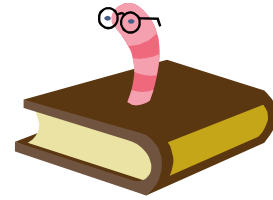


# King Philip Middle School

## Summer Reading Program



Dear Parents and Guardians of Incoming 8<sup>th</sup> Graders,

The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts department is excited to share with you its choices for this year's summer reading program. After considerable deliberation, we have chosen twelve books that we feel will inspire and challenge our incoming 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Among these books you will find both award-winners and contemporary choices that are sure to please any reader. It is our hope that by reading these quality choices, each and every student will expand his or her mind and become excited about the wonderful opportunities a great book presents to each reader.

Students entering a Level 1 course next year are required to read three books from this list. Students entering a Level 2 course next year are required to read two books from this list. However, we recommend that all students read as many books as possible from this list, as each is wonderful and engaging in its own way.

The books on the attached list are classified as a *challenge*, a *just right*, or a *holiday*. These classifications are explained further in this handout. While we believe that all students will benefit from reading any of these excellent choices, we recognize that some students are more mature readers than others. Therefore, we ask that parents are active participants in helping their children make appropriate choices regarding their summer reading books.

In addition to reading the assigned number of books, we are requiring each student to answer reader-response questions on the books. These questions are attached in this handout. Students should bring their answers, as well as their chosen books, to their Language Arts class in September. The responses to these questions will be used as a springboard for our exciting and fulfilling independent reading program, **READ 24/7**.

It is our sincere hope that all incoming eighth grade students enjoy their reading selections this summer. We firmly believe that fine literature has the ability to enhance the lives of all students. We are anxious to engage in the stimulating and enriching discussions that will undoubtedly ensue in September as a result of the summer reading program! Happy reading!

Sincerely,

Nancy Fischer  
Jamie Osborne  
Sue Stoller  
Lindsay Ward

## Reader-Response Questions for Summer Reading Books

These questions are designed to help students become active readers. Active readers are constantly engaged in what they are reading, striving to make connections between literature and real-life, visualizing literary scenes, and predicting outcomes of plots. Each answer must contain a direct quote from the book (this does not have to be something someone said) and the page number where that quote can be found.

Students Entering Level 1: Students must answer the three questions below. Each question must be answered in a minimum of six sentences, with a strong topic and concluding sentence. Students should also incorporate at least three specific details. **DO NOT answer all three questions for each book. Answer only ONE question per book. Additionally, DO NOT use a question more than once. Choose a different question to answer for each book you read.**

1. Summarize the plot of the book. In your summary, be sure to explain the problem the main character is facing, and if the character was able to solve the problem. (Answer this question for one of the books you read)
2. Make a connection between any character in the book and your own personal experience. How do you relate to this character? If you cannot make a connection, show how this character is similar to a character in a modern-day television show, movie, or book you have read. Give an example from your life, and also the life of the character in the book you are writing about. (Answer this question for a second book you read)
3. Identify the protagonist's personality traits, feelings, and/or emotions. Be sure to back up with examples from the story. (Answer this question for a third book you read)

Students Entering Level 2: Students must answer both questions below. Each question must be answered in a minimum of six sentences, with a strong topic and concluding sentence. Students should also incorporate at least three specific details. **DO NOT answer both questions for each book. Answer only ONE question per book. Additionally, DO NOT use a question more than once. Choose a different question to answer for each book you read.**

1. Summarize the plot of the book. In your summary, be sure to explain the problem the main character is facing, and if the character was able to solve the problem. (Answer this question for one of the books you read)
2. Make a connection between any character in the book and your own personal experience. How do you relate to this character? If you cannot make a connection, show how this character is similar to a character in a modern-day

television show, movie, or book you have read. Give an example from your life, and also the life of the character in the book you are writing about. (Answer this question for a second book you read)

This assignment will be reviewed and discussed with students the first and second week in September. Students will be given the opportunity to revise and edit their answers after class discussions. When completed, assignments will be turned in and counted as homework grades.

There are three classifications of books: *a challenge*, *a just right*, and *a holiday*.

- **Challenge**: a book is a "challenge" when you'd like to read it, but you find it challenging because there are many words you don't know or the text is very dense.
- **Just Right**: a book is "just right" when it helps you practice your reading skills and gives you valuable experience in reading. These books may contain a few words per page that you may not know. For the most part, though, you are enjoying the book, and you can read it fluently and smoothly.
- **Holiday**: a book is a "holiday" if it is easy to read or it's an old favorite. It is a book that is a break from a more challenging read, but does not take the place of "challenge" or "just right" books.

#### Holiday:

- ***Stuck in Neutral* by Terry Trueman** (realistic fiction)

The story of a multi-handicapped teenage boy who thinks his dad is going to kill him in order to end his pain. This book delves into the thoughts of this disabled boy and discusses many complex ethical decisions.

- ***Sold* by Patricia McCormick** (multicultural/realistic fiction)

This riveting book is written entirely in verse by a young girl in India. All her hopes and dreams for her future are dashed when she is cruelly sold into prostitution. While the story is based on a fictional character, readers will be drawn to her terrible plight and saddened to learn that while the character may be fictional, her story is all too real.

- ***Al Capone Does My Shirts* by Gennifer Choldenko** (fiction)

This story takes place on Alcatraz Island in 1935. The main character, Moose, has a severely autistic sister, and throughout the book he struggles to adjust to

her sudden mood swings and other issues in his life. The book also provides extensive information for readers about what it was like for children growing up on Alcatraz Island, and there is much additional information on Alcatraz at the conclusion of the novel.

- ***The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke** (adventure/fantasy)

This fast-paced story takes place in Venice, Italy. The plot is full of twists and turns and wacky characters that bring energy to this translation of an entertaining German novel about thieving children, a disguise-obsessed detective and a magical merry-go-round. Readers who enjoy adventure fiction will not be disappointed! If you like Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, you'll love *The Thief Lord*!

#### Just Right:

- ***The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* by Terry Pratchett** (fantasy/fiction)

This is an extremely humorous tale about a talking cat and his educated, talking mice. Don't let the silly premise fool you; Pratchett is a master of comedy and has written over 100 books for young adults. In this tale, Maurice and his mice plan a Pied Piper scheme to take over a town, but soon find that they have chosen the wrong spot for their scheme! Pratchett's wit and intelligence is not to be missed!

- ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon** (realistic fiction)

This book is written from the point of view of Christopher Boone, an autistic boy. Throughout the story, Christopher relates his views on life, including his criteria for having a good day, and shows readers a taste of what it's like to be autistic. Christopher also embarks on a mission to uncover the reason the neighbor's dog, Wellington, has been murdered. Along the way, he learns a great deal about himself and his world. Haddon is a masterful writer, and he makes this story instantly relatable for all readers.

- ***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams** (science fiction)

This is a classic sci-fi book that all fans of the genre should not miss! Adams' fantastic sense of humor pokes fun at every aspect of a typical science fiction novel, and along the way, he creates a fantastic, fanciful tale! Even if you're not a science fiction fan, if you enjoy reading humorous books, you will not be disappointed!

- ***Never Give Up: My Stroke, My Recovery, and My Return to the NFL* by Tedi Bruschi and Michael Holley** (memoir)

This compelling story tells the tale of Tedi Bruschi's stroke and subsequent return to the NFL. The book details his recovery, his support from his teammates, and his triumphant return to the field. Fans of football, and specifically of the New England Patriots, will cheer along with Bruschi's devoted fans as he overcomes the odds and lives out his dreams.

- ***Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom** (memoir)

This is the true story of an incredible bond between a spiritual mentor and his student. The story not only makes you thankful for what you have, it makes you want to thank every person that has positively impacted your life. This poignant story is sure to stay in the hearts and minds of every reader; it will continue to touch your life long after you read the last page.

- ***Life as We Knew It* by Susan Beth Pfeffer** (science fiction)

This story tells of how a teenager's life is impacted after a meteor collides with the moon. Through diary entries, the reader learns about the shortage of food and water and all of the extreme weather changes around the world. The diary entries show how a self-absorbed teenager morphs into a selfless young woman.

#### Challenge:

- ***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak** (historical fiction)

This book is geared toward sophisticated teen readers, due to its discussion of World War II and the Holocaust. Throughout the book, the main character steals many books from various sources. Along the way she meets Death, one of the narrators of this novel. The well-crafted chapters present a fascinating story that hooks the reader from the very beginning. This challenging book is definitely worth reading.

- ***A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* by Dave Eggers** (memoir)

This book is a comedic gem and a Pulitzer Prize finalist. Eggers writes of his experiences of losing both parents at only twenty-two and raising his eight year-old brother on his own. Written with stark honesty and unmistakable wit, Eggers paints a vivid picture of a caring young man and his naïve young brother. Eggers' book begins with a page titled "Rules and Suggestions for Enjoyment of this Book," and the humor doesn't stop there. Eggers' memoir is heartfelt and warm; readers will not be disappointed.

