



Dear incoming 7th grade parents and students,

We are excited to announce this year's summer reading program! Each student is required to read **two** books this summer. Students will read one book that is a shared grade read and another book of their choosing from the "choice" list provided. The required text is:

Grade 7: *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson

Set in New York City at the beginning of the American Revolution, *Chains* addresses the price of freedom both for a nation and for individuals. Isabel tells the story of her life as a slave. She was sold with her five-year-old sister to a cruel Loyalist family even though the girls were to be free upon the death of their former owner. She has hopes of finding a way to freedom and becomes a spy for the rebels, but soon realizes that it is difficult to trust anyone. She chooses to find someone to help her no matter which side he or she is on. With short chapters, each beginning with a historical quote, this fast-paced novel reveals the heartache and struggles of a country and slave fighting for freedom. The characters are well developed, and the situations are realistic. An author's note gives insight into issues surrounding the Revolutionary War and the fight for the nation's freedom even though 20 percent of its people were in chains. Well researched and affecting in its presentation, the story offers readers a fresh look at the conflict and struggle of a developing nation. — *School Library Journal*

The purpose of the summer reading program is two-fold. One purpose is to encourage students to keep reading for fun, and the other is to provide students with a common reading experience. The grade read is specifically designed to give students a first look at the themes they will encounter in the 7th grade year. While students will not be asked to do anything formal with these texts over the summer, they will be expected to participate in class discussions, activities and/or quizzes around these texts in the fall. This means that they will need copies of the texts to bring to school with them in the fall. Students are encouraged to do their reading at the end of the summer or review the texts just before coming back to school, so they feel familiar with the texts when they return. If this is not possible, it is suggested that students jot down a few notes about what they liked and disliked about the books when they finish and bring these to school in September.

Happy reading!

The 7th grade English and History teachers

	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Vol. 1: The Pox Party</i> by M.T. Anderson</p> <p>Octavian grows up in a house of colonial scholars in the years before the American Revolutionary War. Who is Octavian Nothing? Patriot? Traitor? Property? Or Freeman? M.T. Anderson’s compelling book, told in a myriad of forms and voices, is breathtakingly simple in its theme of freedom and individual choice. This book isn’t an easy read, or a light one. It will take some awhile to get into and finish. But finish it you must to learn the secret—and the surprising fate—of the Astonishing Octavian Nothing. This novel pairs perfectly with Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson. Read them all together for the total AmRev experience! Bonus: There’s a Vol. 2!</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Capture the Castle</i> by Dodie Smith</p> <p>This book was brought back into print because Ms. Rowling of Harry Potter fame said it was one of her favs. Cassandra and her wacky family live in a crumbling English castle, leased when her famous writer father was still famous. Now, he suffers from perpetual writer’s block, and the family, once well-off, can barely scrape together a decent tea. Incidentally, Smith is also the author of the original 101 Dalmatians, another wonderful classic that is ten times better than the movie.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate</i> by Jacqueline Kelly</p> <p>Calpurnia Virginia Tate prefers tromping around in the woods and wading in the creek with her blustery grandpa, a Civil War veteran and amateur naturalist. As Callie especially after reading Mr. Darwin’s controversial book, <i>The Origin of the Species</i>. But is there room in Callie’s proscribed society for that oddest of creatures, a female scholar? This detailed read, full of fascinating facts about nature and biology and imbued with all the excitement and optimism people felt as they entered a new age, is far deeper than its sweet and gentle cover implies. Themes of feminism, racism, and gender roles are explored with equal aplomb. And, it’s just a really, really good STORY.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Wednesday Wars</i> by Gary D. Schmidt</p> <p>“Love and hate in seventh grade are not far apart, let me tell you.” In 1967 on Long Island, NY, Holling Hoods English teacher, Mrs. Baker, hates him about as much as she loves William Shakespeare. How does he know? Because every Wednesday afternoon, when half his class leaves for catechism lessons and half leave for Hebrew school, Holling, the only Presbyterian, is left alone with Mrs. Baker...and Shakespeare. When Mrs. Baker first proposes that they read and study the Bard’s plays together, Holling is less than thrilled. But that’s before he discovers Caliban’s curses in <i>The Tempest</i>, or how to use lines from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> to woo the fair Meryl Lee. Suddenly, Shakespeare doesn’t seem so stupid anymore..! The story is filled with lots of funny, subversive stuff –think Ralphie Parker in <i>A Christmas Story</i>.</p>



***I Rode A Horse of Milk White Jade* by Diane Lee Wilson**

You want to read about survival? Try survival on the wild steppes of Kubla Khan's Mongolia in the 13th century when you're just a girl with a horse, a dream and a whole lotta bad luck doggin' your heels. THAT's survival! Wilson has written a fantastical historical fiction about a girl named Oyuna who's not afraid to dress like a guy, ride like a solider and make her own luck..



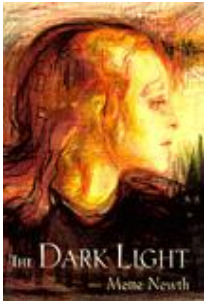
***The Green Glass Sea* by Ellen Klages**

Dewey Kerrigan is an eleven-year-old budding Einstein. The other girls in her class don't interest her half as much as the experiments she reads about in *The Boy Mechanic*. Now her scientist dad has taken a top-secret job in Los Alamos, New Mexico, and Dewey is going to join him. She has no idea what he's working on, all she knows is that her father and his colleagues are developing a "gadget" that is supposed to end the WWII. Even if you think you know how this story goes, Klages' creative, thought-provoking ending will haunt you. Klages scored the 2007 Scott O'Dell award for best historical youth fiction.



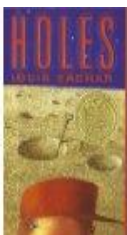
***Hana's Suitcase: A True Story* by Karen Levine**

The director of a newly opened Holocaust museum in Japan and her students become intrigued with a suitcase from a concentration camp found among the museum's artifacts. The story of a Czech girl, Hana Brady, a victim of the Holocaust, unfolds through the search for information about a suitcase and alternates between the past and the present. Part history, part suspenseful mystery, and always anguished family drama, This book ends with an incredible climactic revelation



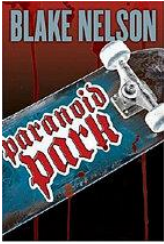

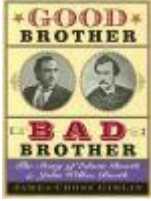


***The Dark Light* by Mette Newth**

. Tora is a thirteen year old girl from a close-knit family in 19th century Norway who is struck down by leprosy and forced to move into a leper colony. While there, she meets Mistress Dybendal, a mysterious rich woman who makes life hell for everyone else but learns to love Tora and teaches her how to read. The irony here is that as Tora weakens and her body gets sicker, her mind travels by books to places far beyond the walls of the hospital and even the little life that she knew before. Just a beautiful book, and even though it's sad (leprosy is terminal) the overall feeling of the story is hopeful and forgiving



***Holes* by Louis Sachar**

Stanley Yelnats (yes, his last name is his first name spelled backwards) is incarcerated at a juvenile detention center called Camp Green Lake on false charges of robbery. The plot is WAY too complicated and twisted to go into, but rest assured that this book is totally cool and quirky and every little thing falls neatly into place at the end, like a huge mental jigsaw puzzle. This book won the National Book Award for Young People's Lit.

	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Paranoid Park</i> by Blake Nelson</p> <p>If you saw someone die right in front of you, what would you do? Run? Scream? Pull out your cell and dial 911? Or would you go home and pray no one ever found out you were there? The terrified narrator of <i>Paranoid Park</i> does exactly that—see, he wasn't supposed to be hanging out at the notorious skate park, but he was and he did. Loosely based on the Russian classic <i>Crime and Punishment</i>, this nail-biter was made into a movie.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Invention of Hugo Cabret: A Novel in Words and Pictures</i> by David Selznick</p> <p>When twelve-year-old Hugo, an orphan living and repairing clocks within the walls of a Paris train station in 1931, meets a mysterious toy seller and his goddaughter, his undercover life and his biggest secret are jeopardized. Somewhere between a graphic novel and an old fashioned epic.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Good Brother, Bad Brother: The Story of Edwin Booth and John Wilkes Booth</i> by James Giblin</p> <p>Both John Wilkes Booth and his elder brother Edwin made lasting impressions on American history. Edwin spent his life perfecting his craft and building a reputation as the finest classical actor of his time. John was impulsive, popular with the ladies, and best known today as the man who assassinated Abraham Lincoln. Family letters and first hand accounts make this a great read.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Swimming to Antarctica</i> by Lynne Cox</p> <p>At 15, she swam and broke the English Channel record, and decided she needed a new goal So Lynne competes in the Nile River Run, swimming in raw sewage and chemical waste, fending off dead rats and broken glass. Undeterred by dysentery she plans more ambitious swims-around the shark-infested Cape of Good Hope to prepare for her big dream, a swim from Alaska to the Soviet Union across the Bering Strait.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Triumph: The Untold Story of Jesse Owens and Hitler's Olympics</i> by Jeremy Schaap</p> <p>This book uncovers the history of one of sports greatest track and field stars and traces the racial struggles he faced in America and the dramatic contests in 1936 at the Olympics in Nazi Berlin.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>No Pretty Pictures</i> by Anita Lobel</p> <p>The author, an award-winning author of children's books, tells the story of her own early childhood years, first as a "hidden child", and subsequently as prisoner in a succession of concentration camps during the Second World War.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Year of the Hangman</i> by Gary Blackwood</p> <p>In 1777, 15-year-old Creighton is kidnapped from England and taken to the American colonies, where he becomes involved in the political unrest that can change the course of history. This is a story of what could have happened if the American Revolution failed. A great story weaving events and persons that really existed into a clever tale for students who have a bit of knowledge about what really happened.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>A Step from Heaven</i> by An Na</p> <p>In this 2002 Printz winning novel, a young girl recounts her bittersweet experience in the United States after her family immigrates from Korea. It follows Young's life from the age of 4 all the way up until she is ready for college, as we watch her change from a hopeful girl into a hardened young adult. Never insincere, never heavy handed, this book will appeal to everyone who feels different.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Trap</i> by John Smelcer</p> <p>Written in alternating chapters that relate the parallel stories of Johnny and his grandfather, this novel poignantly addresses the hardships of life in the far north, suggesting that the most dangerous traps need not be made of steel.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Dairy Queen</i> by Catherine Gilbert Murdock</p> <p>After spending her summer running the family farm and training the quarterback for her school's rival football team, sixteen-year-old D.J. decides to go out for the sport herself, not anticipating the reactions of those around her. The first in a series.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Fairest</i> by Gail Carson Levine</p> <p>In the kingdom of Ayortha, the people sing songs, and no one has a more beautiful voice than Aza. Aza also has the ability to "throw" her voice to make it seem to come from places other than from Aza. This talent finds her in a deceitful arrangement with the new queen, an outsider who does not have the ability to sing in a kingdom that prizes singing.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Princess and the Goblin</i> by George MacDonald</p> <p>Said to be a favorite of both Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, <i>The Princess and the Goblin</i> is the story of the young Princess Irene, her good friend Curdie--a miner's son--and Irene's mysterious and beautiful great-great grandmother, who lives in a secret room at the top of the castle stairs.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Wind Singer</i> by William Nicholson</p> <p>In this first volume of a planned trilogy, the focus is on Amaranth, where life is very structured: people live in color-coded rings around the city--white for best, gray for the gritty outer circle--and tests rule all. A rebellious trio sets the orderly city on its ear by escaping its walls and embarking on an adventure that takes them from city sewers to desert sandstorms, as they seek to save their people from their dreamless existence</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Mr. Monday: Keys to the Kingdom</i> by Garth Nix</p> <p>During a running exercise at school, Arthur Penhaligon collapses from an asthma attack. Upon awakening, he meets a stranger, Mister Monday who hands him an unusual key which begins a wild adventure. Using the powers of the key, Arthur travels to another realm and battles many evil creatures in a struggle to save his world from a mysterious disease.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Double Luck: Memoirs of a Chinese Orphan</i> By Lu Chi Fa</p> <p>Orphaned in 1944 at age three, Chi Fa had no real home. Passed among Chinese relatives and even sold to strangers, he grew up amid abuse, poverty, and family betrayal. But through it all, he found hope and sustenance in small things. His story is a heartfelt, intimate glimpse at tragedy, triumph, and the Asian experience during a time of political change.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Book Thief</i> by Markus Zusak</p> <p>Death, the narrator, relates the story of a 9-year-old girl named Liesel Meminger, a book thief. Set in Germany, across the ensuing years of the late 1930s and into the 1940s, Liesel collects stolen books as well as a peculiar set of friends: the boy Rudy, the Jewish refugee Max, the mayors reclusive wife (who has a whole library from which she allows Liesel to steal), and especially her foster parents.</p>

