



Pacific Cascade Middle School

8th Grade Advanced Language Arts

Summer Reading and Suggested Activities: Incoming 8th Graders

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians of incoming 8th Graders,

In an effort to support student literacy, I would like to encourage students to continue to read during the summer months. Many studies have shown that students tend to slow down in reading, as well as lose accuracy, vocabulary and focus during summer breaks. This is called the “summer slide” and it often causes students to be less prepared for the next school year. Additionally, due to the unique nature of current events and the connection to 8th grade LA curriculum; I also want to encourage students to participate in some optional suggested activities during the summer.

Although **NOT** required summer reading, I do encourage Advanced Language Arts students to choose titles from the list below; which are relevant to the 8th grade language arts curriculum and themes that students will study next year. I do, however, encourage parents and students to examine books and reviews in advanced as some of the selected books contain mature language and/or content, and might be very challenging.

Themes/Content Areas that the book recommendations address:

- Diversity
- Civil Rights Movement
- Racial Issues
- Young People Making a Difference
- Differences
- Identity
- Social Justice
- Early American History

Since these books are relevant to the 8th grade curriculum, I encourage students to journal about the books they read and try to make connections. This may help students connect more to the curriculum in 8th grade, and will give them the opportunity to establish prior knowledge before returning to PCMS in September.

Additionally, I would like to encourage students to visit my favorite book lists website, Brightly, if they are interested in books related to certain topics/themes. The website is: <https://www.readbrightly.com/> and students can search for books by reading level, topic, theme, or content.

If you have any questions about summer reading, please feel free to contact your students 8th Grade Advanced Language Arts teacher, Mrs. Murphy (murphyk@issaquah.wednet.edu). We wish you a safe, enjoyable, and fun summer!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Murphy

**Disclaimer: I have not read all of these recommended books, but they do all come highly recommended from <https://www.readbrightly.com/>. All of these recommendations are classified as “teen/young adult” books, but they may contain mature language and/or content. Many of them also contain issues that are prevalent in current events and may be controversial for some students/families. Therefore, read the provided summary and use recommendations/information on Amazon to find out more information on books you have questions about.*

Suggested Writing Activity

Journal Writing: Documenting your Experience

As part of the 8th grade Advanced LA curriculum, students will read the novel “Warriors Don’t Cry” which is Melba Pattillo Beals’ memoir of the “battle to integrate Little Rock’s Central High” in the fall of 1957. In the author’s note, she writes, “...all the incidents recounted here are based on the diary I kept, on news clippings, and on the recollections of my family and myself....the story is accurate and conveys my truth of what it was like to live in the midst of a civil rights firestorm.”

As our nation currently finds itself in another “civil rights firestorm,” and a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, I encourage students to keep an informal journal during the summer.

Think:

- What are your thoughts and emotions?
- What do you see and hear in the news?
- What conversations do you have with others?
- What artifacts (news clippings, articles, pictures, etc.) can you include in your journal?
- What are you struggling with? What celebrations are you having?

Your recollections of your own experiences will not only help you process your experiences during these unprecedented times but will undoubtedly enrich our classroom discussions during the 2020-2021 school year.



Recommended Titles

There are WAY too many fantastic titles to include an exhaustive list here. I encourage you to use the included links to find even more books related to similar themes/content.

Title	Author	Summary
<u>The Rock and the River</u>	Karen Cushman	Magoon's novel takes place three years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, and offers an authentic portrait of life as a Black teen as the civil rights struggle continued. When 13-year-old Sam witnesses the brutal police beating of a friend, he begins to question the nonviolent philosophy of his activist father, and explores the revolutionary viewpoint of his older brother, who has joined the Black Panthers. Magoon's exploration of the political education and community-oriented work of the Panthers is notable. There are no easy answers in this complex and well-rounded tale of a strong family working in various ways to fight oppression. (https://www.readbrihtly.com/books-to-help-kids-understand-the-fight-for-racial-equality/)
<u>We've Got a Job</u>	Cynthia Levinson	We all need to read this thorough and thoroughly engrossing account on the 1963 Birmingham Children's March, recommended for ages "10 - 99". Levinson makes the little-known story of 4,000 children who fought to desegregate one of the most notoriously violent cities in America personal, helping readers see through the eyes of four young protesters. (https://www.readbrihtly.com/books-to-help-kids-understand-the-fight-for-racial-equality/)
<u>Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice</u>	Phillip Hoose	Few have heard of Colvin, the teenager who refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger almost a year before Rosa Parks did the same. Teens will connect with this brave 15-year-old's story of perseverance as she fights to be taken seriously by classmates and community leaders. In this National Book Award and Newbery Honor winner, Hoose paints a full-bodied portrait of one girl's life amidst a larger struggle. (https://www.readbrihtly.com/books-to-help-kids-understand-the-fight-for-racial-equality/)
<u>Coming of Age in Mississippi</u>	Anne Moody	This was one of the first memoirs of the movement that I read as a child, and I've saved that same copy for my own child. Moody, who died earlier this year at age 74, shares in vivid and painful detail the aggressions that Blacks in the Jim Crow era faced each day. Moody went on to college and activism, working with various civil rights organizations. She was part of the history-making group of students who sat-in and prayed at a Woolworth's lunch counter in 1963, while whites poured mustard and ketchup over their heads and used physical violence against them. Senator Edward M. Kennedy wrote in The New York Times, "Anne Moody's powerful and moving book is a timely reminder that we cannot now relax in the struggle for sound justice in America or in any part of America. We would do so at our peril." (https://www.readbrihtly.com/books-to-help-kids-understand-the-fight-for-racial-equality/)

Title	Author	Summary
<u>Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging</u>	Sebastian Junger	<p>While technically an adult book, Junger’s work — which spends a lot of its pages on the return of soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to their former lives — makes frequent appearances on high school reading lists. And it should, because Junger’s writing is compelling and he approaches anthropology with a great deal of empathy. In Tribe, Junger learns that it’s not a veteran’s failure to “get back in” to society, but often society’s failure to re-assimilate vets, and he looks at what tribal societies can teach ours about loyalty and belonging. The book is a must-read for any civic-minded teen who’s thoughtfully approaching how they might make a difference in the world.</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/nonfiction-books-for-teens/</p>
<u>Becoming Kareem: Growing Up On and Off the Court</u>	Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Raymond Obstfeld	<p>In Becoming Kareem, basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar recounts a challenging childhood and what it was like to face prejudice on and off the court; he also credits the many, sometimes unexpected, mentors who guided him along the way, like Muhammad Ali. This one’s a moving and inspiring memoir of a kid who overcame countless obstacles to become a record- and boundary-breaking athlete, an advocate for social justice, and a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/the-best-childrens-and-ya-books-of-november-2017/</p>
<u>Piecing Me Together</u>	Renée Watson	<p>Jade believes she must get out of her neighborhood if she’s ever going to succeed. Her mother says she has to take every opportunity. She has. She accepted a scholarship to a mostly-white private school and even Saturday morning test prep opportunities. But some opportunities feel more demeaning than helpful. Like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for “at-risk” girls. Except really, it’s for black girls. From “bad” neighborhoods.</p> <p>But Jade doesn’t need support. And just because her mentor is black doesn’t mean she understands Jade. And maybe there are some things Jade could show these successful women about the real world and finding ways to make a real difference.</p> <p>Friendships, race, privilege, identity—this compelling and thoughtful story explores the issues young women face.</p> <p>https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/25566675-piecing-me-together</p>
<u>It’s Trevor Noah: Born a Crime</u>	Trevor Noah	<p>Trevor Noah shares his humorous and raw story of growing up in South Africa with a black South African mother and white European father. In this YA adaptation (suitable for middle grade readers, too), readers will have a better understanding of what it was like to grow up in South Africa during the apartheid and learn about the effects poverty and racism can have on a society.</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/diverse-books-tweens-teens-written-voices-authors/</p>

Title	Author	Summary
<u>Hope Nation: YA Authors Share Personal Moments of Inspiration</u>	Rose Brock	<p>At the heart of any push for social change is the belief that change is possible — a.k.a. hope. This collection of essays about hope from 24 YA authors — including Angie Thomas, Nicola Yoon, and Jason Reynolds — is meant to help turn a quiet sense of hope into something real and vital. “I wanted them to recognize that despite their present-day obstacles, holding on to hope and allowing it to drive them forward is essential, even if baby steps are required,” writes editor Rose Brock. “In simplest terms, hope is a decision. It requires a commitment. And it’s my hope that, by being shown a window into a beloved author’s own experiences, teens will choose to fight for hope in their own lives.”</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/books-activism-teens/</p>
<u>Putting Peace First: 7 Commitments to Change the World</u>	Eric Dawson	<p>Eric Dawson was just 18 when he founded what is now the global nonprofit Peace First, so he knows a thing or two about the power of a teen with a strong idea for social change. In Putting Peace First, Dawson outlines seven ways for other teens to use the power of peacemaking to fight the injustices they see in this world.</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/books-activism-teens/</p>
<u>Steal This Country: A Handbook for Resistance, Persistence, and Fixing Almost Everything</u>	Alexandra Styron	<p>Kirkus calls Steal This Country, the “best social justice guidebook we’ve seen in some time.” It’s a mix of how-to and personal accounts, with some celebrity cred, all inspired by Steal This Book, the 1968 counterculture manual by Abbie Hoffman. According to author Styron, the people featured in Steal This Country are curious, thoughtful, and all were once teenagers. Plus “they’ve all seen injustice in the world around them and instead of being paralyzed by despair, they became energized by hope.”</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/books-activism-teens/</p>
<u>Real Kids, Real Stories, Real Change: Courageous Actions Around the World</u>	Garth Sundem	<p>Written in a kid-appropriate, fun, conversational tone, this book highlights the stories of thirty remarkable children from around the globe. Even this adult is inspired by the grit and character of these kids, from the boy who escaped from slavery in a Pakistani carpet factory, to the British girl who realized a tsunami was on its way and cleared a Thai beach of 100 tourists in time to save their lives. Every profile brings the action home to the reader with a “Get Inspired!” sidebar, nudging the reader to get out there and take the next step.</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/7-inspiring-books-for-kids-who-want-to-change-the-world/</p>
<u>The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight for Civil Rights</u>	Steve Sheinkin	<p>An intriguing story about a little known event in 1944 in which war and civil rights collided. On August 9th, 1944, 244 men refused to go back to work until unsafe and unfair conditions at the docks were addressed. Told through stories of 50 men accused of mutiny, this is a gripping book about fighting for equal treatment in the armed forces.</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/books-celebrate-lesser-know-african-americans-contributions-history/</p>

Title	Author	Summary
<u>Searching for Sarah Rector: The Richest Black Girl in America</u>	Tonya Bolden	<p>Sarah Rector was once hailed as the richest Black girl in America, but how did a poor farming girl become so wealthy? Sarah and her family were "Creek freedmen," Black citizens of the Creek Indian nation. When the Creeks were forced to resettle west of the Mississippi in the 1800s, each one received a land allotment. Little did Sarah know that her land contained rich oil deposits, and when an oil well drilled on her land at the age of 12, Sarah instantly became very wealthy. A guardian was appointed to manage her rapidly increasing fortune until she came of age. When Sarah turned 18 in 1920, she had amassed a fortune estimated at \$1 million. A great story that highlights many of the travesties of justice that happened to many Blacks and Native Americans in early Indian Territories which later became known as the state of Oklahoma.</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/books-celebrate-lesser-know-african-americans-contributions-history/</p>
<u>Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom</u>	Lynda Blackmon Lowery	<p>Meet Lynda Blackmon Lowery, the youngest person to march all the way from Selma to Montgomery. In this book, Lowery describes her experiences of being in jail on nine different occasions — all before the age of 15. Readers will get up close and personal with the Civil Rights movement and gain a better understanding of what it must have been like to experience it firsthand.</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/books-celebrate-lesser-know-african-americans-contributions-history/</p>
<u>American Indian Stories</u>	Zitkala-Sa	<p>Born in 1876 and raised on the Yankton Sioux Reservation, Zitkála-Šá was eight years old when Quaker missionaries appeared, offering children a free education if only they were to leave their parents — and, implicitly, abandon their cultural roots. Expecting adventure, Zitkála-Šá begged her mother to go, and though she was a model student, she refused to accept the estrangement, going on to become an activist and found the National Council of American Indians. This collection of her memories and work is ideal for teen readers, parents, and educators.</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/native-american-history-experience-kids-teens/</p>
<u>Where the Dead Sit Talking</u>	Brandon Hobson	<p>A 2018 National Book Award Finalist, Where the Dead Sit Talking tells the remarkable coming-of-age story of Sequoyah, a 15-year-old Cherokee boy who's placed in the foster care system in 1980s Oklahoma. In the Troutt family's home, he meets and bonds with Rosemary over their shared background and troubling histories. Hobson's book confronts intergenerational trauma and the damaging effects of forced assimilation.</p> <p>https://www.readbrihtly.com/native-american-history-experience-kids-teens/</p>