

Public Schools of Edison Township
Division of Curriculum and Instruction
Department of English

June 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

As we approach the end of our school year, it is time to start thinking about the pleasures of summer reading. The purpose of the summer reading program is to encourage the enjoyment of reading and the development of our students' independent reading skills.

All students entering sixth, seventh, and eighth grades will select and read **ONE fiction or nonfiction book** over the summer from the list provided. All lists and assignments are accessible on the district and/or your child's respective school's website. *Please note:* English 8 Accelerated students receive a separate book list and assignment.

The reading and corresponding assignment must be completed prior to the first day of school in September. Please refer to the attached sample and instructions for further clarification.

We encourage students to visit local bookstores, online resources, and public libraries in order to find their selections. Embedded links to book summaries and reviews as well as resources to access the texts or audiobooks are provided for your convenience.

A reading program is a joint responsibility between school and family. Parents might very reasonably disagree about what material constitutes suitable reading for children. The titles suggested are *not* Board of Education approved texts. They are works that are recommended by such organizations as the American Library Association, the *New York Times*, and the National Council for Teachers of English. They appear on many reading lists across the nation. Nevertheless, certain titles may contain subject matter that some parents may not want their children to read (whether *Grimm's Fairy Tales* for young children or books with mature themes and graphic language for older students). Only parents can determine appropriate choices for their children. Check with teachers, local librarians, and book websites (provided) for reading levels and information about the various titles.

If you have any questions, please contact the Middle School English supervisor, Lisa Dunn, via e-mail at lisa.dunn@edison.k12.nj.us.

Happy Reading!

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF EDISON TOWNSHIP
7th GRADE SUMMER READING 2020

For students entering Grade 7: Identity, Journeys, Second Chances

Consider the following essential questions while you read:

- How do our life experiences and/or decisions shape the people we become?
- Does one's past predict one's future?
- How is one's identity shaped by the past?

Book Selections: Choose **ONE** book (either fiction OR non-fiction) from the list below. You will submit one [Double-Entry Journal](#) for the full-length text you read. Please choose quotations that support **one** of the essential questions above. These quotations will be used to construct a short, written piece when you return in September.

Fiction:

[Rules](#) by Cynthia Lord: Catherine's brother, David, is autistic, and their family life revolves around his needs. Catherine loves her brother and cares enough about him to attempt to help him by compiling lists of rules for living like an ordinary person: "If someone says 'hi,' you say 'hi' back." "If the bathroom door is closed, knock (especially if Catherine has a friend over)!" But Catherine is also frustrated and embarrassed by David and by the way her needs seem secondary, if not nonexistent, to her family. When a girl her age moves in next door, Catherine hopes to be friends but worries that David will ruin the relationship. And her growing friendship with a mute paraplegic boy makes things even more complicated.

[Full Tilt](#) by Neal Shusterman: Sixteen-year-old Blake and his younger brother, Quinn, are exact opposites. Blake is the responsible member of the family. He constantly has to keep an eye on the fearless Quinn, whose thrill-seeking sometimes goes too far. But the stakes get higher when Blake has to chase Quinn into a bizarre phantom carnival that traps its customers forever.

[The London Eye Mystery](#) by Siobhan Dowd: When Salim disappears while riding in a sealed pod on the London Eye, his cousins Kat and Ted, who has Asperger's syndrome, try to solve the mystery while their family falls apart and the police are baffled. Finding that the adults won't listen to them or take them seriously, they set off on their own to follow the clues and theories that Ted, whose brain works on "a different operating system," comes up with.

[Feathers](#) by Jacqueline Woodson: There is no plot, but here are the elements. In 1971, with war in the background, Franny's brother is deaf, and her mother is pregnant again after several miscarriages. In school, there's a new white student in her all-black class, and her best friend thinks he might be Jesus, while the class bully can't seem to leave him alone.

Harbor Me by Jacqueline Woodson: In *Harbor Me*, six fifth-graders who are already considered an experiment because they are "special needs learners" are put together to talk among themselves for the last hour of class. They all think it's a dumb idea until Estaban's dad disappears and they suspect he's been deported. When the worry becomes too much, Estaban starts to open up. Haley records their first talk, and slowly each one of them -- Haley, Estaban, Amari, Ashton, Tiago, and Holly -- tells the story of their life into Haley's recorder. Everyone has a story, and everyone's story deserves to be told. The question is: How will the story end?

The Night Diary by Veera Hiranandani: *The Night Diary* was named a 2019 Newbery Honor Book. It's the story of a Hindu family whose home, once in India, becomes part of Muslim Pakistan when British colonial rule ends and religious violence erupts between once-peaceful neighbors. It's loosely based on the experiences of author Hiranandani's family members in the 1940s. As 12-year-old narrator Nisha writes letters to her deceased mother in her diary, she describes the family's flight, hardships, dangers -- including murderous brawls and crazed knife-wielding men trying to kill children. This chapter of recent history will be a revelation to many Western readers. Its messages of love, family, friendship, kindness, and tolerance are still compelling and timely today.

Flying Lessons and Other Stories by Ellen Oh, ed.: In *Flying Lessons and Other Stories*, 10 celebrated authors create short stories for kids in a variety of genres and reflecting a variety of perspectives. Some stories focus on sports or family; others weave magical folktales; some have heartache and triumph. Each story features characters of different ethnicities, genders, orientation, family makeup, and more, but those differences are not what's highlighted. Kids' common dreams, pain, family struggles, and excitements are conveyed in each story, giving every reader -- whether the character looks like the reader or not -- something to identify with, learn about, and explore.

Brett McCarthy: Work in Progress by Maria Padian: Brett is a good kid, a good soccer player, and a good friend to Diane. But seemingly in a single night, as a result of a dumb phone prank, all that changes. Brett is suspended, then kicked off the soccer team, and Diane is no longer her friend. How the world sees Brett, and how she sees herself, is changing by the day. The one constant in her life has been her beloved, eccentric grandmother -- but now she seems tired and is having a lot of medical tests.

The Bridge Home by Padma Venkatraman: In *The Bridge Home*, 11-year-old Viji and her 12-year-old developmentally disabled sister Rukku flee their abusive father and their village in India for the city, where they find friendship and shelter by pitching a makeshift tent atop an abandoned bridge. Soon, like millions of other homeless kids in that part of the world, they're spending their days slogging through piles of trash hoping to find something they can sell to stay alive. With two boys about their age and a stray dog they've rescued, they form their own family, help each other, and have a lot of pride. But danger is everywhere, from violent people to disease and injury.

Lu: Track (Book 4) by Jason Reynolds: Lu has swagger. He's a rock star track star, and now the co-captain of his track team. Lu is also an albino and has his own share of struggles, like his teammates Ghost, Patina, and Sunny. Gold chains, diamond earrings, and sunscreen are his armor. But as life on the track team evolves, Lu finds himself losing his armor bit by bit. When he discovers a terrible secret about his dad, he's angry enough to shed almost everything he uses to protect himself, but he gains so much more. Now the only question is whether the people in his life will take on their own closed-eyes leaps of faith. Will his dad man up like he teaches Lu to do? Will the Defenders win the championship? Will Lu conquer the hurdles? And what will he name his new baby sister?

Nowhere Boy by Katherine Marsh: A teen named Ahmed is escaping his war-torn country by boat, trying to reach the coast of Greece so that he and his father can enter Europe. Meanwhile, an American kid named Max has relocated to Brussels, Belgium, with his family, and has just been informed by his parents that he will not go to the English-speaking school that his sister is attending. He's going to be enrolled in the local French-speaking school without knowing any French. On top of that, he's going to be repeating sixth grade. Unhappily, he starts his school year with a leaky fountain pen and zero friends. Meanwhile, Ahmed is struggling to find a place to sleep in a new country. Their worlds are about to collide in a story of friendship that knows no borders.

[One Last Word: Wisdom from the Harlem Renaissance](#) by Nikki Grimes: This book is a brilliant collection of Golden Shovel poetry -- poetry that takes part of an already published poem and then uses it to create a whole new poem. Harnessing poignant poetry from Harlem Renaissance poetry greats like Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Bennett, Clara Ann Thompson, Jean Toomer, among others modern-day masters, Nikki Grimes spins new poems with new situations, calls to action, and wisdom for life that in most cases have a distinctly modern edge.

Non-Fiction:

[Chew on This](#) by Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson: This book teaches kids the history of fast food, and shows them the impact it has had on society. Kids learn about the chemicals in the food, how junk food is marketed (and why kids make great targets), how animals are raised and killed, and what it is doing to our bodies.

[Marshfield Dreams](#) by Ralph Fletcher: The colorful boyhood of a popular author comes to life in this personal account. Imagine learning from a nosy classmate that your mother is having yet another baby. To Ralph's classmates, news of one more Fletcher baby is just "scuttlebutt." But for Ralph, the oldest of nine, being part of a large family means more kids to join in the fun—from making tripods in the woods and "snicking" up the rug, to raising chicks and even discovering a meteor (well, maybe). It doesn't feel like there's life beyond Marshfield, Massachusetts. Then one day Dad's new job moves the family to Chicago, and there's so much Ralph has to leave behind. In this humorous and captivating memoir, Ralph Fletcher traces the roots of his storytelling.

[Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science](#) by John Fleischmann: Phineas Gage was truly a man with a hole in his head. Phineas, a railroad construction foreman, was blasting rock near Cavendish, Vermont, in 1848 when a thirteen-pound iron rod was shot through his brain. Miraculously, he survived to live another eleven years and become a textbook case in brain science. His case astonished doctors in his day and still fascinates doctors today. What happened and what didn't happen inside the brain of Phineas Gage will tell you a lot about how your brain works and how you act human.

[Life In Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina \(Young Reader's Edition\)](#) by Misty Copeland: Determination meets dance in this middle grade adaptation of the New York Times bestselling memoir by the first African-American principal dancer in American Ballet Theatre history, Misty Copeland. Her road to excellence was not easy—a chaotic home life, with several siblings and a single mother, was a stark contrast to the control and comfort she found on stage. And when her home life and incredible dance promise begin to clash, Misty had to learn to stand up for herself and navigate a complex relationship with her mother, while pursuing her ballet dreams. *Life in Motion* is a story for all the kids who dare to be different, dream bigger, and want to break stereotypes in whatever they do.

[The Way Things Work Now](#) by David MacCaulay: MacCaulay divides the nonfiction *The Way Things Work Now* into five parts: "Mechanics of Movement," "Harnessing the Elements," "Working with Waves," "Electricity & Automation," and "The Digital Domain," a section new to this edition. The Digital Domain looks at a wide variety of things we take for granted in the 21st century, including touchscreens, games controllers, bits and bytes, robots, and virtual reality. The epilogue has very brief illustrated histories of inventions from gears and turbines to rockets, mirrors, and electric lights. And for those not fluent in all things mechanical, there's a section devoted to defining technical terms found in the book.

[The Great American Dust Bowl](#) by Don Brown: *The Great American Dust Bowl* opens on April 14, 1935, the day a huge, savage dust storm swept through America's high southern plains, derailing trains, suffocating animals, and scouring the paint from houses. The narrative then flashes back in time to explain the geological, economic and environmental factors that led to the drought. It charts the struggles of the millions of Americans who were affected by the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl.

[This Promise of Change: One Girl's Story in the Fight for School Equality](#) by Jo Ann Allen Boyce, Debbie Levy: *This Promise of Change: One Girl's Story in the Fight for School Equality* is a memoir in free verse by Jo Ann Allen Boyce and Debbie Levy. In August 1956, all-white Clinton High School in East Tennessee became one of the first public high schools in the American South to be integrated. Jo Ann Allen was one of the Clinton 12, courageous and determined African American teens who would face months of threats, taunts, and physical assaults, simply because they wanted the opportunity for an equal education.. A compelling and elegantly written must-read addition to the stories of teen heroes of the civil rights movement.

[Path to the Stars: My Journey from Girl Scout to Rocket Scientist](#) by Sylvia Acevedo: Sylvia Acevedo's path to the stars was not an easy one. She was raised in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in the 1960s and '70s -- a time when girls who wanted to become engineers or scientists were easily dismissed and the idea that a Latina girl might aspire to such things was almost inconceivable. But she did have a few things working for her. Sylvia's father was a chemist with a passion for books and libraries, and her mother, who had immigrated from Mexico and struggled early on to learn English, was determined that her children get the best education possible. That meant leaving their close-knit Spanish-speaking neighborhood when Sylvia was in second grade and moving to a new neighborhood with better schools. As one of the few Latino students in the school, she more often than not felt isolated and unwelcome -- until she met another girl named Sylvia who was a Brownie and who invited her to join the troop. While working on her Girl Scout Science badge, Sylvia built a model rocket and began to see new possibilities for her future. In high school she set her sights on becoming an industrial engineer and earned a scholarship to New Mexico State. She then went on to become a rocket scientist at the Jet Propulsion Labs, where she worked on the *Voyager* mission's flyby of Jupiter and its moons and the Solar Polar/Probe missions.

GRAPHIC

[Amulet: The Stonekeeper](#) by Kazu Kibuishi: *The Stonekeeper* provides a propulsive start for the *Amulet* series of graphic novels. The tragedy that opens the book sets a somber tone, but once Emily and Navin begin to explore their new home, the tone lightens even as the action becomes more frenetic. Author/illustrator Kazi Kibuishi has a flair for appealing character design, rich backgrounds, and well-choreographed confrontations. Little in the plot is resolved, but the stage is set for further grand adventures.

[Illegal](#) by Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin: At the start of *Illegal*, Ebo discovers that his older brother, Kwame, has disappeared and knows that the older boy has left to make the hazardous journey from Ghana to Europe. Determined to join him, Ebo refuses to be left behind and sets off on his own. Ebo does find his brother, but the boys will have to face all kinds of peril, across the Sahara Desert to the dangerous streets of Tripoli to the deadly waters that separate them from their ultimate destination.

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Please find embedded links to resources for books and audiobooks [Amazon.Com](#) [Audiobooks.com](#) [Barnes and Noble Booksellers](#) [Audible.com](#) [The Edison Public Library](#)

(See the graphic organizer below)

Grade 7: Name:_____ **Book:** _____ **Author:** _____

Directions: Using ONE of the essential questions to focus your reading, identify key quotations from the beginning, middle, and end of your selected book that respond to the question:

- How do our life experiences and/or decisions shape the people we become?
- Does one's past predict one's future?
- How is one's identity shaped by the past?

<u>Meaningful Quotations</u> (Write the quotation and the page number)	<u>Commentary and Analysis</u> (Explain the importance of the quote and its connection to the essential question.)

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