

Giff Hill School
Middle School (6-8) Summer Reading List

Reading is not only enjoyable, it is essential to keeping your brain healthy and thriving over the summer.

All students should read the book assigned for their grade level.

The annual Upper Campus book chat event will happen on the second Friday after school starts. Summer reading counts as the first two graded assignments in your English class. It is important for you to be able to demonstrate your understanding and engagement with the novels through the projects you complete and during group discussions. Summer reading project options are attached.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER READING

6	<u>Wonder</u> by: RJ Palacio
7	<u>The Skin I'm In</u> by: Sharon G. Flake
8	<u>Skulduggery Pleasant</u> by: Derek Landy

Summer Reading Projects

Complete ONE of the following projects for your assigned novel or memoir in English. You will also participate in the “Summer Reading Book Chat” event by selecting and reading one of the books from the “Faculty Picks” list.

Your projects will provide evidence that you read the works, but, more importantly, they will push you to engage with the books in a more personal way. Students will present their “English read” projects with their English class during the first week of school, and then meet in small, mixed grade level groups to participate in the annual book chat event, which happens the second Friday after school starts.

1. Shoebox Scrapbook: Compile a scrapbook of symbols that represent the main characters, events, settings, and conflicts you came across during the novel. All artifacts must be accompanied by a museum-style inventory list including a description of the item, what it represents, and its significance in the book. You should have at least ten pieces of memorabilia.

2. Novel Playlist: Create a playlist of 5-7 songs that represent the themes/characters/events in the story. Design a graphic for your playlist (like a CD cover) and on the back of your graphic write a brief (5-7 sentences) explanation of the relationship between each song you chose and the book. It should be evident from the list that you have read and fully understand the themes of the book and how they are connected to the lyrics or mood of the songs you chose. You must include a copy of the lyrics for each song.
3. Character Diary: You may use drawings you invent, pictures you cut from magazines, small objects, and written entries. What do you think the character is thinking as she/he goes through the events of the story and his/her part of the plot? How does she/he see those events? How does she/he see the other characters? What does she/he think is happening as the plot progresses? How can you show what she/he thinks is happening without words? The diary must have 7 entries, totaling at least 2 typed pages.
4. Another point of view: Point of view is a key literary device. Rewrite a scene from the perspective of another character. The scene must be at least two pages, 12 point font, typed, double-spaced in length. You may choose to use first-person point of view or third-person narration to switch to the perspective of a different character.
5. Write the last scene: Write a scene that follows the last scene of the book. What happens after the last page? Your scene must be at least two pages, 12 point font, typed, double-spaced in length, and maintain the narrative style of the author.
6. The Fourth Estate: Create a newspaper that might have been issued in the novel's setting (think about appropriate style choices for both time and place of setting). Include two articles about current events from the novel. Remember to answer the journalistic questions: who, what, when, where, and why. Your paper should also include an editorial about a controversial issue facing the people of the community at large, and one article copied (and cited) from a real newspaper of that year. Other ideas to round out your newspaper include the following: a letter to the editor, advertisements, and an obituary of someone from the novel who died. Articles should have headlines; the paper should have a name. Present in a newspaper format.
7. College application. Create the application that a character you have just read about could write and submit to a college. Use all the information you know about the character and infer or create the rest of it. On the application include Name, Academic Rank in Class, High School Courses Taken and Grades, Extracurricular Activities and Personal Activities, and Work Experience. Choose one of the following questions to answer in a two-page essay from the character's point of view: what experience, event, or person has had a significant impact on your life? Discuss a situation where you have made a difference. Describe your areas of interest, your personality, and how they relate to why you would like to attend this college.
8. Life's Little Instruction Book: Create your own booklet containing:
 - a. Five (or more) pearls of wisdom from the novel.
 - b. Five (or more) pearls of wisdom from wise people in your world. You might consider parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, teachers, coaches, ministers, your dentist, etc. Be sure to explain how they connect to the novel.

- c. Three (or more) pearls of wisdom from other literary sources, including other novels, books, newspapers, websites, song lyrics, and speeches. Explain how these other sources are connected to the novel.
- d. Finally, five (or more) pearls of your own. Consider what you have learned thus far in your life. What did you take away from the novel? What advice can you offer to others?

The following options should only be attempted if you have artistic talent.

1. Graphic Novel: Recreate the story in a graphic novel format. Choose what you feel are the most important scenes and tell the story of your novel. Your work will be scored equally on your selection of key scenes and how effective you were in capturing the emotion, plot, and characters of each scene. Your graphic novel should include at least seven scenes from the novel, keeping in mind that the pictures can be whatever size you wish.
2. Word collage. Write the title of the book in the center of a sheet of paper. Then look through magazines for words, phrases, and sentences that illustrate or tell something about your book. As you look, think in terms of the theme, setting, plot line, as well as characters. Work to get fifty such words, phrases, or sentences so the whole sheet of paper will be covered. The visual impact of the collage should tell a potential reader a lot about the book. This project can also be completed digitally.
3. Create a character's room. We learn a lot about people by what they keep in their closets, what they have on their walls, what they select to put in a room. Select a character you know well and create a model bedroom including his/her closet that would mean a lot to the character. Select 10 features of the room that have particular meaning and write a "tour guide's" script to use while presenting the room.
4. Photo album. Think about the events that happened in your novel. Decide which scenes or pictures from the novel a character would want to remember. Then draw 7 of these "photos" and combine them into an album. For each picture, write about what is being shown and why it is a significant memory for the character. For instance, in *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick (1993, Scholastic), Max would want a picture of himself opening the Christmas present Kevin made for him, a picture of Kevin on his shoulders, and a picture of Kevin bursting in to save him from his brutal father.
5. Board game: Create a board game about the book you read. For example, the game could advance players when they answer a question about the book or move players backward or forward based on problems and solutions from the book. You can model your game on an existing board game like Monopoly or any other game you know well.

2023 Upper Campus Faculty Picks - Book Chat Selections

Staff Member	Book (Title, Author)	Description
Veronica Pozas RM2	My Broken Language Quiara Alegria Hudes Memoir best suitable for High school students *available SORA	<p>Quiara Alegria Hudes was the sharp-eyed girl on the stairs while her family danced in her grandmother's tight North Philly kitchen. She was awed by her aunts and uncles and cousins, but haunted by the secrets of the family and the unspoken, untold stories of the barrio--even as she tried to find her own voice in the sea of language around her, written and spoken, English and Spanish, bodies and books, Western art and sacred altars. Her family became her private pantheon, a gathering circle of powerful orisha-like women with tragic real-world wounds, and she vowed to tell their stories--but first she'd have to get off the stairs and join the dance. She'd have to find her language.</p> <p>Weaving together Hudes's love of books with the stories of her family, the lessons of North Philly with those of Yale, this is an inspired exploration of home, memory, and belonging--narrated by an obsessed girl who fought to become an artist so she could capture the world she loved in all its wild and delicate beauty.</p>
Rashida Powell RM7	Arko: The Dark Union U.W. Leo Science Fiction best suitable for middle school students	<p>A group of tweens unearth the most significant discovery in world history, designed to save the human species...from itself.</p> <p>Ariel Hyden and his friends accompany their parents, some of the world's top scientists, on a trip to the Yucatán where Dr. Hyden is conducting research for the Mexican government. On the kids' exploration of nearby old Mayan grounds, they discover an impossibly advanced structure hidden for millions of years in the bowels of the earth that is responsible for the past—and future—of the world as we know it.</p> <p>A perilous mission has the children and the scientists racing to find answers to the purpose of their incredible discovery and who created it. With federal officers, armed soldiers, and nefarious individuals in hot pursuit, the group must be successful—the fate of the world is counting on them.</p> <p>With thought-transmitting abilities, an ancient entity buried for millions of years, hatching flying pterosaurs, and futuristic technology, ARKO: The Dark Union is a thought-provoking and realistic story steeped in scientific facts, speculating on humanity's ecological destruction and its survival.</p>
Topher Dunlap RM8	All the Light We Cannot See Anthony Doerr Fiction, best suitable for high school students *available SORA	<p>Marie-Laure lives in Paris near the Museum of Natural History, where her father works. When she is twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris and father and daughter flee to the walled citadel of Saint-Malo, where Marie-Laure's reclusive great uncle lives in a tall house by the sea. With them they carry what might be the museum's most valuable and dangerous jewel.</p> <p>In a mining town in Germany, Werner Pfennig, an orphan, grows up with his younger sister, enchanted by a crude radio they find that brings them news and stories from places they have never seen or imagined. Werner becomes an expert at building and fixing these crucial new instruments and is enlisted to use his talent to track down the resistance. Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another.</p>
Emma Henson RM3	Turtles All the Way Down John Green Fiction best suitable for high school students	<p>Aza Holmes never intended to pursue the disappearance of fugitive billionaire Russell Pickett, but there's a hundred-thousand-dollar reward at stake and her Best and Most Fearless Friend, Daisy, is eager to investigate. So together, they navigate the short distance and broad divides that separate them from Pickett's son Davis.</p> <p>Aza is trying. She is trying to be a good daughter, a good friend, a good student, and maybe even a good detective, while also living within the ever-tightening spiral of her own thoughts.</p>

	*available SORA	
Mikayla Lezovich RM9B	Challenger Deep by Neal Shusterman Fiction best suitable for high school students *available SORA	Caden Bosch is on a ship that's headed for the deepest point on Earth: Challenger Deep, the southern part of the Marianas Trench. Caden Bosch is a brilliant high school student whose friends are starting to notice his odd behaviour. Caden Bosch is designated the ship's artist in residence to document the journey with images. Caden Bosch pretends to join the school track team but spends his days walking for miles, absorbed by the thoughts in his head. Caden Bosch is split between his allegiance to the captain and the allure of mutiny. Caden Bosch is torn.
Bill LaMonte RM4	My Stroke of Insight Jill Bolte Taylor Memoir best suitable for High school students *available SORA	Jill Taylor was a 37-year-old Harvard-trained brain scientist when a blood vessel exploded in her brain. Through the eyes of a curious scientist, she watched her mind deteriorate whereby she could not walk, talk, read, write, or recall any of her life. Because of her understanding of the brain, her respect for the cells in her body, and an amazing mother, Jill completely recovered. In My Stroke of Insight, she shares her recommendations for recovery and the insight she gained into the unique functions of the two halves of her brain. When she lost the skills of her left brain, her consciousness shifted away from normal reality where she felt "at one with the universe." Taylor helps others not only rebuild their brains from trauma, but helps those of us with normal brains better understand how we can consciously influence the neural circuitry underlying what we think, how we feel and how we react to life's circumstances.
Francine Francis RM10	Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You by: Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi Non-fiction best suitable for high school students *available SORA audiobook	This is NOT a history book. This is a book about the here and now. A book to help us better understand why we are where we are. A book about race. The construct of race has always been used to gain and keep power, to create dynamics that separate and silence. This remarkable reimagining of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning reveals the history of racist ideas in America, and inspires hope for an antiracist future. It takes you on a race journey from then to now, shows you why we feel how we feel, and why the poison of racism lingers. It also proves that while racist ideas have always been easy to fabricate and distribute, they can also be discredited. 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.

<p>David Obando RM11</p>	<p>Something I am Not by: Cher Gatto</p> <p>Fiction best suitable for High school students</p>	<p>SOMETHING I AM NOT is a powerful look at the insidious world of human trafficking right in our own backyard, and the redemptive story of a young man's fight to get out. A father who never loved him ... A woman who stole his worth ... And a brother he couldn't protect. Where does someone run in the face of his deepest shame? Billy McQueen works hard to keep his life together ... and concealed. At seventeen, he dreams of an escape from the barroom, his father's manipulation, and the advances of his father's girlfriend. However, on his eighteenth birthday, Billy is introduced to a younger brother he never knew he had. An eight-year-old who is barely capable of navigating the corrupt world of his father's boxing club. In order to secure his own freedom, Billy must fight for it. But to save his little brother who is next in line for the slave trade ... he must die for it.</p>
<p>LaShanda Boodoo Lower Patio</p>	<p>Undercover Chefs By: Erin Fry</p> <p>Fiction, best for middle school readers</p>	<p>Three unlikely friends join forces to win a baking competition and save their school's culinary classroom. Isaac, a nationally-ranked runner; Jane, a shy artist; and J.C., a rebellious scooter rider—all have a secret passion for cooking. The promise of a cupcake contest lures them to an unusual classroom on the outskirts of campus. As they share friendship and a love for cooking, the pressures of the contest start to boil over—a recipe for disaster that could destroy their chances at winning! The heat is on, and Isaac, Jane and J.C. must figure out a way to salvage their cupcakes, save the culinary classroom from being demolished, and protect their secrets before the judges cast their final votes.</p>
<p>Liz Hoffing RM5</p>	<p>The Breadwinner Deborah Ellis</p> <p>Historical Fiction best suitable for middle school students</p> <p>*available SORA</p>	<p>Since the Taliban took over Afghanistan, 11-year-old Parvana has rarely been outdoors. Barred from attending school, shopping at the market, or even playing in the streets of Kabul, the heroine of Deborah Ellis's engrossing children's novel <i>The Breadwinner</i> is trapped inside her family's one-room home. That is, until the Taliban hauls away her father and Parvana realizes that it's up to her to become the "breadwinner" and disguise herself as a boy to support her mother, two sisters, and baby brother. Set in the early years of the Taliban regime, this topical novel for middle readers explores the harsh realities of life for girls and women in modern-day Afghanistan. A political activist whose first book for children, <i>Looking for X</i>, dealt with poverty in Toronto, Ellis based <i>The Breadwinner</i> on the true-life stories of women in Afghan refugee camps. In the wily Parvana, Ellis creates a character to whom North American children will have no difficulty relating. The daughter of university-educated parents, Parvana is thoroughly westernized in her outlook and responses. A pint-sized version of Offred from Margaret Atwood's <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>, Parvana conceals her critique of the repressive Muslim state behind the veil of her chador. Although the dialogue is occasionally stilted and the ending disappointingly sketchy, <i>The Breadwinner</i> is essential reading for any child curious about ordinary Afghans. Like so many books and movies on the subject, it is also eerily prophetic. "Maybe someone should drop a big bomb on the country and start again," says a friend of Parvana's. "'They've tried that,' Parvana said, 'It only made things worse.'"</p>
<p>Heather McGuire Main Office</p>	<p>Miles Morales #1 Shock Waves by : Justin Reynolds</p> <p>Graphic novel, high engagement, best for reluctant middle school readers</p> <p>*available SORA</p>	<p>Miles Morales is a normal kid who happens to juggle school at Brooklyn Visions Academy while swinging through the streets of Brooklyn as Spider-Man. After a disastrous earthquake strikes his mother's birthplace of Puerto Rico, Miles springs into action to help set up a fundraiser for the devastated island. But when a new student's father goes missing, Miles begins to make connections between the disappearance and a giant corporation sponsoring Miles' fundraiser. Who is behind the disappearance, and how does that relate to Spider-Man? A true middle-grade graphic novel starring one of Marvel's most popular characters, bestselling author Justin A. Reynolds (<i>Opposite of Always</i>) and Eisner award-nominated artist Pablo Leon (<i>Refugees</i>) create a riveting story that will connect with new and well-versed comics readers alike.</p>

<p>Liz Kinsella Main Office</p>	<p>When You Reach Me by: Rebecca Stead</p> <p>Fiction, mystery best for middle school readers</p> <p>*available SORA</p>	<p>Miranda is an ordinary sixth grader, until she starts receiving mysterious messages from somebody who knows all about her, including things that have not even happened yet. Each message brings her closer to believing that only she can prevent a tragic death. Until the final note makes her think she's too late.</p>
<p>Casie Summers Office</p>	<p>They Both Die at the End Adam Silvera</p> <p>Fiction, best suitable for high school students</p> <p>*available SORA</p>	<p>On September 5, a little after midnight, Death-Cast calls Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio to give them some bad news: They're going to die today.</p> <p>Mateo and Rufus are total strangers, but, for different reasons, they're both looking to make a new friend on their End Day. The good news: There's an app for that. It's called the Last Friend, and through it, Rufus and Mateo are about to meet up for one last great adventure—to live a lifetime in a single day.</p>