



**KCD Seventh Grade  
2025-26 Summer Reading**

Rising Seventh Graders:

Welcome to the summer before your seventh-grade year!

As you know, summer reading is an essential part of your KCD English experience. We ask you to read each summer to keep your brain active and engaged, and we select books that we feel will effectively prepare you for the coming year.

**DO NOT READ ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:** *Into Thin Air*, *Ghost Boys*, or *The Graveyard Book*. **We will read these during the school year!**

This summer you are required to read THREE books, two of which I have chosen for you. You may choose the third from the list below OR you may email me ([clark.pollitt@kcd.org](mailto:clark.pollitt@kcd.org)) with a request to choose one on your own that isn't on the list. I recommend that you read the one you select first, because that one will be purely pleasure reading. Read the required two closer to the time that we will begin school next August.

**You do NOT need to take notes on ANY of the books. I want your reading experience to be as enjoyable and easy as possible. NO NOTES!**

**Audio Books:** I strongly encourage you to avail yourself of the audio version of these books and read along with them, if you find that helpful and/or enjoyable. I think they provide a great way to practice your reading skills while also feeling like you are being read to and entertained. If you do use the audio books, **YOU MUST READ ALONG IN THE ACTUAL BOOK**, rather than just listening.

If you have any questions or issues, never hesitate to reach out to me this summer. I will be out of town for a couple of weeks in early June, but after that I'll be in town and around campus, coaching soccer and teaching summer classes. Let me know if I can help.

I'm looking forward to a great summer of reading and an excellent 2025-26 school year! ~Mr. P

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**Two REQUIRED books**



In *Same Sun Here*, Meena and River have a lot in common: fathers forced to work away from home to make ends meet, grandmothers who mean the world to them, and faithful dogs. But Meena is an Indian immigrant girl living in New York City's Chinatown, while River is a Kentucky coal miner's son. As Meena's family studies for citizenship exams and River's town faces devastating mountaintop removal, this unlikely pair become pen pals, sharing thoughts and, as their camaraderie deepens, discovering common ground in their disparate experiences.



*Into the Wild* begins with the discovery of Christopher McCandless's body by a group of Alaskan hunters who visit Denali National Park and Preserve on a yearly excursion. They radio for help. The FBI arrives and removes the body. Krakauer then visits with Wayne Westerberg, who knew Christopher McCandless as "Alex McCandless" and who provides an initial character sketch of the young man. We then begin to trace his backstory and get the full picture of what unfolded that led to his tragic death.



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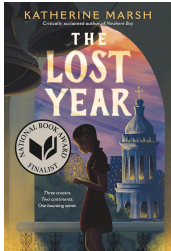

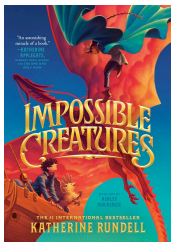
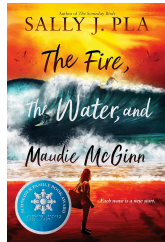
**Novels**

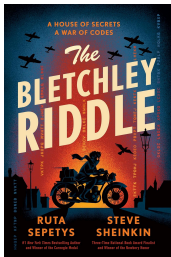
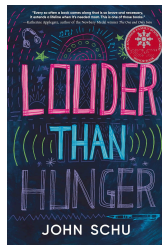




[What Happened to Rachel Riley](#) by Claire Swinarski. Anna Hunt may be the new girl at East Middle School, but she can already tell there's something off about her eighth-grade class. Rachel Riley, who just last year was one of the most popular girls in school, has become a social outcast. But no one, including Rachel Riley herself, will tell Anna why. As a die-hard podcast enthusiast, Anna knows there's always more to a story than meets the eye. So she decides to put her fact-seeking skills to the test and create her own podcast around the



[Light Comes to Shadow Mountain](#) by Toni Buzzeo. It's 1937 and the government is pushing to bring electricity to the mountains of southeastern Kentucky. It's all Cora can think of; radios with news from around the world, machines that keep food cold, lightbulbs by which to read at night! Cora figures she can help spread the word by starting a school newspaper and convincing her neighbors to support the Rural Electrification Act. But resistance to change isn't easy to overcome, especially when it starts at home. Cora's mother is a fierce opponent

	question that won't stop running through her head: What happened to Rachel Riley?		of electrification. She argues that protecting the landscape of the holler—the trees, the streams, the land that provides for their way of life—is their responsibility. But Cora just can't let go of wanting more.
	<a href="#">The Lost Year</a> by Katherine Marsh. Thirteen-year-old Matthew is miserable. His journalist dad is stuck overseas indefinitely, and his mom has moved in his great-grandmother to ride out the pandemic, adding to his stress and isolation. But when Matthew finds a tattered black-and-white photo in his great-grandmother's belongings, he discovers a clue to a hidden chapter of her past, one that will lead to a life-shattering family secret. Set in alternating timelines that connect the present-day to the 1930s and the US to the USSR, Katherine Marsh's latest novel sheds fresh light the horrific famine that killed millions of Ukrainians, and which the Soviet government covered up for decades.		<a href="#">Boy 2.0</a> by Tracey Baptiste. Win "Coal" Keegan has just landed in his latest foster home, with a big, noisy, slightly nosy family named the McKays. They seem eager to welcome Coal, but he's wary of trusting them. So, he doesn't tell them that he went for a walk with chalk in his pocket to cover a nearby street with his art. He doesn't tell them that a neighbor found Coal drawing, pulled a gun on him, and fired it. He doesn't tell them the police chased him. And he definitely doesn't tell them that when everything went down, Coal somehow turned invisible. But he did. Now he has to figure out how. Is he a superhero? Some kind of mutant? A science experiment? Is that why he has no family of his own?
	<a href="#">Impossible Creatures</a> by Katherine Rundell. The day that Christopher saved a drowning baby griffin from a hidden lake would change his life forever. It's the day he learned about the Archipelago—a cluster of unmapped islands where magical creatures of every kind have thrived for thousands of years, until now. And it's the day he met Mal—a girl on the run, in desperate need of his help. Mal and Christopher embark on a wild adventure, racing from island to island, searching for someone who can explain why the magic is fading and why magical creatures are suddenly dying. They consult sphinxes, battle kraken, and negotiate with dragons. But the closer they get to the dark truth of what's happening, the clearer it becomes: no one else can fix this. If the Archipelago is to be saved, Mal and Christopher will have to do it themselves.		<a href="#">The Fire, The Water and Maudie McGinn</a> by Sally J. Pla. Maudie always looks forward to the summers she spends in California with her dad. But this year, she must keep a troubling secret about her home life—one that her mom warned her never to tell. Maudie wants to confide in her dad about her stepdad's anger, but she's scared. When a wildfire strikes, Maudie and her dad are forced to evacuate to the beach town where he grew up. It's another turbulent wave of change. But now, every morning, from their camper, Maudie can see surfers bobbing in the water. She desperately wants to learn, but could she ever be brave enough? As Maudie navigates unfamiliar waters, she makes friends—and her autism no longer feels like the big deal her mom makes it out to be. But her secret is still threatening to sink her. Will Maudie find the strength to reveal the awful truth—and maybe even

			find some way to stay with Dad—before summer is over?
	<p><a href="#">The Bletchley Riddle</a> by Ruta Sepetys, Steve Sheinkin. <i>Remember, you are bound by the Official Secrets Act...</i> Summer, 1940. Nineteen-year-old Jakob Novis and his quirky younger sister Lizzie share a love of riddles and puzzles. And now they're living inside of one. The quarrelsome siblings find themselves amidst one of the greatest secrets of World War II—Britain's eccentric codebreaking factory at Bletchley Park. As Jakob joins Bletchley's top minds to crack the Nazi's Enigma cipher, fourteen-year-old Lizzie embarks on a mission to solve the mysterious disappearance of their mother.</p>		<p><a href="#">Louder Than Hunger</a> by John Schu. Jake volunteers at a nursing home because he likes helping people. He likes skating and singing, playing Bingo and Name That Tune, and reading mysteries and comics aloud to his teachers. He also likes avoiding people his own age . . . and the cruelty of mirrors . . . and food. Jake has read about kids like him in books—the weird one, the outsider—and would do anything <i>not</i> to be that kid, including shrink himself down to nothing. But the less he eats, the bigger he feels. How long can Jake punish himself before he <i>truly</i> disappears? A fictionalized account of the author's experiences and emotions living in residential treatment facilities as a young teen with an eating disorder, <i>Louder than Hunger</i> is a triumph of raw honesty.</p>
	<p><a href="#">The Island</a> by Natasha Preston. Jagged Island: a private amusement park for the very rich—or the very influential. Liam, James, Will, Ava, Harper, and Paisley—social media influencers with millions of followers—have been invited for an exclusive weekend before the park opens. They'll make posts and videos for their channels and report every second of their VIP treatment. When the teens arrive, they're stunned: the resort is even better than they'd imagined. Their hotel rooms are unreal, the park's themed rides are incredible, and the island is hauntingly beautiful. They're given a jam-packed itinerary for the weekend. But soon they'll discover that something's missing from their schedule: getting off the island alive.</p>		<p><a href="#">Mexikid</a> by Pedro Martín. Pedro Martín has grown up hearing stories about his abuelito—his legendary crime-fighting, grandfather who was once a part of the Mexican Revolution! But that doesn't mean Pedro is excited at the news that Abuelito is coming to live with their family. After all, Pedro has 8 brothers and sisters and the house is crowded enough! Still, Pedro piles into the Winnebago with his family for a road trip to Mexico to bring Abuelito home, and what follows is the trip of a lifetime, one filled with laughs and heartache. Along the way, Pedro finally connects with his abuelito and learns what it means to grow up and find his grito.</p>