten years ago, fourteen-year-old Francisco is still working in the fields but fighting to improve his life and complete his education.

Thomson, Sarah – *Three Cups of Tea (Young Reader’s Edition)*. When mountaineer Greg Mortenson becomes lost in the mountains and is rescued by Pakistani villagers, he vows to return to build a village school.

Science-Fiction & Fantasy

Adams, Douglas - *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Seconds before Earth is demolished to make room for a galactic freeway, an earthman is saved by his friend. Together they journey through the galaxy.

Barron, T.A. - *The Lost Years of Merlin*. A young boy who has no identity nor memory of his past washes ashore on the coast of Wales and finds his true name after a series of fantastic adventures.

Crichton, Michael - *Andromeda Strain*. For five days, American scientists struggle to identify and control a deadly new form of life.

Shusterman, Neil – *The Schwa Was Here*. When eighth-grader Antsy Bonano realizes his friend Calvin Schwa has the ability to be nearly invisible, he concocts a money-making scheme.

Wrede, Patricia - *Dealing with Dragons*. Determined not to be pushed into marrying a boring and proper prince, Princess Cimerone flees her kingdom and becomes an assistant to the dragon Kazul.

Classic

Alcott, Louisa May - *Little Women*. Chronicles the joys and troubles of the four March sisters as they grow into young ladies and marry in 19th-century New England.

Rawls, Wilson - *Where the Red Fern Grows*. A young boy living in the Ozarks achieves his heart's desire when he becomes the owner of two redbone hounds and teaches them to be champion hunters.

Austen, Jane. PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. In this comedy of manners, Elizabeth Bennet, a spirited heroine, doesn't always agree with her opinionated beau, Mr. Darcy.

Brontë, Charlotte. JANE EYRE. In early 19th century England, an orphaned young woman accepts employment as a governess and soon finds herself in love with her employer, who has a terrible secret.

Robert Louis Stevenson. *Treasure Island*.

While going through the possessions of a deceased guest who owed them money, the mistress of an inn and her son find a treasure map that leads them to a pirate's fortune.

Jack London. *The Call of the Wild*.

Buck, who is half St. Bernard and half Scotch shepherd, is abducted and taken to the Klondike where he reverts to the wild and becomes a leader of a pack of wolves.

Handout

Catherine Called Birdy by Karen Cushman

Things to Notice – Answer ALL questions on a separate piece of paper!

1. Birdy's relationship with her parents changes in this year of her life. What changes do you see? Why do you think this happens?
 2. Perkin, the goat boy, also rebels against his role in medieval society. What do you think his chances are for success?
 3. Luck plays a part in what happens to Birdy. Find some places where, if certain things hadn't happened or had happened, Birdy's life would have turned out differently. Has luck played a part in your life?
 4. Birdy and Morwenna watch a play in Lincoln in which the roles of the Devil and God are acted out somewhat hilariously and Birdy thinks about what God should look like for her paintings. What do you think either or both should look like?
 5. What do you think of Birdy's poetry?
 6. Why do you think there's so much in the book about the saints and their martyrdom?
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Activities & Research – Choose TWO to complete!

1. Make a list of words you would use to describe Birdy and then find evidence in her journal to support each choice of word.
2. There are many scenes Birdy describes which must have been very funny to witness. Find one you liked, you will share it with the class.
3. Birds play an important part of this book and are used as a symbol throughout. Find as many allusions (references) to them as possible and see if you can decide why and how Karen Cushman used them.
4. Several characters in this book have conditions which today's medicine or knowledge could help: Birdy's poor eyesight, lepers, and Perkins' leg. What is the modern cure for these and other ailments?
5. Ladies of the manor were expected to know herbs are still used?
6. Birdy spends a lot of time painting on her bedroom walls. Draw or paint one scene from her description.
7. Jews are being expelled from England in this story. Did that really happen in 1290? Find out why. What other countries expelled Jews? How recently?
8. Birdy's brother has been on a Crusade. Find out more about the Crusades? Which one would George have been part of and what did they accomplish? Was George right in his opinion of them after his return?