

8th Grade Summer Reading



Dear Future Eighth Graders (and Parents),

All of the students at Sutton Middle School will be reading two (2) novels over summer vacation.

All incoming eighth-graders must read 2 novels from the list of books found on the following pages and complete the attached worksheets, one set of worksheets for each novel. Summer reading work will be used as part of a written assessment during the first weeks of school.

If there are any questions about summer reading, please contact Sutton Middle School at (508) 581-1630.

Happy Reading!

The Sutton Middle School English Department ☺

If there are any questions about the Sutton Middle School summer reading program, please contact the Sutton Middle School at (508) 581-1630.

Choose two (2) books from the following list to be your Summer Reading novels.

The following synopses are adopted from www.amazon.com and www.bn.com

Bomb: The Race to Build-and Steal-the World's Most Dangerous Weapon by Steve Sheinkin **Nonfiction**
This fascinating tale, packed with a wide cast of characters, focuses mainly on three individuals: a spy for the Soviets Harry Gold, leader of the Manhattan Project J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Knut Haukelid, who sabotaged German bomb efforts while working for the Norwegian resistance. Sheinkin skillfully combines conversational snapshots of the science behind the atomic bomb with a fast-paced narrative of the remarkable people who made it possible and attempted to steal it. Loaded with archival photos and primary-source documents, the accessible volume lays out how the bomb was envisioned and brought to fruition. This nonfiction selection reads like an international spy thriller,

Sledding Hill by Chris Crutcher **Fiction**
Eddie Proffit loses his Dad and best friend to violent accidents in the opening pages of this novel. Eddie's story is narrated by the dead friend, Billy, who, if not in Heaven, is in a very good place—free of pain and full of neat tricks to employ during his ghostly mission to help Eddie overcome sadness so deep he has stopped speaking. The exploration of death and of being silenced by grief takes a hairpin turn when book banning—a very different type of silencing—becomes the focus of the novel's second half. Eddie's elective silence has his mother's minister, Sanford Tarter, convinced he needs to be baptized. Tarter also teaches English at the high school. Eddie, however is not in Tarter's ELA class; he is instead enrolled in a class called Really Modern Literature, run by a librarian who prefers "books by authors who are still alive." She requires everyone read *Warren Peerce* by the "relatively obscure" author Chris Crutcher. Naturally, this "good book with bad words" is condemned by Tarter, who incites a crusade to rid the library of all Crutcher's "irrelevant and only marginally well written" books. As the book winds to its climax, Eddie resolves his problems both with censored books and the death of his friend and father in a triumphant and satisfying conclusion.

White Fang by Jack London

Fiction – Adventure

Even as a pup, he is different from his brothers: a large gray cub among a litter of red-haired puppies, with a quicker bite and heavier paw. When he leaves the protection of his snug cave, he and his mother are captured by the fire-making gods -- man-animals who live in teepees, determine that the pup is half-dog, half-wolf, and name him White Fang. White Fang finds himself relentlessly tormented by the tribe's domestic dogs and quickly learns to surpass them in cunning and viciousness. His brutality is encouraged even further when he is sold to a sadistic man who takes advantage of the dog's massive size and tremendous strength to pit him in to-the-death dogfights. White Fang is driven near mad, until a young man comes along who offers him kindness and friendship. But friendship is something White Fang doesn't understand...yet.

The Misfits by James Howe

Realistic Fiction

The Misfits focuses on a seemingly average group of middle school students in a small town in America. The four unusual characters are outcasts for innocuous reasons, and together they form the Gang of Five (yes, there are only 4 of them). Knowing full well that the middle school student council elections are essentially a popularity contest, the Gang of Five decides to run for office in hopes of creating meaningful change. Their campaign forces the school, students and teachers alike, to look at themselves and each other in a new light.

My Thirteenth Winter by Samantha Abeel

Memoir

Samantha Abeel tells her own story of living with and overcoming dyscalculia. She describes in painstaking detail how her life was affected by her learning disability before and after she was diagnosed and the way her peers, her family, and her teachers treated her. In seventh grade, Samantha suffered anxiety attacks as she struggled to keep up in her classes, to remember two locker combinations, and to deal with new teachers. Samantha was eventually placed in Special Education classes in eighth grade, but she continued to feel anxious about her future. Despite these struggles, Samantha's story is heartwarming and uplifting.

Elsewhere by Gabrielle Zevin

Fiction

Although 15-year-old Liz is maturing, coping with disappointments, and learning to control her anger, she is getting younger. Having been killed by a hit and run driver, she now lives in Elsewhere with the grandmother who died before she was born. Initially, Liz misses her family and feels sullen and depressed. She is mad at the driver who hit her and distressed that she will never have a boyfriend and attend the prom. Gradually, Liz begins to realize that life in Elsewhere is not all it seems to be and is, in fact, more that it appears to be.

Rash by Pete Hautman

Futuristic Fiction

In 2076 in the United Safer States of America, verbal abuse, obesity, and dangerous activities are against the law. Helmets and health food are de rigueur, and sports are either outlawed or radically changed (runners' track times have slowed appreciably because of the bulky safety equipment required). The penalty for breaking any rule is a lengthy prison term, and 24 percent of the population is incarcerated and responsible for doing much of the country's manual labor--without pay. For Bo Marsten, 16, the punishment for allegedly spreading a rash through school is a prison sentence, which is suspended, but he then goes to jail for lack of self-control after he hits a classmate. Bo has the opportunity to reduce his sentence when he's chosen for the prison's (illegal) football team, but the sadistic coach is determined that his players win at any cost. **This book contains some mature language.**

Endangered by Eliot Schrefer

Realistic Fiction

Fourteen-year-old Sophie rescues Otto, a young chimp, while spending the summer at her mother's bonobo sanctuary in the Democratic Republic of Congo. When the president is assassinated and war breaks out, Sophie has a chance to return home to the United States but cannot bear to leave Otto. Their journey to safety takes them into the bonobo enclosure, but the real danger begins when they venture out and risk encountering rebel soldiers.

Does My Head Look Big In This by Randa Abdel-Fattah

Fiction

Amal is an Australian-born, Muslim Palestinian "whacked with some seriously confusing identity hyphens." At 16, she loves shopping, watches *Sex and the City*, and IMs her friends about her crush on a classmate. She also wants to be strong enough to wear the hijab, a badge of her deeply held faith, even if it means receiving insults from kids at her snotty prep school and being refused a part-time job in the food court. Her parents support her and so do her friends whether they are Muslim, Jewish, Christian, or secular. The first-person present-tense narrative is hilarious and sometimes heartbreaking.

Define Normal by Julie Anne Peters

Fiction

Antonia Dillon, a driven honor student at Oberon Middle School, is not surprised when she is asked to become a peer counselor. It's just another honor to add to her resume. But her first counseling session is pure culture shock--Antonia has been paired with the notorious Jasmine "Jazz" Luther, a punk with an incredible attitude who uses black lipstick and is into body piercing and tattoos. As the two girls reluctantly engaging in their sessions, a strange, tentative friendship develops, with each girl gradually revealing more and more about her troubled life. Antonia admits that her divorced mother is deeply depressed and unable to work or care for her family; Jazz talks about her controlling, materialistic yuppie parents and their expectations. As secret after secret is exchanged, it becomes obvious that the "priss" and the punk are made to be best friends. The only question that remains is will the world accept their friendship?

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

Science Fiction

In order to develop a secure defense against a hostile alien race's next attack, government agencies breed child geniuses and train them as soldiers. A brilliant young boy, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin lives with his kind but distant parents, his sadistic brother Peter, and the person he loves more than anyone else, his sister Valentine. Young Ender Wiggin is drafted to the orbiting Battle School for rigorous military training. Ender's skills make him a leader in school and respected in the Battle Room, where children play at mock battles in zero gravity. Ender suffers greatly from isolation, rivalry from his peers, pressure from the adult teachers, and an unsettling fear of the alien invaders. The war with the Buggers has been raging for a hundred years, and the quest for the perfect general has been underway for almost as long. Is Ender the general Earth needs?

The Best Man by Richard Peck

Contemporary Fiction

This coming-of-age story traces milestones in Archer Magill's life from first to sixth grade while deftly addressing a variety of social issues. The first scene—depicting a “train wreck” of a wedding in which six-year-old Archer performs ring bearer duties in a pair of muddy, too-tight shorts that have split open in the back—sets the stage for other hilarious mishaps. Whenever Archer flounders, there are people (usually the influential men he “wanted to be”) ready to help: his father, as good at fixing problems as he is at restoring vintage cars; his stylish Uncle Paul; and his dignified grandfather Magill. Archer gains some wisdom on his own, but the most profound lessons about prejudice and conflict resolution are taught by his mentors, all-too-human heroes, whom readers will come to admire as much as Archer does. It's an indelible portrait of what it looks like to grow up in an age of viral videos and media frenzies, undergirded by a powerful sense of family.

Beneath by Roland Smith

Contemporary Fiction

Pat O'Toole has always idolized his older brother, Coop. Coop is... different. He doesn't talk on the phone, doesn't use email, and doesn't have friends. He's never really cared for anything but the thrill of being underground, and for Pat of course. So it's no surprise to anyone that after a huge fight with their parents, Coop runs away. One year later, Pat receives a package containing a digital voice recorder and a cryptic message from his brother. He follows the clues to New York City and soon discovers that Coop has joined the Community, a society living beneath the streets. Now it's up to Pat to find his brother – and bring him home.

Scythe by Neil Shusterman

Dystopian Fiction

Consider a world where the digital cloud has transformed into the self-aware Thunderhead, whose benevolent totalitarian rule has turned the planet into a utopia. There's no poverty or crime, and everyone is guaranteed immortality. Well, almost everyone. Because babies are still being born, population growth must be limited. In a world where humanity has conquered death, Scythes are tasked with "randomly" killing people in order to curb overpopulation. Sixteen-year-old Citra and Rowan are chosen by a Scythe named Faraday to train as apprentices. Neither likes the idea, but they're given no choice...

Crossover by Kwame Alexander

Contemporary Fiction

Twins Josh and Jordan are junior high basketball stars, thanks in large part to the coaching of their dad, a former professional baller who was forced to quit playing for health reasons, and the firm, but loving support of their assistant-principal mom. In this novel in verse, the brothers begin moving apart from each other for the first time. Jordan starts dating the "pulchritudinous" Miss Sweet Tea, and Josh has a tough time keeping his jealousy and feelings of abandonment in control. Underscoring the sports and the fraternal tension is a portrait of a family that truly loves and supports one another. Alexander has crafted a story that vibrates with energy and heart. A slam-dunk.

