

May 2023

Dear incoming 7<sup>th</sup> Graders and 7th Grade Parents,

Summer is upon us, and it is time to present the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Summer Reading List for the 2023-2024 school year. Many books were considered for this year's list, and we think we've chosen some of the best reads out there for young adults. The book lists highlight a variety of genres and reading levels in order to meet the individual interests and needs of your students. Let the page turning begin!



Students are asked to read **3 books** during the summer, although we hope they'll read more. They are to select one book from **List A** and one book from **List B**. The third book should be a personal selection chosen by the student, and it does not have to be from either list. Book Lists A and B are attached here, but can also be found on the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Marie Murphy webpage.

When students return in the fall for their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year, they will be expected to write about and discuss the books they chose to read over the summer.

If you have any questions, please let us know. We look forward to working with you and your child during the 2023-2024 school year. Happy reading!

Sincerely,

Kathy Pagakis  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade English

Carrie Stotz  
Library Media Specialist

Connie Oshana  
Special Education Teacher

Helen Miller  
English Language teacher



Marie Murphy School  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade Summer Reading 2023

List A

- Anderson, Laurie Halse                      Fever 1793                      Historical Fiction  
During the summer of 1793, Mattie Cook lives above the family coffee shop with her widowed mother and grandfather. Mattie spends her days avoiding chores and making plans to turn the family business into the finest Philadelphia has ever seen. But then the fever breaks out.
- Avi                      Loyalty                      Historical Fiction  
Newbery Medalist Avi explores the American Revolution from a fresh perspective in the story of a young Loyalist turned British spy navigating patriotism and personal responsibility during the lead-up to the War of Independence.
- Bruchac, Joseph                      Code Talkers: Navajo Marines of WWII                      Historical Fiction  
Throughout World War II, in the conflict fought against Japan, Navajo code talkers were a crucial part of the U.S. effort, sending messages back and forth in an unbreakable code that used their native language. They braved some of the heaviest fighting of the war, and with their code, they saved countless American lives. Yet their story remained classified for more than twenty years.
- Gladwell, Malcom                      Outliers: The Story of Success                      Nonfiction  
Malcolm Gladwell takes us on an intellectual journey through the world of "outliers"--the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful. He asks the question: what makes high-achievers different? Along the way he explains the secrets of software billionaires, what it takes to be a great soccer player, why Asians are good at math, and what made the Beatles the greatest rock band.
- Ganda, Martin                      I Will Always Write Back                      Memoir  
It started as an assignment. Everyone in Caitlin's class wrote to an unknown student somewhere in a distant place. Martin was lucky to even receive a pen-pal letter. There were only ten letters, and fifty kids in his class. But he was the top student, so he got the first one. That letter was the beginning of a correspondence that spanned six years and changed two lives. In this compelling dual memoir, Caitlin and Martin recount how they became best friends—and better people—through their long-distance exchange. Their story will inspire you to look beyond your own life and wonder about the world at large and your place in it.
- Green, Michelle                      A Strong Right Arm                      Historical Fiction  
Motivated by her love for the game and inspired by the legendary Jackie Robinson, Mamie Johnson is determined to be a professional baseball pitcher.
- Hale, Nathan                      Lafayette: A Revolutionary War Tale                      Graphic Novel/Nonfiction  
Gilbert du Motier became the Marquis de Lafayette at a young age, but he was not satisfied with the comforts of French nobility—he wanted adventure! When he heard about the Revolution going on in America, he went overseas and fought alongside Alexander Hamilton and George Washington for America's independence.
- Lai, Thanhha                      Inside Out and Back Again                      Historical Fiction/Novel in Verse  
Inspired by the author's childhood experience of fleeing Vietnam after the Fall of Saigon and immigrating to Alabama, this coming-of-age novel told in verse has been celebrated for its touching child's-eye view of family and immigration.

Nielsen, Jennifer

Iceberg

Historical Fiction

As disaster looms on the horizon, a young stowaway onboard the *Titanic* will need all her courage and wits to stay alive. In this thrilling tale, readers will be caught up in the terror and suspense alongside the main character as she fights to save her friends and herself.

Ogle, Rex

Free Lunch

Memoir

*Free Lunch* is the story of Rex's efforts to navigate his first semester of sixth grade—who to sit with, not being able to join the football team, Halloween in a handmade costume, classmates and a teacher who take one look at him and decide he's trouble—all while wearing secondhand clothes and being hungry. His mom and her boyfriend are out of work, and life at home is punctuated by outbursts of violence. Halfway through the semester, his family is evicted and ends up in government-subsidized housing in view of the school. Rex lingers at the end of last period every day until the buses have left, so no one will see where he lives. Unsparing and realistic, *Free Lunch* is a story of hardship threaded with hope and moments of grace. Rex's voice is compelling and authentic, and *Free Lunch* is a true, timely, and essential work that illuminates the lived experience of poverty in America.

Park, Linda Sue

When My Name was Keoko

Historical Fiction

Sun-hee and her older brother, Tae-yul, live in Korea with their parents. Because Korea is under Japanese occupation, the children study Japanese and speak it at school. Their own language, their flag, the folktales Uncle tells them—even their names—are all part of the Korean culture that is now forbidden.

Reynolds, Jason and Kendi, Ibram X.

Stamped (for kids): Racism, Anti Racism, and You

Nonfiction

Through a gripping, fast-paced, and energizing narrative written by beloved award-winner Jason Reynolds, this book shines a light on the many insidious forms of racist ideas--and on ways readers can identify and stamp out racist thoughts in their daily lives

Seputys, Ruta

I Must Betray You

Historical Fiction

A gut-wrenching, startling historical thriller about communist Romania and the citizen spy network that devastated a nation

Sheinkin, Steve

King George: What was his Problem? Everything Schoolbooks Didn't Tell You About the American Revolution

Nonfiction

Sheinkin succeeds in making history as interesting for young people to read as it should be. He has collected intriguing stories about the American Revolution and offers them in context for today's readers. Beginning with the origins of colonial discontent and running through to the final celebration Washington has with his officers, Sheinkin uses a very casual conversational tone and often talks directly to the reader.

Spiegelman, Art

Maus

Graphic Novel/Memoir

A story of a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe and his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father's story and history itself.

Takei, George

They Called Us Enemy

Graphic Novel/Memoir

A stunning graphic memoir recounting actor/author/activist George Takei's childhood imprisoned within American concentration camps during World War II. Experience the forces that shaped an American icon -- and America itself -- in this gripping tale of courage, country, loyalty, and love.

## List B

- Alexander, Kwame                      The Crossover                      Fiction – Novel in Verse  
"With a bolt of lightning on my kicks . . . The court is SIZZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. Cuz tonight I'm delivering," announces dread-locked, 12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse.
- Applegate, Katherine                      The One and Only Ivan                      Fiction – Newbery Winner  
Ivan's transformative emergence from the "Ape at Exit 8" to "The One and Only Ivan, Mighty Silverback," comes to life through the gorilla's own distinct narrative voice, which is filled with wry humor, deep emotion and thought-provoking insights into the nature of friendship, hope, and humanity.
- Applegate, Katherine                      Wishtree                      Fiction - Newbery Winner  
Warm and thoughtful, this story is told from the perspective of an ancient oak tree who has seen it all. Readers will root for the old tree, along with the people and animals who come to depend on it. The shorter length and strong plot are appealing for middle grade readers who are growing into novels with more complex subject matter.
- Auch, M.J.                      One Handed Catch                      Historical Fiction  
Just after World War II, 11-year-old Norm's family owns a meat market. On the Fourth of July, while helping his dad in the store, he gets his hand caught in the meat grinder and loses it. He then faces the challenges of one-handed shoe tying, band practice, and his dream of being a baseball player.
- Braden, Ann                      The Benefits of Being an Octopus                      Realistic Fiction  
Some people can do their homework. Some people get to have crushes on boys. Some people have other things they've got to do. Seventh-grader Zoey has her hands full as she takes care of her much younger siblings after school every day while her mom works her shift at the pizza parlor. Zoey thinks how much easier everything would be if she were an octopus: eight arms to do eight things at once. Incredible camouflage ability and steady, unblinking vision. Powerful protective defenses.
- Callender, Kacen                      King and the Dragonflies                      Realistic Fiction  
A story about loss, grief, and finding the courage to discover one's identity.
- Cisneros, Ernesto                      Falling Short                      Realistic Fiction  
Isaac and Marco already know sixth grade is going to change their lives. But it won't change things at home—not without each other's help. This year, star basketball player Isaac plans on finally keeping up with his schoolwork. Better grades will surely stop Isaac's parents from arguing all the time. Meanwhile, straight-A Marco vows to finally win his father's approval by earning a spot on the school's basketball team. But will their friendship and support for each other be enough to keep the two boys from falling short?
- Craft, Jerry                      New Kid                      Graphic Novel/Realistic Fiction/Newbery Award Winner  
Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one.

Draper, Sharon                      Out of My Mind                      Realistic Fiction  
Melody is not like most people. She cannot walk or talk, but she has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She is smarter than most of the adults who try to diagnose her and smarter than her classmates who dismiss her as mentally challenged, because she cannot tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by cerebral palsy. And she's determined to let everyone know it... somehow.

Farmer, Nancy                      The House of the Scorpion                      Science Fiction/Dystopian  
Matt is a clone of El Patrón, a powerful drug lord of the land of Opium, which is located between the United States and Mexico. For six years, he has lived in a tiny cottage in the poppy fields with Celia, a kind and deeply religious servant woman who is charged with his care and safety. He knows little about his existence until he is discovered by a group of children playing in the fields and wonders why he isn't like them. Though Matt has been spared the fate of most clones, who have their intelligence destroyed at birth, the evil inhabitants of El Patrón's empire consider him a "beast" and an "eejit".

Fipps, Lisa                      Starfish                      Novel in Verse/Realistic Fiction  
Ever since Ellie wore a whale swimsuit and made a big splash at her fifth-birthday party, she's been bullied about her weight. To cope, she tries to live by the Fat Girl Rules - like "no making waves", "avoid eating in public", and "don't move so fast that your body jiggles". And she's found her safe space - her swimming pool - where she feels weightless in a fat-obsessed world. In the water, she can stretch herself out like a starfish and take up all the room she wants. It's also where she can get away from her pushy mom, who thinks criticizing Ellie's weight will motivate her to diet. Fortunately, Ellie has allies in her dad, her therapist, and her new neighbor, Catalina, who loves Ellie for who she is. With this support buoying her, Ellie might finally be able to cast aside the Fat Girl Rules and starfish in real life - by unapologetically being her own fabulous self.

Freeman, Meghan E.                      Alone                      Novel in Verse/Dystopian  
When 12-year-old Maddie hatches a scheme for a secret sleepover with her two best friends, she ends up waking up to a nightmare. She's alone - left behind in a town that has been mysteriously evacuated and abandoned.  
\*This author is coming to Marie Murphy next school year!\*

Green, Tim                      The Final Season                      Realistic Fiction  
From *New York Times* best-selling author and former NFL player Tim Green comes a gripping, deeply personal standalone football novel about a star middle school quarterback faced with a life-changing decision after his dad is diagnosed with ALS. Perfect for fans of Mike Lupica!

Jamieson, Victoria                      When Stars are Scattered                      Realistic Fiction/Graphic Novel  
Omar and his younger brother, Hassan, have spent most of their lives in Dadaab, a refugee camp in Kenya. Life is hard there: never enough food, achingly dull, and without access to the medical care Omar knows his nonverbal brother needs. So when Omar has the opportunity to go to school, he knows it might be a chance to change their future . . . but it would also mean leaving his brother, the only family member he has left, every day.

Korman, Gordon                      Schooled                      Realistic Fiction  
A quirky homeschooled kid must learn how to fit in (or stand out) at public school in this heartwarming fish-out-of-water classic.

Ryan, Pam Munoz                      Becoming Naomi Leon                      Realistic Fiction  
Naomi Soledad Leon Outlaw has had a lot to contend with in her young life, her name for one. Then there are her clothes (sewn in polyester by Gram), her difficulty speaking up, and her status at school as "nobody special."

Sloan, Holly Goldberg and Woltzer, Meg To Night Owl From Dogfish

Realistic Fiction

From two extraordinary authors comes a moving, exuberant, laugh-out-loud novel about friendship and family, told entirely in emails and letters.

Sonnenblick, Jordan

Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie

Realistic Fiction

Steven has a totally normal life (well, almost). He plays drums in the All-City Jazz Band, has a crush on the hottest girl in school (who doesn't even know he's alive), and is constantly annoyed by his younger brother, Jeffrey (who is cuter than cute - which is also pretty annoying). But when Jeffrey gets sick, Steven's world is turned upside down, and he is forced to deal with his brother's illness, his parents' attempts to keep the family in one piece, his homework, the band, girls, and Dangerous Pie (yes, you'll have to read the book to find out what that is!).

Soontornvat, Christina

A Wish in the Dark

Fantasy

A boy on the run. A girl determined to find him. A compelling fantasy looks at issues of privilege, protest, and justice.

Venkatraman, Padma

A Time to Dance

Realistic Fiction

This inspiring story of a young girl's struggle to regain her passion and find a new peace is told lyrically through verse that captures the beauty and mystery of India and the ancient *bharatanatyam* dance form. This is a stunning novel about spiritual awakening, the power of art, and above all, the courage and resilience of the human spirit.

Yang, Kelly

New From Here

Realistic Fiction

This novel about courage, hope, and resilience follows an Asian American boy fighting to keep his family together and stand up to racism during the initial outbreak of the coronavirus.

Zevin, Gabrielle

Elsewhere

Fantasy

Although Liz is maturing, coping with disappointments, and controlling her anger, she is getting younger. Having been killed by a hit and run driver, she now lives in Elsewhere with the grandmother who died before she was born. After death, the residents get younger until they become babies and are reborn onto Earth again.