



Derby Middle School

10 Nutmeg Avenue

Derby, CT 06418

(203) 736-1426 (office)

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Mr. William Vitelli

Principal

Mr. Sean O'Meara

Dean of Students

Summer Reading Activity

Dear Parent,

At Derby Middle School, we work hard throughout the school year to provide rigorous and engaging work for our students. This includes introducing them to high quality literature that is used to open their hearts and minds to great reading and writing. We ask that you help support us and your student as we look to develop lifelong readers. Please encourage them to continue this work independently over the summer by reading one or more great book(s).

Attached to this letter is a list of book suggestions that the DMS reading teachers have put together, as well as a list of small projects to choose from to complete after reading each book. For every book read and project turned in the student will receive Derby Dollars, our school's primary positive reward program for excelling academically or behaviorally. The Derby dollars can then be used in our school store.

Why Summer Reading?

Summer can be a season full of good times and fun memories, but did you know that kids may experience learning losses when they don't read during the summer? There's actually a name for it: ***The Summer Slide*** (and not the fun one at the playground). This ***Summer Slide*** can create an achievement gap between students who read and those who don't. Students that do not read over the summer tend to lose some of the growth achieved at the end of the year.

So what can you do as a parent to help **STOP the Summer Slide**? Here's a simple solution... Encourage your student(s) to read books! Studies show that children who read over the summer are more prepared to learn and perform better on tests upon returning to school in the fall.

Motivating your kids to read doesn't have to be costly, and can even be free if you visit the public library. Here's how you can help your kids keep their reading skills sharp:

- Let your kids have a say in choosing the book(s) they want to read.
- Give kids access to a wide variety of age-appropriate books.
- Introduce your kids to a great book series or a book turned into a popular movie.
- If possible, let your kids use technology like a tablet or e-reader to read their books.

Below is a great resource from GoodReads that should guide you toward choosing great books for your student(s) to engage in over the summer. It contains several lists of books for middle school students organized into easy-to-navigate categories.

<https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/middle-school>

Have a safe and fun summer and ENJOY YOUR READING!

Sincerely,

The Derby Middle School Reading Team

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DMS Summer Reading Projects

Directions: Choose one of the following projects to complete after reading each book. **These projects will be collected by next year's reading teacher within the first few weeks of school and counted as your first grade of the year in your reading class.**

1) Book Review

Write a three-paragraph book review. The first paragraph should include a concise summary of the story. This includes a relevant description of the story as well as its characters, setting and overall theme or message. The second paragraph should offer a critical assessment of the book – your reactions to the story: what struck you as interesting, whether or not you enjoyed it, and what you took away (learned) from it. The third paragraph should suggest whether or not the audience would appreciate it, and either recommend or do not recommend the book to other readers.

2) Letter to the Author

Write a letter to the author of the book that follows the following format:

Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself – your name, where you go to school... perhaps how you chose to read the book. Describe why you liked or did not like the book(s). Is there something particular about his/her style of writing...plot development...characterization?

Paragraph 2: Tell the author what reading his or her work (name the title) made you think about. What ideas or questions about life did it give you? Why did you enjoy this book?

Paragraph 3: Make a connection between yourself and a character or an event in the story. Did the book mirror your life in some way? What questions did the author force you to ask yourself or others?

3) Create an alternate ending

Write a 1-2 page alternate ending to the book you read. In other words, rewrite the ending to make it different from (and hopefully better than) the original. You must use the same characters that are present in the original ending of the book; however, you may introduce new characters, or kill off any old ones you wish. You can even choose to write it from a different character's perspective, or even in a different time or place. Your new ending should be creative, believable, and exciting!

4) Design a Book Jacket

Redesign the jacket (front and back cover) of the book you read. The front cover should include the title and author and an illustration of the most exciting part (climax) of the story. The back cover should include a summary, a brief author bio, and favorable reviews. Another illustration on the back cover is optional.

5) Make a CD/Soundtrack

Think about all the events that happened in your book, the setting of the story, and the mood that the story created in you as a reader. Use that information to create a soundtrack for the movie version of your book. Add between 5 and 10 songs to your soundtrack accompanied by brief paragraphs that explain your reasons for choosing each song.



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DMS Reading Teachers' Recommended Summer Reading List

City of Orphans by Avi (Historical Fiction)

As a newsboy on the streets of 1893 New York, thirteen-year-old Maks Geless has a hard enough time evading the grasp of the Plug Ugly gang, whose sinister boss wants to control all the newsies on the Lower East Side. But now Maks is burdened with a new challenge: proving the innocence of his sister, Emmain just four days. Maks teams up with Willa, a strange but loyal girl who lives alone in an alley, and Bartleby Donck, an eccentric lawyer (among other employments), to do some urgently needed detective work.

Ella Enchanted by Gail Carson Levine (Fantasy)

Ella is a girl with a most unusual gift, and her story has charmed readers and critics alike. Now Miramax Films brings this wholly original Cinderella story to the silver screen, complete with princes, ogres, wicked stepsisters, and a fairy-tale ending fit for a princess.

The City of Ember by Jeanne Du Prau (Science Fiction)

The city of Ember was built as a last refuge for the human race. Two hundred years later, the great lamps that light the city are beginning to flicker. When Lina finds part of an ancient message, she's sure it holds a secret that will save the city. She and her friend Doon must decipher the message before the lights go out on Ember forever!

The Million Dollar Shot by Dan Gutman (Sports)

When Eddie Ball finds out about the Finkles contest -- a chance to win a million dollars just by sinking a foul shot at the NBA finals -- he realizes it could be the end of his family's troubles, especially since his mother was just laid off from the Finkle factory. But someone really wants Eddie to shoot an air ball, and will do almost anything to sabotage his million dollar shot ...

The Lost Hero (The Heroes of Olympus #1) by Rick Riordan (Fantasy)

'The Lost Hero' is a story set in the Percy Jackson universe, in which three heroes go on a quest to rescue the goddess Hera, who has been captured by a race of giants. On the way they face many dangers from Greek mythology, including the witch Medea, King Midas, who can turn anything into gold, and man-eating one-eyed giants called Cyclopes. Jason struggles with his lost memories, eventually realizing that he is part of an exchange with a Roman camp of demigods, in an attempt to make the two rival sides reunite together in friendship.

Divergent by Veronica Roth (Science Fiction)

For Beatrice Prior, the decision is between staying with her family and being who she really is - she can't have both. So she makes a choice that surprises everyone, including herself. During the highly competitive initiation that follows, Beatrice renames herself Tris and struggles to determine who her friends really are - and where, exactly, a romance with a sometimes fascinating, sometimes infuriating boy fits into the life she's chosen.

Eragon by Christopher Paolini (Fantasy)

Fifteen-year-old Eragon believes that he is merely a poor farm boy - until his destiny as a Dragon Rider is revealed. Gifted with only an ancient sword, a loyal dragon, and sage advice from an old storyteller, Eragon is soon swept into a dangerous tapestry of magic, glory, and power. Now his choices could save - or destroy - the Empire.

Lower Reading Levels



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Unwind by Neal Shusterman (Science Fiction)

In America after the Second Civil War, the Pro-Choice and Pro-Life armies came to an agreement: The Bill of Life states that human life may not be touched from the moment of conception until a child reaches the age of thirteen. Between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, however, a parent may choose to retroactively get rid of a child through a process called "unwinding." Unwinding ensures that the child's life doesn't "technically" end by transplanting all the organs in the child's body to various recipients. Now a common and accepted practice in society, troublesome or unwanted teens are able to easily be unwound.

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card (Science Fiction)

A futuristic tale involving aliens, the Internet, and an orbiting battle station ringing true even today as it is first and foremost a tale of humanity; a tale of a boy struggling to grow up into someone he can respect while living in an environment stripped of choices.

Double Identity by Margaret Peterson Haddix (Science Fiction)

As Bethany approaches her thirteenth birthday, her parents begin acting more oddly than usual: Her mother cries constantly, and her father barely lets Bethany out of his sight. Then one morning he hustles the entire family into the car, drives across several state lines -- and leaves Bethany with an aunt she never knew existed. Bethany has no idea what's going on.

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee (Classic/Historical Fiction)

The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it, *To Kill a Mockingbird* became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic. Compassionate, dramatic, and deeply moving, *To Kill a Mockingbird* takes readers to the roots of human behavior - to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humor and pathos.

Heat by Mike Lupica (Sports)

Twelve-year-old Michael Arroyo lives in the shadows of Yankee Stadium, home of his heroes, but a place that might as well be on a different continent since he can't afford to see the inside. He also lives in the shadows of his Bronx neighborhood, hiding from the bill collectors and the officials who would separate him from his seventeen-year-old brother if they knew the two boys were living on their own. Baseball is Michael's only salvation, along with his dream of playing in the Little League World Series--until a rival accuses Michael of being older than the league limit.

Bud, Not Buddy (Historical Fiction)

It's 1936, in Flint, Michigan. Times may be hard, and ten-year-old Bud may be a motherless boy on the run, but Bud's got a few things going for him: 1. He has his own suitcase filled with his own important, secret things. 2. He's the author of *Bud Caldwell's Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself*. 3. His momma never told him who his father was, but she left a clue: flyers of Herman E. Calloway and his famous band, the Dusky Devastators of the Depression!!!!!!

Brian's Winter by Gary Paulsen (Adventure)

Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson is desperately trying to survive. Winter is around the corner and he isn't prepared at all. He must learn to adapt and learn in order to survive the deadly winter. During his journey to survive the winter, he learns new things like making leather clothing, learns about science when he found mice cities under the snow, and makes friends with animals like Betty the skunk and wolves and humans David Smallhorn and his family who rescued him.

Higher Reading Levels



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Advice For Families

Early readers

- Point out print in the child's environment: on cereal boxes, food labels, toys, restaurants, and traffic signs.
- Sing songs, say short poems or nursery rhymes, and play rhyming words games with your child.
- Tell stories to your child.
- Read aloud to your child. Point to the words on the page as you read.
- Read a short passage several times to your child until your child can read it with you. Then encourage your child to read the passage to you.
- Encourage older children to read with younger children.
- Encourage your child to read (or pretend read) to you. Make this reading enjoyable. Don't worry if your child does not read all of the words correctly but, rather, applaud your child's efforts to read.
- Go to the library together.
- Have books, magazines, and newspapers around the house. Let your child see you reading.
- Encourage your child to write messages such as grocery lists, to-do lists, postcards, or short messages to family members or friends. Don't worry about conventional spelling at this point but, rather, encourage your child's first efforts at authorship.
- When watching television, have the captioning feature enabled so that the children view the words while hearing them performed aloud.

Advanced readers

- Talk to your child about what he or she is reading. Ask open-ended questions such as "What do you think about that story?" "What would you have done if you were that character?"
- Make reading and writing a regular part of your daily home activities. Let your child see you using reading and writing for real purposes.
- Visit the public library. Help your child to get his or her own library card.
- Read to your child regularly, even after your child is able to read some books independently.
- Listen to your child read. Use strategies to help your child with tricky words. For example, when your child comes to an unfamiliar word, you might say, "Skip it and read to the end of the sentence. Now try again – what makes sense and looks like the word that you see?"
- Praise your child's efforts at reading.
- Play word games such as thinking of different words to describe the same things.
- Support your child's writing. Have writing materials such as paper, markers, and pencils available. Read what your child writes.
- Set reasonable limits for television viewing.

Adapted from Mraz, Padak, & Baycich (2002).

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