



North Gwinnett Middle School



6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Language Arts Summer Reading List 2011

Step 1: Choose **TWO** books from this list to read by the 2nd week of school.

Step 2: Complete a Reading Response Documentation sheet for each book by the 2nd week of school.

**Reading Response Documentation sheets can be found at www.northgwinnetts.com*

After Ever After by Jordan Sonnenblick

Jeffrey isn't a little boy with cancer anymore. He's a teen who's in remission, but life still feels fragile. The after-effects of treatment have left Jeffrey with an inability to be a great student or to walk without limping. His parents still worry about him. His older brother, Steven, lost it and took off to Africa to be in a drumming circle and "find himself." Jeffrey has a little soul searching to do, too, which begins with his escalating anger at Steven, an old friend who is keeping something secret, and a girl who is way out of his league but who thinks he's cute. Grades 6 – 9. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

Anything but Typical by Nora Raleigh Baskin

Jason Blake is an autistic 12-year-old living in a neurotypical world. Most days it's just a matter of time before something goes wrong. But Jason finds a glimmer of understanding when he comes across PhoenixBird, who posts stories to the same online site as he does. Jason can be himself when he writes and he thinks that PhoenixBird - her name is Rebecca - could be his first real friend. Grades 4 – 7. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

All Shook Up by Shelley Pearsall

When 13-year-old Josh finds out that he has to stay with his dad in Chicago for a few months, he's not too thrilled. But when he arrives at the airport, he's simply devastated. His father—who used to be a scatterbrained but pretty normal shoe salesman—has become . . . Elvis. Well, a sideburn-wearing, hip-twisting, utterly-embarrassing Elvis impersonator. Grades 6 – 8. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

All the Broken Pieces by A. Berg

Two years after being airlifted out of war-torn Vietnam, 12-year-old Matt Pin is haunted: by bombs that fell like dead crows, by the family -- and the terrible secret -- he left behind. Now, inside a caring adoptive home in the United States, a series of profound events force him to choose between silence and candor, blame and forgiveness, fear and freedom. By turns harrowing, dreamlike, sad, and triumphant, this searing debut novel, told in lucid verse, reveals an unforgettable perspective on the lasting impact of war and the healing power of love. Grades 6 – 10. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

A Thousand Never Evers By Shana Burg

IN KUCKACHOO, MISSISSIPPI, 1963, 7th grader, Addie Ann Pickett worships her brother Elias and follows in his footsteps by attending the black junior high school. But when her careless act leads to her brother's disappearance and possible murder, Addie struggles with not knowing if he's dead or alive. Through tragedy, she finds the voice to lead a civil rights march all her own, and maybe change the future for her people. Grades 5- 8.

Beef Princess of Practical County by Michelle Houts

After years of waiting, it is finally Libby Ryan's turn to shine at the Practical County Fair. Libby is filled with excitement as she and her granddad pick out two calves for her to raise on her family's cattle farm, in hopes of winning the annual steer competition. Against her father's advice, Libby gives the calves names. She knows the calves will eventually be auctioned off, but Libby finds that she is growing closer to her steers with each passing day. Grade 5 – 9.

Brooklyn Nine: an novel in nine innings by Alan Gratz

Baseball is in the Schneider family blood. Each member of this family from family founder Felix Schneider in the 1800s to Snider Flint in the present day has a strong tie to the game and to Brooklyn. Through the years this family has dodged bullets on a battlefield, pitched perfect games, and dealt with the devastating loss of family and the Brooklyn Dodgers. Nine innings in nine generations. One game one family. Through it all one thing remains true: the bonds of family are as strong as a love of the game. Grades 7 – 10.

Bull Rider by Suzanne Williams

Cam O'Mara, a 14-year-old champion skateboarder, and grandson and younger brother of bull- riding champions is not interested in partaking in the family sport. Cam is a skateboarder and perfecting his tricks -- frontside flips 360s -- means everything until his older brother Ben comes home from Iraq paralyzed from a brain injury. What would make a skateboarder take a different kind of ride? And what would get him on a monstrosity of a bull named Ugly? If Cam can stay on for the requisite eight seconds, will the \$15, 000 prize bring hope and a future for his big brother? Grades 7 – 10

Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson

As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. Grades 6 -10. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

Claudette Colvin: Twice Towards Justice by Phillip Hoose

Claudette Colvin On March 2 1955, an impassioned teenager fed up with the daily injustices of Jim Crow segregation refused to give her seat to a white woman on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. This is a dramatic story of the historic Montgomery bus boycott and court case that would change the course of American history. Grade 6 – up.

The Compound by Stephanie Bodeen

Eli, the 15-year-old son of a billionaire techno-preneur, has spent the last six years with his family in the massive underground shelter his father has built, knowing that nuclear war has destroyed the world he knows—and killed his grandmother and his twin brother, who couldn't reach the compound in time. With nine years to go before the air outside will be safe to breathe again, the food supply shows signs of running out, but Eli's father has a solution—provided they jettison all morals and ethics. Grades 7 – up.

Countdown by Deborah Wiles

It's 1962, and it seems everyone is living in fear. Twelve-year-old Franny Chapman lives with her family in Washington, DC, during the days surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis. Amidst the pervasive threat of nuclear war, Franny must face the tension between herself and her younger brother, figure out where she fits in with her family, and look beyond outward appearances. For Franny, as for all Americans, it's going to be a formative year. Grades 5 – 8. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

Crossing Stones by Helen Frost

Eighteen-year-old Muriel lives on one side of Crabapple Creek. Her family's closest friends the Normans live on the other. For as long as Muriel can remember the families' lives have been intertwined connected by the crossing stones that span the water. But now that Frank Norman, who Muriel is just beginning to think might be more than a friend, has enlisted to fight in World War I and her brother Ollie has lied about his age to join him the future is uncertain. Grades 6 – 10.

Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester by Barbara O'Connor

An amazing secret has tumbled off a freight train into Carter, Georgia, and Owen Jester is the only person who knows about it. If he can simply manage to evade his grandfather's snappish housekeeper, organize his two best friends, and keep his nosy neighbor, Viola, at bay, he just might be in for the summer of a lifetime. A fantastic fable of friends, enemies, and superibly slimy bullfrogs. Grades 4 – 7. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

43 Old Cemetery Road: Dying to Meet You K. Klise

Ignatius B. Grumpy moves into the Victorian mansion at 43 Old Cemetery Road hoping to find some peace and quiet so he can crack a wicked case of writer's block. But 43 Old Cemetery Road is already occupied by eleven-year-old Seymour, his cat Shadow, and an irritable ghost named Olive. It's hard to say who is more outraged. But a grumpy old ghost just might inspire this grumpy old man--and the abandoned kid. Grades 4 – 6. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

Found by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Thirteen-year-old Jonah has always known that he was adopted and he's never thought it was any big deal. Then he and a new friend Chip who's also adopted begin receiving mysterious letters. The first one says "You are one of the missing." The second one says "Beware! They're coming back to get you." Jonah Chip and Jonah's sister Katherine are plunged into a mystery that involves the FBI a vast smuggling operation an airplane that appeared out of nowhere -- and people who seem to appear and disappear at will. Grades 6 – 8.

The Girl Who Threw Butterflies by Mick Cochrane

For an eighth grader, Molly Williams has more than her fair share of problems. Her father has just died in a car accident, and her mother has become a withdrawn. Molly doesn't want to be seen as "Miss Difficulty Overcome"; she wants to make herself known to the kids at school for something other than her father's death. So she decides to join the boy's baseball team. Molly hopes it's enough to impress her coaches *and* her new teammates. Grades 5 – 9.

Gym Candy by Carl Deuker

Mick Johnson is determined not to make the same mistakes his father a failed football hero made. But after being tackled just short of the end zone in a big game Mick begins using "gym candy " or steroids. His performances become record-breaking but the side effects are terrible: Mick suffers 'roid rage, depression, and body acne. Gym Candy's subject matter is just as hard-hitting as its football scenes. (Young Adult) Grades 8+

Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

The gripping story is set in a post apocalyptic world where the government demands a tribute from each of its territories: two children to be used as gladiators in a televised fight to the death. Katniss offers to take the place of her sister in the Hunger Games, but after this ultimate sacrifice, she is entirely focused on survival at any cost. It is her teammate, Peeta, who recognizes the importance of holding on to one's humanity in such inhumane circumstances. Grades 7 and up. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

Mockingbird by Kathryn Erskine

In Caitlin's world, everything is black or white. Things are good or bad. Anything in between is confusing. That's the stuff Caitlin's older brother, Devon, has always explained. But now Devon's dead and Dad is no help at all. Caitlin wants to get over it, but as an eleven-year-old girl with Asperger's, she doesn't know how. When she reads the definition of closure, she realizes that is what she needs. In her search for it, Caitlin discovers that not everything is black and white—the world is full of colors—messy and beautiful. Grades 4 -6. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg by Rodman Philbrick

Young Homer Figg sets off to follow his brother into the thick of the Civil War. Through a series of fascinating events, Homer's older brother has been illegally sold to the Union Army. It is up to Homer to find him and save him. Grades 5 – 8. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

The Mysterious Benedict Society by Trenton Lee Stewart

Join the Mysterious Benedict Society as Reynie Kate Sticky and Constance embark on a daring new adventure that threatens to force them apart from their families friends and even each other. When an unexplained blackout engulfs Stonetown the foursome must unravel clues relating to a nefarious new plot while their search for answers brings them closer to danger than ever before. Grades 5 – 9.

Notes from the Dog by Gary Paulsen

Fifteen-year-old Finn is a loner living with his dad and his amazing dog Dylan. This summer he's hoping for a job where he doesn't have to talk to anyone except his pal Matthew. Then Johanna moves in next door. She's 10 years older, cool, funny and she treats Finn as an equal. Dylan loves her too. Johanna's dealing with breast cancer and Matthew and Finn learn to care for her emotionally and physically. Grades 5 – 9.

Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper

Eleven-year-old Melody has a photographic memory. Her head is like a video camera that is always recording. Always. And there's no delete button. She's the smartest kid in her whole school—but no one knows it. Most people—her teachers and doctors included—don't think she's capable of learning, and up until recently her school days consisted of listening to the same preschool-level alphabet lessons again and again and again. If only she could speak up, if only she could tell people what she thinks and knows . . . but she can't, because Melody can't talk. She can't walk. She can't write. Grades 4 – 6. Georgia Book Nominee)

One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams-Garcia

Eleven-year-old Delphine has it together. Even though her mother, Cecile, abandoned her and her younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern, seven years ago. Even though her father and Big Ma will send them from Brooklyn to Oakland, California, to stay with Cecile for the summer. When the girls arrive in Oakland in the summer of 1968, Cecile wants nothing to do with them. Rather than spend time with them, Cecile sends Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern to a summer camp sponsored by a revolutionary group, the Black Panthers, where the girls get a radical new education. Grades 4 – 7. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

Return to Sender by Julia Alvarez

After Tyler's father is injured in a tractor accident, his family is forced to hire migrant Mexican workers to help save their Vermont farm from foreclosure. Tyler isn't sure what to make of these workers. Are they undocumented? And what about the three daughters, particularly Mari, the oldest, who is proud of her Mexican heritage but also increasingly connected her American life. Her family lives in constant fear of being discovered by the authorities and sent back to the poverty they left behind in Mexico. Can Tyler and Mari find a way to be friends despite their differences? Grades 4 – 7. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

Runaway Twin by Peg Kehret

Sunny Skyland has missed her twin sister ever since they were separated at age three after their mother and grandmother were killed in an automobile accident. Sunny has kept her memories of Starr alive over the past decade and in seven foster homes. Then, the discovery of a canvas bag containing \$800, with no claimant, spurs Sunny to travel from Nebraska to her old neighborhood in Enumclaw, WA. Sunny is an experienced runaway who plans carefully and tells no one. She does reach her destination, but not with the expected ending. Grades 5 – 7.

Scat by Carl Hiaasen.

Bunny Starch, the most feared biology teacher ever, is missing. She disappeared after a school field trip to Black Vine Swamp. And, to be honest, the kids in her class are relieved. But when the principal tries to tell the students that Mrs. Starch has been called away on a "family emergency," Nick and Marta just don't buy it. They will have to reckon with an eccentric eco-avenger, a stuffed rat named Chelsea, a wannabe Texas oilman, a singing substitute teacher, and a ticked-off Florida panther before they really begin to see the big picture. That's life in the swamp, kids. Grades 5 – 8. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

Schooled by Gordon Korman

Cap doesn't exactly fit in at Claverage Middle School (dubbed C Average by the kids). He has long, ungroomed hair, wears hemp clothes, and practices Tai Chi out on the lawn. His weirdness basically makes him biggest nerd in school. This is great news for Zach Powers, big man on campus. He can't wait to instate the age-old tradition in C-Average School: The biggest nerd is nominated for class president. Will Cap turn out to be the greatest President in the history of C-Average School? Or the biggest punchline? Grades 6 – 8.

Strange Case of Origami Yoda by T. Angleberger

Dwight, a loser, talks to his classmates via an origami finger puppet of Yoda. If that weren't strange enough, the puppet is uncannily wise and prescient. Origami Yoda predicts the date of a pop quiz, guesses who stole the classroom Shakespeare bust, and saves a classmate from popularity-crushing embarrassment with some well-timed advice. How can Yoda be so smart when Dwight himself seems so clueless. Grades 4 – 6. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

Swindle by Gordan Korman

After a mean collector named Swindle cons him out of his most valuable baseball card, Griffin Bing must put together a band of misfits to break into Swindle's compound and recapture the card. There are many things standing in their way -- a menacing guard dog, a high-tech security system, a very secret hiding place, and their inability to drive -- but Griffin and his team are going to get back what's rightfully his . . . even if hijacks ensue. This is Gordon Korman at his crowd-pleasing best, perfect for readers who like to hoot, howl, and heist. Grades 4 – 7. (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

Year of the Bomb Ronald Kidd

In the 1950s in Sierra Madre, CA, four seventh graders, enamored of horror movies, have the thrill of a lifetime when a movie crew comes to town to film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Paul is the narrator. His colorful friends include the son of a blacklisted sound editor, a scrawny scaredy-cat, and a tough guy who can't help picking on the others. The Red Scare plays a prominent role as the boys investigate a professor at a nearby university who worked on the Manhattan Project and was friendly with a Russian spy. Grades 4 -7.

Waiting for Normal by Leslie Connor

Twelve-year-old, Addie is waiting for normal. But Addie's mom has an all-or-nothing approach to life: a food fiesta or an empty pantry, jubilation or gloom, her way or no way. All or nothing never adds up to normal. All or nothing can't bring you all to home, which is exactly where Addie longs to be, with her half sisters, every day. In spite of life's twists and turns, Addie remains optimistic. Someday, maybe, she'll find normal. Leslie Connor has created an inspiring novel about one girl's giant spirit. Waiting for normal is a heartwarming gem. Grades 5 – 7.

When the Whistle Blows Fran Cannon Slayton

Jimmy lives in Rowlesburg, West Virginia, during the 1940s. He does all the things boys do in the small mountain town: plays a mean game of football, pulls the unforgettable Halloween prank with his friends in 'the Platoon,' and promises to head off into the woods on the first day of hunting season— no matter what. He also knows his father belongs to a secret society, and is determined to uncover the mysteries behind it! Grades 6 – 10.

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin

In the Valley of Fruitless Mountain, a young girl named Minli spends her days working hard in the fields and her nights listening to her father spin fantastic tales about the Jade Dragon and the Old Man of the Moon. Minli's mother, tired of their poor life, chides him for filling her head with nonsense. But Minli believes these enchanting stories and embarks on an extraordinary journey to find the Old Man of the Moon and ask him how her family can change their fortune. Grades 4 – 6 (Georgia Book Award Nominee)

