2020 Summer Recommended Reading for Students Entering 5th and 6th Grade

Summer Family Reading:
For sharing and discussing

To foster the understanding of racial equity, activism, and anti-racist practices, Middle School Librarians have compiled two recommended reading lists for parents and students to read together and discuss.

- **Nonfiction for 4-6 Grade Students**
- **Middle School Fiction**

Many of the books are available on the eBook platform accessible via the Dalton SORA App for free. They are also available through eBook lending modules on NYPL, Queens Public Library and Brooklyn Public Library.

If you can, please support these independent bookstores that are in operation. Most offer pick-up and/or shipping options. Please consult their store websites for more information:

- **Books of Wonder** (UWS and Chelsea)
- **Bank Street Bookstore** (UWS)
- **The Cornerbookstore** (UES)
- **Sisters Uptown Bookstore** (Harlem)
- **Greenlight Bookstore** (Brooklyn)
- **The Lit Bar** (Bronx)
Adventurous #OWNVOICE Series

from

Rick Riordan Presents

Authors with different heritages create stories based on their own cultural myths, similar to the successful series created by Rick Riordan based on Greek, Roman, Norse, and Egyptian mythologies.

These are the first book in each series:

- ARUSH A AND THE END OF TIME by ROSHANI CHOKSHI (Indian/Fantasy)
- DRAGON PEARL by YOON HA LEE (Korean, Sci-Fi)
- THE STORM RUNNER by J.C. CERVANTES (Mayan/Mexican, Fantasy)
- SAL AND GABI BREAK THE UNIVERSE by CARLOS HERNANDEZ (Cuban, Sci-Fi)
- TRISTAN STRONG PUNCHES A HOLE IN THE SKY by BY KWAME MBALIA (African/African American, Fantasy)
- RACE TO THE SUN by REBECCA ROANHORSE (Navajo, Fantasy)
- PAOLA SANTIAGO AND THE RIVER OF TEARS by TEHLOR KAY MEJIA (Hispanic American, Fantasy)
Bowling, Dusti.
INSIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF A CACTUS
Looking for a mystery filled with friendship and courage? Look no further than Aven Green and her new friends in this fun story.

Bryan, Ashley.
INFINITE HOPE: A BLACK ARTIST’S JOURNEY FROM WORLD WAR II TO PEACE
National treasure author/illustrator Ashley Bryan relates his real and often painful experience as a black soldier on the front line during WWII, using his artwork: both from back then and created now, letters home, and reflection to critically examine a racially inequitable history and to call to action for creating a more just and peaceful future.

Colbert, Brandy.
THE ONLY BLACK GIRLS IN TOWN
Alberta is a talented surfer and the only black girl in her grade for years. Her best friend Laramie can't always understand her experiences. When Edie, another black girl moves across the street and finds a box of old journals in the attic, the two new friends, very different in temperaments and experiences, team up to solve the mystery of the writer and help each other solidify their own identities.

Day, Christine.
I CAN MAKE THIS PROMISE
Since her mother was adopted by a white couple, Edie believes that there is little chance for her to uncover her own Native American heritage - until she discovers a box hidden in the attic that might unlock the secrets and answer all her questions.

Heidicker, Christian McKay.
SCARY STORIES FOR YOUNG FOXES
When two fox kits are separated from their litters, they discover a dangerous world full of monsters: a zombie, a witch who tries to steal their skins, a ghost who hunts them through the snow, and many more. Will they finally find safety? And what is the scariest of all?

Henkes, Kevin.
SWEEPING UP THE HEART
Amelia is stuck at home with her father and her babysitter, the beloved Mrs. O'Brien during summer break with little to entertain her - until she meets Casey at her neighborhood art studio. Casey is Amelia’s first friend who is a boy and she doesn’t always know how to navigate the friendship. When Casey claims to see the spirit of Amelia’s mother (who died ten years before), the two set out on a journey to discover the past and the present.
Jamieson, Victoria and Omar Mohamed.
WHEN STARS ARE SCATTERED
Omar and his younger brother, Hassan, spent most of their lives in Dadaab, a refugee camp in Kenya. Life is hard there and made even harder because Hassan has some mental disabilities. So when Omar has the opportunity to go to school, he knows it might be a chance to change their future. He is torn between having a chance at a better future and leaving his brother behind. This graphic novel memoir of a Somalian refugee, co-authored by the award winning comic artist Victoria Jamieson, is heart-wrenching and yet hopeful and uplifting.

Kelly, Erin Entrada.
LALANI OF THE DISTANT SEA
Newbery winner Erin Entrada Kelly draws on her own imagination, inspired by her childhood stories from the Philippines, to create an adventuresome tale of a seaside village under the constant threat of the haunting spirits and a courageous and empathetic heroine who sets out to rescue her people.

Kodahata, Cynthia.
A PLACE TO BELONG
After being released from the Japanese American internment camp, Hanako and her family, including her 5-year-old brother were forced to leave the U.S. and return to her grandparent’s village on the outskirts of Hiroshima, having to survive, with much resilience and familial love, the devastation and hardship from the atomic bombing and the aftermath of the war.

Marks, Janae.
FROM THE DESK OF ZOE WASHINGTON
Zoe has never met her father -- who is serving a long prison sentence for murder. When she receives a letter from him on her 12th birthday, Zoe starts to question all that she has known about him. Finding details about his life hasn’t been easy -- but Zoe is determined to solve this mystery and perhaps finally meets her father, who insists that he is innocent and was wrongfully convicted.

Messner, Kate.
CHIRP
Mia and her parents move to Vermont the summer after seventh grade with her grandmother who has started a cricket farm, harvesting the new environmentally friendly food. Mia attends summer camps, makes new friends, is determined to get to the bottom of various sabotages to the cricket farm, and has to confront her own dark secret that resulted in her gymnastics accident.
Park, Linda Sue.
PRARIE LOTUS
Multi-heritaged 14-year-old Hanna lost her Chinese mother several years back due to the San Francisco race riot in 1877. She and her white father finally settle in a town in the American heartland. Hana wishes to become the town’s seamstress but her dreams are severely interrupted due to racism against her Chinese identity. Holding on to her mother’s legacy of courage and justice, Hana must overcome these obstacles.

Reynolds, Jason.
LOOK BOTH WAYS
Ten tales about ten very different students, each with unique experiences and distinct identities, are told in much humor and empathy by the National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature for 2020-2021.

Schmidt, Gary.
PAY ATTENTION, CARTER JONES
Carter Jones suddenly has an English butler who insists on helping his family during a time of grief: teaching and letting Carter drive the huge family car and taking over the school soccer field so everyone can play cricket, among other absurd and humorous events. All so that Carter and his mother could finally embrace life again after the family’s tragic losses.

Venkatraman, Padma.
THE BRIDGE HOME
Sisters Viji and Rukku run away from their abusive father to live on the street in contemporary Chennai, India. The girls manage to find shelter on an abandoned bridge and become friends with other homeless children. They scavenge in trash heaps and make bead necklaces to make money to buy food. When the rainy season hits and Rukku becomes gravely ill -- Viji must decide whether to risk going for help from adults!

Warga, Jasmine.
OTHER WORDS FOR HOME
In this verse novel, Jude relocates with her mother to Cincinnati from Syria when her hometown becomes too dangerous to stay, having to adjust to a new identity as “Middle Eastern” in an American school. This new life is full of large and small challenges but also delightful surprises: new friends, a whole new family, and a school musical that Jude might just try out for!

Wolitzer, Meg and Holly Goldberg Sloan.
TO NIGHT OWL FROM DOGFISH
Bett & Avery, two 12-year-old girls opposite in every way to each other, start an electronic correspondence because their two dads have fallen in love and are on a perceived reckless journey on foreign lands. This is a hilarious tale of unlikely friendships and life’s many small obstacles that eventually amount to deep revelations.
For More Book Choices

- 2019 Summer Reading Recommendations
- Recommended Book Series
- 2020 American Library Association’s Youth Media Award Winners

**American Indian Youth Literature Award**
“...identifies and honors the very best writing and illustrations by Native Americans and Indigenous peoples of North America.”
This award includes winner and honor books in picture book, middle school and young adult categories.

**Asian/Pacific American Youth Literature Award**
“...to honor and recognize individual work about Asian/Pacific Americans and their heritage, based on literary and artistic merit.”
This award includes winner and honor titles in categories of: Adult Fiction, Adult Non-Fiction, Youth Literature, Children’s Literature and Picture Book.

**The Pura Belpré Award**
“...presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth.”
This award includes winner and honor books for authors and illustrators.

**The Coretta Scott King Book Awards**
“...to outstanding African American authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults that demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture and universal human values.”
This award includes winner and honor books for authors and illustrators.