

# Summer Reading 2021



June 2021

Dear Families,

Reading for enjoyment during the summer is one of life's little pleasures for most of us. Our wish for your children is that they too look forward to reading those books that they didn't have time for during the school year. All students entering sixth, seventh, and eighth grade are expected to read **at least three books** over the summer. Although we recommend students use sticky notes or take notes to engage more deeply with their reading, there is no specific assignment to respond to the books.

While curating our lists, we try to choose books that are of high interest to students. The books also vary widely by reading level. If you feel that a book is not at an appropriate level, please help your child choose something else. You may want to read the books alongside your child so you can discuss them together. Some students may want to pair up with friends to read the same book together, too.

The following list is organized by genre. Each list includes a brief synopsis of the book, and some include links to book trailers or short video reviews.

You can check the [Dobbs Ferry Public Library](#) catalog to see if a book is available through the public library system. DFPL will be sponsoring a summer reading program this year, with both live and Zoom programs. Students can earn raffle tickets by writing book reviews of the books they read (which you can submit to be included in the DFMS catalog). Please click [here](#) for more information. Students can also see if books are available online through [Sora](#).

Another option for children to continue learning over the summer is through the [Middle School Choice Board](#). The choice board is essentially a grid with a range of activities that gives students the opportunity to choose the activity they would like to do and to learn in a variety of ways. The board represents content and strategies from the whole school year, and is designed to be self-paced.

Happy reading!

Best wishes,

Ellen Elsen  
Library Media Specialist

Michelle Yang-Kaczmarek  
K-8 Literacy Coordinator

The Language and Literature Department at DFMS (Claudia Ducic, Danielle Egan, Ed Feller, Melissa Gretczko, Rachael Lief, Mike Pagano, Jill Rosenblum, and Denise Rivera)

**Dobbs Ferry Middle School**  
**Suggested Summer Reading for Eighth Grade**  
**Summer 2021**

Students are expected to read any three books this summer, although we hope you will choose to read all summer. Books may be chosen from the suggestions below, but you are not limited to this list. You do not need to write a response to what you have read over the summer, but there will be an assignment when you return to school in September. We do recommend that you use sticky notes or jot down notes in a response notebook as a way to record your thinking as you read.

**Short Story Collection**



**Flying Lessons & Other Stories**, edited by Ellen Oh

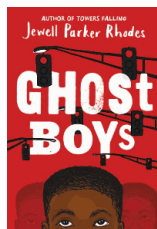
From basketball dreams and family fiascos to first crushes and new neighborhoods, this anthology, written by award-winning children's authors, celebrates the uniqueness and universality in all of us. Features stories by Kwame Alexander, Soman Chainani, Mat de la Pena, Grace Lin, Walter Dean Myers, Jacqueline Woodson, and more.



**Once Upon an Eid: Stories of Hope and Joy by 15 Muslim Voices**, edited by S.K. Ali and Aisha Saeed

This collection showcases the most brilliant Muslim voices writing today, all about the most joyful holiday of the year: Eid! Eid: The short, single-syllable word conjures up a variety of feelings and memories for Muslims. For those who cherish this day of celebration, the emotional responses may be summed up in another short and sweet word: joy.

**Fantasy**



**Ghost Boys** by Jewell Parker Rhodes

After seventh-grader Jerome is shot by a white police officer, he observes the aftermath of his death and meets the ghosts of other fallen black boys including historical figure Emmett Till.



**Orphan Island** by Laurel Snyder

A group of orphans wait each year for a boat to arrive on the island, replacing the eldest with the youngest, never to be seen again, as each remaining child learns what it means to say goodbye to childhood forever.



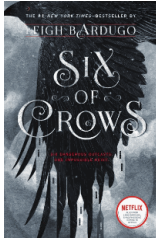


### **Red Queen** by Victoria Aveyard

In a world divided by blood--those with common, Red blood serve the Silver-blooded elite, who are gifted with superhuman abilities. Seventeen-year-old Mare, a Red, discovers she has an ability of her own. To cover up this impossibility, the king forces her to play the role of a lost Silver princess and betrothes her to one of his own sons. But Mare risks everything and uses her new position to help the Scarlet Guard--a growing Red rebellion--even as her heart tugs her in an impossible direction. (Other books in series: *The Glass Sword*, *King's Cage*, *War Storm*)

Book Trailer:

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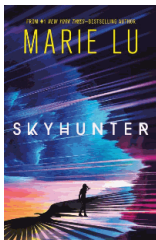
### **Six of Crows** by Leigh Bardugo

Offered a chance to participate in a deadly heist that could make him rich beyond his wildest dreams, criminal prodigy Kaz Brekker recruits a team of talented associates to organize a plot that is threatened by their mutual enmity.

(Sequel: *Crooked Kingdom*)

Book Trailer:

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### **Skyhunter** by Marie Lu

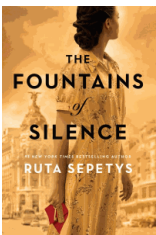
Talin is a Striker, a member of an elite fighting force that stands as the last defense for Mara, the only free nation in the world, but when a mysterious prisoner is brought from the front to Mara's capital, Talin senses there is more to him than meets the eye.

## **Historical Fiction**



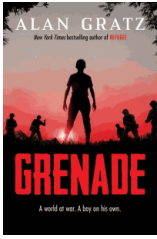
### **The Downstairs Girl** by Stacey Lee

1890, Atlanta. By day, seventeen-year-old Jo Kuan works as a lady's maid for the cruel Caroline Payne, the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Atlanta. But by night, Jo moonlights as the pseudonymous author of a newspaper advice column for "the genteel Southern lady."



### **Fountains of Silence** by Ruta Sepetys

Drawn back to his mother's homeland by the utopian promises of the Franco regime in 1957 Madrid, the photographer son of an oil tycoon bonds with a girl who raises his awareness about the lingering shadows of the Spanish Civil War.

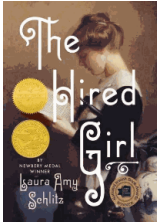


### **Grenade** by Alan Gratz

On April 1, 1945 with the battle of Okinawa beginning, fourteen-year-old native Okinawan Hideki, drafted into the Blood and Iron Student Corps, is handed two grenades and told to go kill American soldiers. Hideki does not want to kill anyone, he just wants to find his family. Hideki's struggle across the island will finally bring him face-to-face with Ray, a marine in his very first battle--and the choice he makes will change Hideki's life forever.

Author speaking about the book:

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### **The Hired Girl** by Laura Amy Schlitz

Fourteen-year-old Joan Skraggs, just like the heroines in her beloved novels, yearns for real life and true love. But what hope is there for adventure, beauty, or art on a hardscrabble farm in Pennsylvania where the work never ends? Over the summer of 1911, Joan pours her heart out into her diary as she seeks a new, better life for herself--because maybe, just maybe, a hired girl cleaning and cooking for six dollars a week can become what a farm girl could only dream of--a woman with a future.

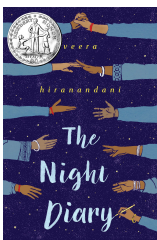


### **Kent State** by Deborah Wiles

Told from different points of view--protesters, students, National Guardsmen, and "townies"--recounts the story of what happened at Kent State in May 1970, when four college students were killed by National Guardsmen, and a student protest was turned into a bloody battlefield.

Author speaking about the book:

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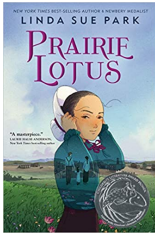
### **The Night Diary** by Veera Hiranandani

Shy twelve-year-old Nisha, forced to flee her home with her Hindu family during the 1947 partition of India, tries to find her voice and make sense of the world falling apart around her by writing to her deceased Muslim mother in the pages of her diary.



### **A Night Divided** by Jennifer Nielsen

When the Berlin Wall went up, Gerta, her mother, and her brother Fritz were trapped on the eastern side where they were living, while her father and her other brother Dominic were in the West. Four years later, Gerta, now twelve, sees her father on a viewing platform on the western side and realizes he wants her to risk her life trying to tunnel to freedom.

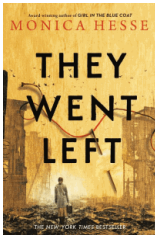


**Prairie Lotus** by Linda Sue Park

In Dakota Territory in the 1880s, half-Chinese Hanna and her white father face racism and resistance to change as they try to make a home for themselves. Includes author's note.

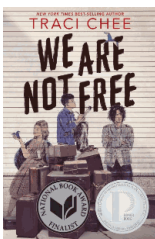
One Minute Book Review:

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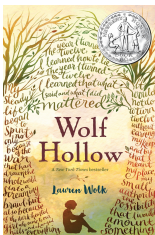
**They Went Left** by Monica Hesse

Zofia, a teenage Holocaust survivor, travels across post-war Europe as she searches for her younger brother and seeks to rebuild her shattered life.



**We Are Not Free** by Traci Chee

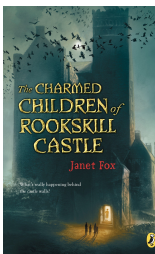
For fourteen-year-old budding artist Minoru Ito, her two brothers, her friends, and the other members of the Japanese-American community in southern California, the three months since Pearl Harbor was attacked have become a waking nightmare: attacked, spat on, and abused with no way to retaliate--and now things are about to get worse, their lives forever changed by the mass incarcerations in the relocation camps.



**Wolf Hollow** by Lauren Wolk

Twelve-year-old Annabelle must learn to stand up for what's right in the face of a manipulative and violent new bully who targets people Annabelle cares about, including a homeless World War I veteran.

**Horror**



**The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle** by Janet Fox

In 1940, during the Blitz, Katherine, Robbie and Amelie Bateson are sent north to a private school in Rookskill Castle in Scotland, a brooding place, haunted by dark magic from the past--but when some of their classmates disappear Katherine has to find out if the cause is hidden in the past or very much in the present.

Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c4s2tw1CKbSr0idjD0bN-U2-4xro0x5/view?usp=sharing>



### **The Night Gardener** by Jonathan Auxier

Irish orphans Molly, fourteen, and Kip, ten, travel to England to work as servants in a crumbling manor house where nothing is quite what it seems to be. Soon the siblings are confronted by a mysterious stranger and secrets of the cursed house.

## **Humor**

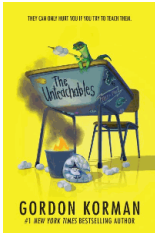


### **To Night Owl from Dogfish** by Holly Goldberg Sloan and Meg Wolitzer

Unhappy about being sent to the same summer camp after their fathers start dating, Bett and Avery, eleven, eventually begin scheming to get the couple back together after a break-up. Told entirely through emails.

Book trailer:

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### **The Unteachables** by Gordon Korman

The Unteachables are a wayward medley of characters: Parker the dyslexic farm boy; Aldo, who is perpetually angry; Elaine (rhymes with pain); Barnstorm the jock; Rahim the sleep-deprived artist; and Mateo, lost in fantasy worlds. Plus Kiana, who isn't even registered with the school. Not to mention their teacher, who remains in disgrace after a 25-year-old cheating scandal and is just killing time, waiting to take early retirement. Are they really incorrigible, or is it possible they are just misunderstood?

One Minute Book Review:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z4ej9SIVm\\_bduMG9PH6n1tQEFVEupUBR/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z4ej9SIVm_bduMG9PH6n1tQEFVEupUBR/view?usp=sharing)

## **Mystery**



### **I Am Princess X** by Cherie Priest

Years after writing stories about a superheroine character she created with a best friend who died in a tragic car accident, sixteen-year-old May is shocked to see stickers, patches and graffiti images of the superheroine appearing all over town..



### **Take the Key and Lock Her Up** (Embassy Row, Book 3) by Ally Carter

Desperate to protect her younger brother Jamie, Grace Blakely, her brother, and her friend Alexei are on the run from the forces in Adria who threaten them because Jamie is the true heir to the throne--but it is hard to hide from Prime Minister Alexandra Petrovic and the the secret society that is part of Grace's family heritage, and even harder to know who to trust.

(Other books in series: *All Fall Down*, *See How They Run*)



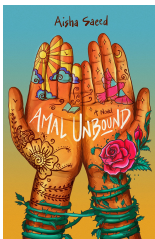
### **The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle** by Leslie Connor

Mason Buttle is the biggest, sweatiest kid in his grade, and everyone knows he can barely read or write. Mason's learning disabilities are compounded by grief. Fifteen months ago, Mason's best friend, Benny, turned up dead in the Buttle family's orchard. An investigation drags on, and Mason can't understand why Lieutenant Baird won't believe what Mason has told him about that day. Both Mason and his new friend, tiny Calvin Chumsky, are relentlessly bullied by the other boys in their neighborhood. When Calvin goes missing, Mason finds himself in trouble again.

One Minute Book review:

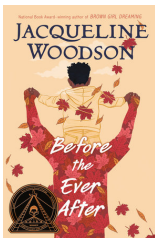
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## **Realistic Fiction**



### **Amal Unbound** by Aisha Saeed

In Pakistan, Amal holds onto her dream of being a teacher even after becoming an indentured servant to pay off her family's debt to the wealthy and corrupt Khan family.



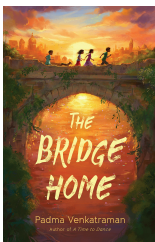
### **Before the Ever After** by Jacqueline Woodson

ZJ's friends Ollie, Darry and Daniel help him cope when his father, a beloved professional football player, suffers severe headaches and memory loss that spell the end of his career.



### **The Best Man** by Richard Peck

Archer Magill has spent grade school with one eye out in search of role models. Three of the best are his grandpa, the great architect; his dad, the great vintage car customizer; and his uncle Paul, who is just plain great. Along the way he finds a fourth—Mr. McLeod, the first male teacher in the history of Archer's school.



### **The Bridge Home** by Padma Venkatraman

Four determined homeless children make a life for themselves in Chennai, India.

One Minute Book Review:

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### **Field Notes on Love** by Jennifer E. Smith

Two teens, Hugo and Mae, are strangers until they share a cross-country train trip that teaches them about love, each other, and the futures they can build for themselves.

Book trailer:

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### **Goodbye Stranger** by Rebecca Stead

As Bridge makes her way through seventh grade on Manhattan's Upper West Side with her best friends--curvaceous Em, crusader Tab, and a curious new friend--she finds the answers she has been seeking.

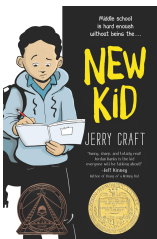


### **King and the Dragonflies** by Kacen Callender

In a small but turbulent Louisiana town, one boy's grief takes him beyond the bayous of his backyard, to learn that there is no right way to be yourself.

Author speaking about the book:

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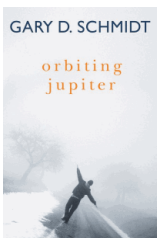
### **New Kid** by Jerry Craft

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. Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds--and not really fitting into either one. Graphic novel.

(Companion Book: *Class Act*)

Author speaking about the book:

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### **Orbiting Jupiter** by Gary D. Schmidt

Jack, 12, tells the gripping story of Joseph, 14, who joins his family as a foster child. Damaged in prison, Joseph wants nothing more than to find his baby daughter, Jupiter, whom he has never seen. When Joseph has begun to believe he'll have a future, he is confronted by demons from his past that force a tragic sacrifice



### **Punching the Air** by Ibi Zoboi with Yusef Salaam

At sixteen years old, Amal is convicted of a crime he didn't commit and sent to prison. Despair and rage almost sink him until he turns to the refuge of his words, his art. This never should have been his story. But can he change it? In verse.



### **The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise** by Dan Gemeinhart

Twelve-year-old Coyote and her father rush to Poplin Springs, Washington, in their old school bus to save a memory box buried in a park that will soon be demolished.

Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19cSWMMkne2-qw7HDZtBk3AKi1RfbWAtA/view?usp=sharing>



### **The Stars Beneath Our Feet** by David Barclay Moore

A boy tries to steer a safe path through the projects in Harlem in the wake of his brother's death.



### **Stargazing** by Jen Wang

Growing up in the same Chinese-American suburb, perfectionist Christine and artistic, confident, impulsive Moon become unlikely best friends, whose friendship is tested by jealousy, social expectations, and illness.

Book trailer:

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## **Science Fiction**



### **Dragon Pearl** by Yoon Ha Lee

Min, a thirteen-year-old girl with fox-magic, stows away on a battle cruiser and impersonates a cadet in order to solve the mystery of what happened to her older brother in the Thousand World Space Forces.



### **Scythe** by Neal Shusterman

In a world where disease has been eliminated, the only way to die is to be randomly killed ('gleaned') by professional reapers ('scythes'). Two teens must compete with each other to become a scythe--a position neither of them wants. The one who becomes a scythe must kill the one who doesn't. (Other books in series: *Thunderhead*, *The Toll*)

Book trailer:

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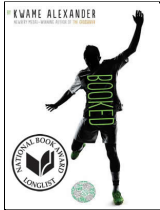


### **Warcross** by Marie Lu

When teenage coder Emika Chen hacks her way into the opening tournament of the Warcross Championships, she glitches herself into the game as well as a sinister plot with major consequences for the entire Warcross empire.

(Sequel: *Wildcard*)

## **Sports Fiction**

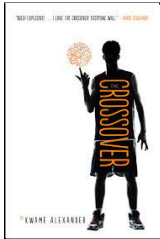


### **Booked** by Kwame Alexander

Twelve-year-old Nick loves soccer and hates books, but soon learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams.

Author speaking about the book:

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### **The Crossover** by Kwame Alexander

Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health. In verse.



### **Ghost** by Jason Reynolds

Aspiring to be the fastest sprinter on his elite middle school's track team, gifted runner Ghost finds his goal challenged by a tragic past with a violent father.

(Other books in series: *Patina*, *Sunny*, *Lu*)

Author (and others) speaking about the book:

<https://www.pbs.org/video/jason-reynolds-discusses-ghost-dbm4ux/>

## **Informational Texts/Biographies/Memoirs**

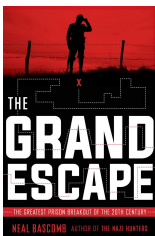


### **Becoming RBG: Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Journey to Justice** by Debbie Levy

Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a modern feminist icon--a leader in the fight for equal treatment of girls and women in the workplace and in society. She blazed trails to the peaks of the male-centric worlds of education and law, where women had rarely risen before. Graphic format.

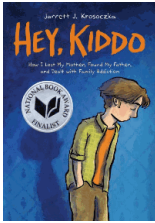
Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Cdnz1p-DL2Es82wUP2BBXy6tygsaTbjk/view?usp=sharing>



### **The Grand Escape: The Greatest Prison Breakout of the 20th Century** by Neal Bascomb

The story of a group of Allied POWs in WWI who dared to escape from Germany's most notorious prison camp.

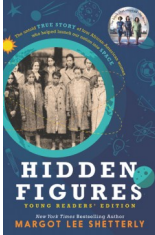


### **Hey Kiddo** by Jarrett Krosoczka

Author and illustrator Jarrett J. Krosoczka discusses growing up in a family grappling with addiction. Graphic format.

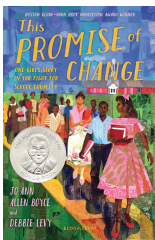
Author speaking about the book:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JT9LPUQaNFTTXnWI5uyLvbPQEzqSjLjF/view?usp=sharing>



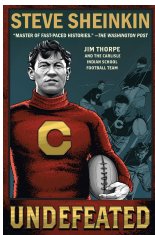
### **Hidden Figures** by Margot Lee Shetterly (Young Readers' Edition)

Before John Glenn orbited the earth, or Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, a group of dedicated female mathematicians known as “human computers” used pencils, slide rules, and adding machines to calculate the numbers that would launch rockets, and astronauts, into space



### **This Promise of Change: One Girl's Story in the Fight for School Equality** by Jo Ann Allen Boyce

In 1956, one year before federal troops escorted the Little Rock Nine into Central High School, fourteen-year-old Jo Ann Allen was one of twelve African-American students who broke the color barrier and integrated Clinton High School in Tennessee. This is the heartbreaking and relatable story of her four months thrust into the national spotlight and as a trailblazer in history.

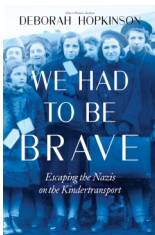


### **Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian High School Football Team** by Steve Sheinkin

Before they became legends, Jim Thorpe and Pop Warner met at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, where they forged one of the winningest teams in American football history.

Author speaking about the book:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/169REgoB79jsxWKj9lfA7leryh0bUbKM5/view?usp=sharing>



### **We Had To Be Brave** by Deborah Hopkinson

Looks at the role of the Kindertransport during World War II, a rescue effort that sent children to other countries in order to escape the Nazis. Includes first-person accounts by survivors and rescuers.



### **When Stars Are Scattered** by Omar Mohamed and Victoria Jamieson

Omar and his younger brother Hassan live in a refugee camp. When an opportunity for Omar to get an education comes along, he must decide between going to school every day or caring for his nonverbal brother in this intimate and touching portrayal of family and daily life in a refugee camp.

Graphic format.

Book trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=111ztD-2QaU>