

Dear parents of rising 7th graders,

As a school, we are focusing on high-interest literature for summer reading. With this focus in mind, we have picked six book options that have a historical fiction focus. Students are expected to pick **only one** and complete the attached assignment.

Option 1: The Witch of Blackbird Pond by Elizabeth George Speare

Sixteen-year-old Kit Tyler is marked by suspicion and disapproval from the moment she arrives on the unfamiliar shores of colonial Connecticut in 1687. Alone and desperate, she has been forced to leave her beloved home on the island of Barbados and join a family she has never met. Torn between her quest for belonging and her desire to be true to herself, Kit struggles to survive in a hostile place. Just when it seems she must give up, she finds a kindred spirit. But Kit's friendship with Hannah Tupper, believed by the colonists to be a witch, proves more taboo than she could have imagined and ultimately forces Kit to choose between her heart and her duty.

Elizabeth George Speare won the 1959 Newbery Medal for this portrayal of a heroine whom readers will admire for her unwavering sense of truth as well as her infinite capacity to love.

Option #2: Dead End in Norvelt by Jack Gantos

Dead End in Norvelt is the winner of the 2012 Newbery Medal for the year's best contribution to children's literature and the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction!

Melding the entirely true and the wildly fictional, *Dead End in Norvelt* is a novel about an incredible two months for a kid named Jack Gantos, whose plans for vacation excitement are shot down when he is "grounded for life" by his feuding parents, and whose nose spews bad blood at every little shock he gets. But plenty of excitement (and shocks) are coming Jack's way once his mom loans him out to help a feisty old neighbor with a most unusual chore—typewriting obituaries filled with stories about the people who founded his utopian town. As one obituary leads to another, Jack is launched on a strange adventure involving molten wax, Eleanor Roosevelt, twisted promises, a homemade airplane, Girl Scout cookies, a man on a trike, a dancing plague, voices from the past, Hells Angels . . . and possibly murder.

Endlessly surprising, this sly, sharp-edged narrative is the author at his very best, making readers laugh out loud at the most unexpected things in a dead-funny depiction of growing up in a slightly off-kilter place where the past is present, the present is confusing, and the future is completely up in the air.

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Option #3: Amos Fortune - Free Man by Elizabeth Yates

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A Newbery Medal Winner□□When Amos Fortune was only fifteen years old, he was captured by slave traders and brought to Massachusetts, where he was sold at auction. Although his freedom had been taken, Amos never lost his dignity and courage. For 45 years, Amos worked as a slave and dreamed of freedom. And, at age 60, he finally began to see those dreams come true.□

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Option #4: North to Freedom by Anne Holm

Having escaped from the eastern European concentration camp where he has spent most of his life, a twelve-year-old boy struggles to cope with an entirely strange world as he flees northward to freedom in Denmark. "[*North to Freedom*] is, to my mind, the single finest novel ever written for children of about ages 9 to 13."--*School Library Journal*

Option #5: Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy by Gary Schmidt

It only takes a few hours for Turner Buckminster to start hating Phippsburg, Maine. No one in town will let him forget that he's a minister's son, even if he doesn't act like one. But then he meets Lizzie Bright Griffin, a smart and sassy girl from a poor nearby island community founded by former slaves. Despite his father's-and the town's-disapproval of their friendship, Turner spends time with Lizzie, and it opens up a whole new world to him, filled with the mystery and wonder of Maine's rocky coast. The two soon discover that the town elders, along with Turner's father, want to force the people to leave Lizzie's island so that Phippsburg can start a lucrative tourist trade there. Turner gets caught up in a spiral of disasters that alter his life-but also lead him to new levels of acceptance and maturity. This sensitively written historical novel, based on the true story of a community's destruction, highlights a unique friendship during a time of change. -Author's note.

Option #6: The Lions of Little Rock by Kristin Levine

As twelve-year-old Marlee starts middle school in 1958 Little Rock, it feels like her whole world is falling apart. Until she meets Liz, the new girl at school. Liz is everything Marlee wishes she could be: she's brave, brash and always knows the right thing to say. But when Liz leaves school without even a good-bye, the rumor is that Liz was caught passing for white. Marlee decides that doesn't matter. She just wants her friend back. And to stay friends, Marlee and Liz are even willing to take on segregation and the dangers their friendship could bring to both their families.

-Winner of the New-York Historical Society Children's History Book Prize

-A *New York Times Book Review* Editor's Choice

Each of these books can be purchased at a local bookstore or on Amazon.

An important literary study skill is for students to engage with literature. To prepare for our unit of study, your student should come to our first class with:

1. The completed plot diagram on the following page
2. Chapter notes and important quotes from the book (to be completed in a composition book or spiral)
3. The signed Parent form

NOTE: This assignment is due on the first day of school and will serve as a homework grade.

The first few weeks of school will be dedicated to activities surrounding these books that will introduce literary terms and writing lessons used throughout the year. Students should bring their novel choice to class with them each day until this unit is complete.

In addition, students should be prepared to work on a project of their choice (from a list provided in class) during the course of our in-class unit. It will be important that students have finished reading the book, taking notes, and finished the plot diagram before the first day of class so that they can feel confident in class discussions, quizzes, projects, and activities.

We are looking forward to a wonderful school year. We truly hope your student enjoys the chosen book and these assignments promote a culture of lifelong learning and appreciation of literature. Have a great summer!

3. Climax

When does the main character face their problem? This is the turning part of the story... things will never be the same for the character.

2. Rising Action

What events happen after the exposition and before the climax?

4. Falling Action:

What happens immediately after the climax?

6. Conflict

What is the major problem in the story?

5. Resolution:

What happens at the VERY end of the story?

1. Exposition

Who are the main characters in the beginning of the story?

What is the setting in the beginning of the story?

Plot Diagram



Middle School Summer Reading Assignment

PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION SLIP

During the summer, my son/daughter _____ entering 7th grade at Fellowship Christian School read _____ (*book title*). I am verifying my child has read the assigned book by signing below.

Print Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/ Guardian Signature

Date

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENTS

This completed sheet is required to be turned in as the cover sheet of your summer reading plot diagram and chapter notes.

Failure to turn in this sheet with your packet will result in a zero for the assignment.

Summer reading assignment will be collected on the first day of school.