

# *Arlington Central School District*

## *Middle School: Required Summer Reading*

Dear Parents and Students:

The purposes of our summer reading requirement for middle school students are to promote continuous reading habits, to encourage reading for pleasure, and to establish a springboard for reflection in the fall. Summer provides the perfect opportunity for parents to continue to support their children's development of lifelong reading habits by encouraging and helping them find many great books.

The list on the other side of this letter reflects a wide variety of reading levels and interests. We encourage parents to review the list with your child and consider his or her interests, individual reading level, and attitude toward reading when selecting just the right book. We have made every attempt to be sure the books on this list are readily available through the public library as well as local bookstores.

Here are some suggestions to help your child engage in summer reading on his/her own and make it fun for the family, too.

- Dig out your child's library card or get one if s/he doesn't already have one.
- Did you know that you can access the Mid Hudson Library System from your home computer and reserve books from the online catalog? The website is: <http://gigcat.midhudson.org/>
- Tips for helping your child select just the right book can be found at <http://www.rif.org/parents/tips/tip.msp?View=19>
- Read along with your child and discuss the book together.
- Encourage your child to read more than one book.
- If your child is struggling with the selected book or isn't enjoying it, *stop* and select another title from the list.
- During the first marking period, all students, under the direction of their Middle School teacher, are required to complete an assignment based on the book they have chosen from the summer reading list. Your child may want to take notes to help remember important details about the summer reading book as an aid in completing the assignment in the fall. **Remember, the assignment will be completed in class.** As an example, students may be asked to write a new chapter for the book, write a book review, or write an essay that connects the book to experiences from their own life, or to other books they have read in the past.

➤ Teacher-generated examples of this assignment may be found at <http://www.arlingtonschools.org/Curriculum/english.html>

Should you have any questions regarding summer reading, please contact your child's middle school.

*Heading into Sixth: For students entering Grade 6*

*Select one from the following list:*

Titles are coded for readability: C=challenging A=average E=easy

**A Boy at War: A Novel of Pearl Harbor** by Harry Mazer (Historical Fiction 104 pages – A) Fourteen-year-old Adam Pelko, the son of a navy lieutenant, witnesses the sinking of his father's battleship, the "Arizona," during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

**Beetles Lightly Toasted** by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (Humor/Fiction 134 pages - E) In this humorous story, fifth grader Andy Moller is determined to win the essay contest on conservation.

**Blackwater by Eve Bunting** (Contemporary 141 pages – A) Thirteen-year-old Brodie Lynch was ready for the perfect summer of adventure along the awesome Blackwater River. That was before everything changed forever. When a harmless prank goes too far, the unthinkable happens.

**Chronicles of Darkness #1: Wolf Brother** by Michelle Paver (Adventure 304 pages - C) In this original adventure, set 6,000 years ago, 12-year old Torak and his wolf-cub companion must defeat the evil that stalks their land. Their journey takes them through the deep forest, onto glaciers, and into dangers they never dreamed of.

**Crash** by Jerry Spinelli (Contemporary 176 pages– A) The hilarious and poignant story of a cocky seventh-grade super jock named Crash Coogan.

**Danger on Midnight River: World of Adventure Series, Book 6** by Gary Paulsen (Adventure 80 pages – E) Slow learner Daniel Martin escapes peer teasing by spending most of his time outdoors. Daniel’s survival skills are put to a severe test when a van crash plunges into the river and Daniel must choose between saving himself and risking his life to save the passengers trapped in the van.

**Dealing With Dragons** by Patricia Wrede (Fantasy 212 pages - C) Princess Cimorene moves into a dragon’s cave as a cook to avoid marrying an idiotic prince.

**Diary of a Wimpy Kid** by Jeff Kinney (Humor 224 pages – E) It’s a new school year, and Greg Heffley finds himself thrust into middle school, where undersized weaklings share the hallways with kids who are taller, meaner, and already shaving. The hazards of growing up before you’re ready are uniquely revealed through words and drawing as Greg records them in his diary.

**Everyone Else’s Parents Said Yes** by Paula Danziger (Realistic Fiction 115 pages - E) Matthew Martin is an annoying soon-to-be eleven-year-old boy. He finds that he must face the consequences for his behavior when the sixth-grade girls declare war on him and it coincides with his party.

**A Family of Poems: My Favorite Poetry for Children** by Caroline Kennedy (Poetry 143 pages - A) An anthology of poems celebrating poetry’s ability to connect us like family.

**George Washington’s Socks** by Elvira Woodruff (Historical Fiction 166 pages E) During a campout, five children are transported back to George Washington’s time, where they learn the sober realities of the Revolutionary War.

**Heartlight** by T.A. Baron (Science Fiction 242 pages - C) Kate’s grandfather has been working in his laboratory to uncover an unknown element in the heart of stars, called “Pure Concentrated Light”. He has succeeded in making a small amount of this magical substance which has the power to liberate your “Heartlight” so that you can travel to anyplace in space.

**How Angel Peterson Got His Name** by Gary Paulsen (Autobiographical/Humorous, 128 pages -E) When you grow up in a small town in the north woods, you have to make your own excitement. High spirits, idiocy, and showing off for the girls inspire Gary Paulsen and his friends to attempt some “extreme sports” of their own invention.

**The Liberation of Gabriel King** by Kelly Going (Contemporary 192 pages - A) Gabe’s best friend, Frita, decides to use the summer to rid Gabe of all his fears (and there are many) as well as her own (a much shorter list) so that the two can face “the big kids” in the fall.

**Lily’s Crossing** by Patricia Reilly Giff (Historical Fiction 200 pages - E) During a summer spent at the beach in 1944, Lily’s friendship with Albert, a young Hungarian refugee, causes her to see the war and her own world differently.

**No More Dead Dogs** by Gordon Korman (Fiction 180 pages - A) Eighth-grade football hero Wallace Wallace is sentenced to detention attending rehearsals of the school play where, in spite of himself, he becomes wrapped up in the production.

**The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits and a Very Interesting Boy** by Jeanne Birdsall (Fiction 262 pages - C) On their summer vacation, four sisters discover a garden paradise, a lonely boy, and one truly awful grown-up.

**Rabble Starkey** by Lois Lowry (Fiction 192 pages - A) Rabble (short for Parable Ann) and her young, single mother have a wonderful relationship even though times are hard.

**Skellig** by David Almond (Fantasy 182 pages - A) Michael met Skellig, the man-owl-angel who lies motionless behind the tea chests, in an abandoned garage behind Michael’s house. As disturbing as this discovery is, it is the least of Michael’s worries.

**The Teacher’s Funeral: A Comedy in Three Parts** by Richard Peck (Realistic Fiction 208 pages - A) C’mon back to rural Indiana in 1904 and join 15-year-old Russell, whose summer ends with the unexpected death of old Miss Myrt Arbuckle.

**The View from Saturday** by E.L. Konigsburg (Fiction 163 pages - A) Four hilariously different students develop a special friendship and attract the attention of their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent their sixth grade class in the Academic Bowl competition.

**A Week in the Woods** by Andrew Clements (Contemporary 160 pages - E) The fifth grade's annual camping trip in the woods tests Mark's survival skills and his ability to relate to a teacher who seems out to get him.

**When the Soldiers Were Gone** by Vera W. Propp (Historical Fiction 101 pages - A) At the end of WWII, in 1945, Henk is separated from the Dutch Christian family that has raised and protected him throughout the war and is taken back home by strangers, his real parents, who are Jewish.

***Charging into Seventh: For students entering Grade 7***

***Select one from the following list:***

**Titles are coded for readability: C=challenging A=average E=easy**

**April Morning** by Howard Fast (Historical Fiction 208 pages - C) The Battle of Lexington becomes fifteen-year-old Adam Cooper's initiation into manhood

**Bull Run** by Paul Fleischman (Historical Fiction 104 pages - A) Northerners, Southerners, generals, couriers, dreaming boys, and worried sisters describe the glory, the horror, the thrill, and the disillusionment of the first battle of the Civil War.

**Chasing Vermeer** by Blue Balliett (Mystery 272 pages - A) When seemingly unrelated and strange events start to happen and a precious Vermeer painting disappears, eleven-year-olds Petra and Calder combine their talents to solve an international art scandal.

**Dale Earnhardt Jr.: Born to Race** by Ken Garfield (Biography 96 pages - E) Although his initial claim to fame may have been that he was the son of the "Intimidator," Dale Earnhardt, Jr. quickly proved that he could make a name for himself.

**Emako Blue** by Brenda Woods (Contemporary 128 Pages - E) From the moment she stands up in chorus auditions and her heavenly voice fills the room, Emako Blue profoundly affects anyone who meets her.

**Hope was Here** by Joan Bauer (Contemporary 192 pages - A) When sixteen-year-old Hope and the aunt who has raised her move from Brooklyn to Mulhoney, Wisconsin, they become involved with the diner owner's political campaign to oust the town's mayor.

**Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters** by Andrea Pinkney (Nonfiction 120 pages - A) Engaging text and glorious art are combined in this collection of sketches celebrating the contributions of 10 women who moved forward the cause of civil rights in America.

**Make Lemonade** by Virginia Euwer Wolff (Contemporary 200 pages - A) Living in the projects but determined to be the first person in her family to go to college, LaVaughn takes a job babysitting for Jolly, the teenage mother of two-year-old Jeremy and baby Jilly.

**Millions** by Frank Boyce Cottrell (Adventure 272 pages - A)

After their mother dies, two brothers find a huge amount of money which they must spend quickly before England switches to the new European currency, but they disagree on what to do with it.

**Mission: In Search of the Time and Space Machine (Spy Force)** by Deborah Abela (Science Fiction 224 pages - A) Max Remy, 11, spends much of her time alone because her divorced parents are busy with their high-powered jobs. To pass the time she writes stories about super spy Alex Crane and the top-secret agency, Spy Force. Little does she dream that she will soon be involved in an adventure to rival those of her protagonist.

**My Thirteenth Season** by Kristi Roberts (Contemporary/Sport 160 pages - A) Already downhearted due to the loss of her mother and her father's overwhelming grief, thirteen-year-old Fran decides to give up her dream of becoming the first female in professional baseball after a coach attacks her just for being a girl.

**Old Yeller** by Fred Gipson (Realistic Fiction 192 pages - A) The simple story of a boy and his dog in the Texas hill country of the 1860s.

**Party Girl** by Lynne Ewing (Contemporary 128 pages - E) Kata and Ana are best friends and fellow gang members. When Ana suddenly dies in a drive-by shooting, Kata begins to question the choices she has made and wonder what the future holds. Can she escape the violence and futility of gang life?

**Pedro's Journal** by Pam Conrad (Historical Fiction 96 pages - E) The cabin boy on the "Santa Maria" keeps a diary in which records his experiences when he sails with Columbus.

**Phineas Gage: A Gruesome But True Story About Brain Science** by John Fleischman (Nonfiction 86 pages - A) The story of the construction foreman who survived for 10 years after a 13-pound iron rod shot through his brain.

**The Pigman** by Paul Zindel (Contemporary 182 pages - A) A teenage boy and girl, high school sophomores from unhappy homes, tell of their bizarre relationship with an old man.

**Stanford Wong Flunks Big-time** by Lisa Yee (Contemporary 304 pages - A) After flunking sixth-grade English, basketball prodigy Stanford Wong must struggle to pass his summer-school class, keep his failure a secret from his friends, and satisfy his academically demanding father.

**Surviving the Applewhites** by Stephanie Tolan (Contemporary 224 pages A to C) Jake, a budding juvenile delinquent, is sent for home schooling to the arty and eccentric Applewhite family's Creative Academy, where he discovers talents and interests he never knew he had.

**Touching Spirit Bear** by Ben Mikaelson (Contemporary 256 pages - A) After his anger erupts into violence, Cole, in order to avoid going to prison, agrees to participate in a sentencing alternative based on the Native American Circle Justice, and he is sent to a remote Alaskan Island where an encounter with a huge Spirit Bear changes his life.

**Tripping the Lunch Lady: And Other School Stories** by Nancy E. Mercado (Humor 192 pages– E)

A collection of funny short stories about life in school.

**Vandemark Mummy** by Cynthia Voigt (Mystery 224 pages - A)A collection of Egyptian antiquities draws a 12-year-old boy and his sister into an intricately plotted web of burglary, kidnapping and attempted murder.

**The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar and Six More** by Roald Dahl (Short Stories 240 pages - A) If you could see with your eyes closed, how would you use your power? That's what Henry has to decide in "The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar," one of the seven stories in this extra-ordinary collection. In addition to imaginative and magical tales, this book also contains the true story of how Roald Dahl became a writer.

***Strutting into Eighth: For students entering Grade 8***

***Select one from the following list:***

**Titles are coded for readability: C=challenging A=average E=easy**

**Al Capone Does My Shirts** by Gennifer Choldenko (Realistic Fiction 228 pages - E) Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there, and has to contend with his new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.

**Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl-The Definitive Edition** by Anne Frank (Biography 352 pages - A) Anne Frank's diaries have always been among the most moving and eloquent documents of the Holocaust.

**Bronx Masquerade** by Nikki Grimes (Contemporary/Poetry 176 pages - A) When Wesley Boone writes a poem for his high school English class and reads it aloud, poetry-slam-style, he kicks off a revolution.

**Bucking the Sarge** by Christopher Paul Curtis (Contemporary 288 pages - A) Fifteen-year-old wannabe philosopher Luther T. Farrell knows a few things about life. He knows the Sarge (his rich, shrewd, slumlord mom) is tougher than nails and that he had better not cross her.

**Bull Run** by Paul Fleischman (Historical Fiction, 104 pages – E) Northerners, Southerners, generals, couriers, dreaming boys, and worried sisters describe the glory, the horror, the thrill, and the disillusionment of the first battle of the Civil War.

**Call of the Wild** by Jack London (Adventure 208 pages - A)

Taken from a kindly owner, Buck is forced into the perilous life of a sled dog in the treacherous Yukon Territory..

**Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two** by Joseph Bruchac (Historical Fiction 240 pages - A)

Their story remained classified for more than twenty years.

**Freak The Mighty** by Rodman Philbrick (Fantasy 179 pages - E) The characters are contemporary and endearing with Max--an oversized, learning disabled, middle school student--as the narrator. Max becomes Freak the Mighty when he befriends an extremely small, yet highly intelligent, boy named Kevin.

**Gathering Blue** by Lois Lowry (Science Fiction 224 pages - A) Kira, an orphan with a twisted leg, lives in a world where the weak are cast aside. She soon realizes she is surrounded by many mysteries and secrets. No one must know of her plans to uncover the truth about her world and see what places exist beyond.

**The Greatest, Muhammed Ali** by Walter Dean Myers (Biography 192 pages– A) This book traces the life and career of Muhammad Ali, the only boxer to be the heavyweight champion of the world three times. Ali's life is placed in the context of historical events, such as the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and Watergate.

**Here in Harlem: Poems in Many Voices** by Walter Dean Myers (Poetry 88 pages - E) In the introduction, Myers writes that he was inspired by Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*, in which the people who live in a fictional town tell their stories in verse, and by his love of the Harlem community where he grew up.

**The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** by Douglas Adams (Science Fiction 320 pages – C ) Join Douglas Adams's hapless hero Arthur Dent as he travels the galaxy with his intrepid pal Ford Prefect, getting into horrible messes and generally wreaking hilarious havoc.

**Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow** by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (Nonfiction 176 pages - C) What was it like to be a teenager in Germany under Hitler? The author draws on oral histories, diaries, letters, and her own extensive interviews to tell the history from the viewpoints of people who were there.

**The Hobbit: Or There and Back Again** by J.R.R. Tolkien (Classic Fantasy 320 pages - C)

Bilbo Baggins was a hobbit who wanted to be left alone in quiet comfort. But the wizard Gandalf came along with a band of homeless dwarves., and soon Bilbo was drawn into their quest.

**It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life** by Lance Armstrong (Biography 288 pages - A) This is the story of Lance Armstrong, the world-famous cyclist, and his fight against cancer.

**Johnny Hangtime** by Dan Gutman (Adventure 144 pages- E) Thirteen-year old Johnny Thyme is “Johnny Hangtime,” a stunt kid who fills in for Ricky Corvette during dangerous stunts that are done in Ricky’s action films. Johnny’s father died doing a stunt and his mother wishes that he would quit the profession. A big surprise awaits him when he does a stunt at the site of his father’s death.

**Maus: A Survivor’s Tale: My Father Bleeds History (Volume 1) or Maus: And Here My Troubles Began (Volume 2)** by Art Spiegelman (Graphic Novel, Historical Fiction 160 pages - C) Told with chilling realism in an unusual comic-book format, this is more than a tale of surviving the Holocaust. The Nazis, portrayed as cats, gradually introduce increasingly repressive measures, until the Jews, drawn as mice, are systematically hunted and herded toward the Final Solution. This is a complex book.

**Monster** by Walter Dean Myers (Contemporary 288 pages - C) Steve is accused of being an accomplice in the robbery and murder of a drug store owner. A teenager who dreams of being a filmmaker, he writes the story of his trial for felony murder in the form of a movie script, with journal entries after each day's action.

**A Raisin in the Sun** by Lorraine Hansberry (Play 176 pages - C) Hansberry's award-winning drama about the hopes and aspirations of a struggling, working-class family living on the South Side of Chicago.

**Shabanu, Daughter of the Wind** by Suzanne Fisher Staples (Contemporary 288 pages - A) When eleven-year old Shabanu, the daughter of a nomad in the Cholistan Desert of present-day Pakistan, is pledged in marriage to an older man whose money will bring prestige to the family, she must either accept the decision, as is the custom, or risk the consequences of defying her father's wishes.

**Summer of My German Soldier** by Bette Green (Historical Fiction 240 pages - E) When German prisoners of war are brought to her Arkansas town during World War II, twelve-year-old Patty, a Jewish girl, befriends one of them and must deal with the consequences of that friendship.

**The Sword in the Stone** by T. H. White (Fantasy 256 pages - C) The Sword in the Stone recreates, against the background of magnificent pageantry and dark magic that was medieval England, the education and training of young King Arthur, who was to become the greatest of Britain's legendary rulers.