



# Summer Reading List

## Seventh Grade

You will read two books this summer in preparation for our work together next year. As with all of the work you do for this class, your summer reading assignments and notes must be your own. You should not use another student's work or visit on-line sites for interpretations or explanations of the books you read. Your thinking matters most.

If you are unable to buy a personal copy of a text, you may take notes on paper or use sticky notes in a borrowed text. However, you must have a copy of the books to use during the first four to six weeks of school. While an e-book will work for your choice book, please have a physical copy of *Under the Persimmon Tree* by Suzanne Fisher Staple.

### Everyone reads the following:

Everyone will read ***Under the Persimmon Tree* by Suzanne Fisher Staples** As you read, mark passages that seem significant to you. These passages may describe events that seem important to a particular character, that move a portion of the story forward, or that help you understand some portion of the book. This list is not all inclusive. If a passage seems important for another reason, mark it. Because you will use these passages to complete your summer assignment and for our in-class discussions, you may wish to flag them for easy reference later.

**Summer Assignment for *Under the Persimmon Tree* is due on the first day of class:** Look back at the passages that you marked. Select three to five that you think are the most important. For each, write a paragraph or two explaining why you find the passage significant. Remember that you decide what matters to you, so you cannot be wrong if you clearly explain your thinking. Please type this assignment.

Staples, Suzanne. ***Under the Persimmon Tree***




In the mountains of northern Afghanistan after 9/11, Najmah watches in horror as the brutal Taliban kidnap her father and older brother. . . . When her mother and baby brother die in an American air raid, she . . . makes a perilous journey to a refugee camp in Pakistan. In a parallel narrative, Nusrat (her American name was Elaine), who converted to Islam when she met Faiz in New York, has set up a rough school for the refugees. She has had no news of Faiz, her husband, since he left to establish a clinic in the north. The two stories come together when Najmah and Nusrat meet [at the school], where they wait in anguish for news of the people they love.

From American Library Association

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## Choose one book from the list on the following pages:

Take the time to select a book you will enjoy. Talk with your parents and friends. Read the descriptions provided below and preview the opening pages of the books that interest you. You will complete several assignments on the text you choose from this list during the first weeks of school. Because you will read the book in the summer and complete assignments when school begins, you will want to do the things good readers do in order to remember what they have read. Some of the strategies you might choose include the following:

-  Write a short summary at the end of each chapter in order to help you find information for assignments when school starts.
-  Write brief, personal responses to important events in the text.
-  Make a list of important quotations and what you think they mean.

Please note that these are suggestions to help you be successful. These are not required assignments. You may choose other strategies that work better for you.

Christi, Agatha. ***Murder on the Orient Express.***

Detective extraordinaire Hercule Poirot never refuses an interesting case—but his services are certainly not for sale. When Mr. Ratchett approaches him in the dining-car, he spurns the American's generous offer. But when Ratchett is found dead the next morning, Poirot responds with eagerness. One thing is for sure—with the train trapped in a heavy Balkan snowdrift, the killer cannot escape.

Tolkien, J. R. R. ***The Hobbit.***

*"In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort."*

The hobbit-hole in question belongs to one Bilbo Baggins, an upstanding member of a "little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded dwarves." He is, like most of his kind, well-off, well-fed, and best-pleased when sitting by his own fire with a pipe, a glass of good beer, and a meal to look forward to. Certainly, this particular hobbit is the last person one would expect to see set off on a hazardous journey; indeed, when Gandalf the Grey stops by one morning, "looking for someone to share in an adventure," Baggins fervently wishes the wizard elsewhere. No such luck, however; soon thirteen fortune-seeking dwarves have arrived on the hobbit's doorstep in search of a burglar; and before he can even grab his hat or an umbrella, Bilbo Baggins is swept out his door and into a dangerous adventure.

Taylor, Theodore. ***The Weirdo***.

“Weirdo” is the insulting nickname the townsfolk give Chip Clewt, a 17-year-old boy who had been badly burned in an airplane crash . . . Now assisting a graduate student observe and tag bears in the [Powhatan] swamp in order to protect them, he has aroused the tempers of local hunters. Samantha Sanders, the 16-year-old daughter of one of the most vocal opponents of the hunting ban, meets Chip when she follows a prize hunting dog into the swamp. . . . A strong friendship develops as the two lonely teenagers solve a murder while lobbying for animal rights.

*From School Library Journal*

Korman, Gordon. ***Masterminds***.

Serenity, New Mexico, is an idyllic community for all its inhabitants. Everyone has everything they need, and no one lies. As the local newspaper boasts, “Serenity Voted #1 in USA for standard of living.” Eli has always been happy with his life and never had any reason to want to leave. . . . [until] Eli and a few friends begin to uncover secrets and discover that honesty may not be at the heart of Serenity. . . . Korman has created a fun and creative story that delves into the philosophy of what makes us human and whether or not we are defined by our circumstances.

*From School Library Journal*

Na, An. ***A Step from Heaven***

In her mesmerizing first novel, Na traces the life of Korean- born Young Ju from the age of four through her teenage years, wrapping up her story just a few weeks before she leaves for college. The journey that NA chronicles, in Young’s graceful and resonant voice, is an acculturation process that is at times wrenching, at times triumphant and consistently absorbing.

*From Publisher’s Weekly*

If you have questions regarding your assignment during the summer, you may e-mail me at [kguidry@keystoneschool.org](mailto:kguidry@keystoneschool.org) I look forward to discussing these books when school begins in August. In the meantime, have a good summer and happy reading!

--Mrs. Guidry

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