



June 2024

Dear Parents and/or Guardians of Students Entering Grade 5:

We hope this finds you and your family well. With summer break quickly approaching, it's time to start thinking about this year's summer reading program. It is critical that our middle school students read at least 30 minutes a day during the summer. Student choice is key here. Summer is a time for our middle schoolers to read multiple books on topics that interest them and/or discover new authors, genres, and series.

In addition to building or sustaining a daily reading habit, students entering grade 5 are also required to read a book and complete a theme-based assignment aligned with grade 5 standards. After students read a theme-based book, they are required to complete the template that will be used in English classes during the first or second week of school.

This year's Grade 5 Summer Reading theme is gaining insight into ourselves through literary characters.

- Fairness/Unfairness - characters overcoming unfair situations
- Courage/Bravery – characters showing extreme bravery in difficult situations
- Advocacy– when characters find their voice to advocate for themselves and others

Grade Level Theme-Based Books:

- Keep scrolling through this document to find the Grade 5 theme-based book lists
- Students are encouraged to select a book from their grade level's theme-based book list but may read other titles if they address the summer reading themes listed above
- Copies of the theme-based books may be available through the Billerica Public Library; BPL staff is available to help students find books

Middle School Summer Reading Assignment for Students Entering Grades 5:

- Students need to make a copy of and complete the summer reading assignment template that follows; it will be used in English classes during the first week or two of school in the fall

We wish our middle-school students and their families a wonderful and safe summer.

Happy Reading,

Marian Dyer & the Summer Reading Committee



Billerica Public Schools' 2024 Middle School Summer Reading Assignment

Make an Electronic Copy of this 2-Page Template and share with your ELA Teacher

Name:

Date:

Title of Novel:

Author:

Directions: Respond to the following in complete sentences.

1. Describe the main **setting** of the novel.
2. Write a 5-7 sentence **summary** of the novel.
3. Describe one major **conflict** (problem) in the novel.
4. **Character Descriptions** – Select two major characters from your novel. Provide one character trait for each character with evidence from the text to support your claims. Make sure to include quotations and page number(s) where evidence was found.

Name of Character	Textual Evidence to Support Trait with page #
Ponyboy Curtis	“Like the way you dig sunsets, Pony. That’s gold. Keep that way, it’s a good way to be” (page 178). “...we were just buddies who stuck together” (page 138). “we all just wanted to stay together” (page 177).

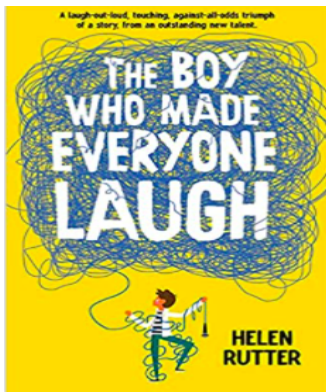
5. **Theme** – State the theme--one of the four summer reading themes--of the novel you read. Cite evidence from the novel you read to support the theme. You may copy lines from the novel (cite quotations) and/or paraphrase the lines (put in your own words).

6. **Evaluation** – Would you recommend the novel? Why or why not?

Entering Grade 5 2024 Summer Reading List

The books below are suggestions that align with the themes of fairness, bravery, and advocacy. Families are encouraged to decide on summer reading books with their children. **You are welcome to choose a text not on this list** and we ask you to try to keep the themes in mind in choosing alternative texts.

The Boy Who Made Everyone Laugh, **Helen Rutter**



Billy Plimpton has a big dream: to become a famous comedian when he grows up. He already knows a lot of jokes, but thinks he has one big problem standing in his way: his stutter.

At first, Billy thinks the best way to deal with this is to . . . never say a word. That way, the kids in his new school won't hear him stammer. But soon he finds out this is NOT the best way to deal with things. (For one thing, it's very hard to tell a joke without getting a word out.)

As Billy makes his way toward the spotlight, a lot of funny things (and some less funny things) happen to him. In the end, the whole school will know – If you think you can hold Billy Plimpton back, be warned: The joke will soon be on you!

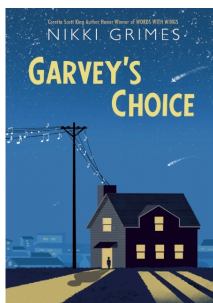
The First Rule of Punk, Celia C. Perez



There are no shortcuts to surviving your first day at a new school—you can't fix it with duct tape like you would your Chuck Taylors. On Day One, twelve-year-old Malú (María Luisa, if you want to annoy her) inadvertently upsets Posada Middle School's queen bee, violates the school's dress code with her punk rock look, and disappoints her college-professor mom in the process. Her dad, who now lives a thousand miles away, says things will get better as long as she remembers the first rule of punk: be yourself.

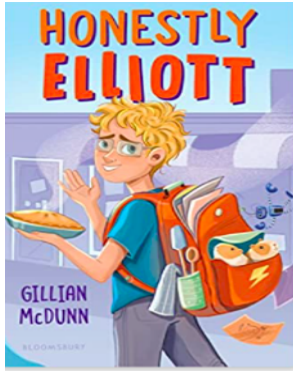
The real Malú loves rock music, skateboarding, zines, and Soyrizo (hold the cilantro, please). And when she assembles a group of like-minded misfits at school and starts a band, Malú finally begins to feel at home. She'll do anything to preserve this, which includes standing up to an anti-punk school administration to fight for her right to express herself!

Garvey's Choice, Nikki Grimes



Garvey's father has always wanted Garvey to be athletic, but Garvey is interested in astronomy, science fiction, reading—anything but sports. Feeling like a failure, he comforts himself with food. Garvey is kind, funny, smart, a loyal friend, and he is also overweight, teased by bullies, and lonely. When his only friend encourages him to join the school chorus, Garvey's life changes. The chorus finds a new soloist in Garvey, and through chorus, Garvey finds a way to accept himself, and a way to finally reach his distant father—by speaking the language of music instead of the language of sports.

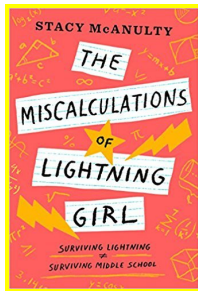
Honestly Elliott, Gillian McDunn



Elliott has been struggling since his closest friend moved away, and he's not too sure where he fits into his own family, especially since his newly remarried dad and stepmom are expecting a baby. His grades aren't too great, he's always forgetting things, and he doesn't really like sports. All together, the result is someone the complete opposite of his dad--a fact they're both very aware of. Elliott's only solace is cooking, where he can control the outcome, testing exciting recipes and watching his favorite cooking shows.

When he's paired with the super smart and popular Maribel for a school-wide project, Elliott worries they won't see eye to eye. But Maribel is also looking for a new way to show others her true self and this project could provide the chance they both need. Sometimes the least likely friends help you see a new side to things . . . and sometimes you have to make a few mistakes before you figure out what's right.

The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl, Stacy McAnulty



Lucy Callahan was struck by lightning. She doesn't remember it, but it changed her life forever. The zap gave her genius-level math skills, and ever since, Lucy has been homeschooled. Now, at 12 years old, she's technically ready for college. She just has to pass 1 more test — middle school!

Planet Earth is Blue, Nicole Panteleakis



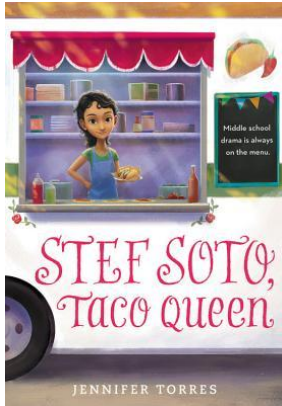
Twelve-year-old Nova is eagerly awaiting the launch of the space shuttle Challenger--it's the first time a teacher is going into space, and kids across America will watch the event on live TV in their classrooms. While foster families and teachers dismiss Nova as severely autistic and nonverbal, her big sister Bridget understands how intelligent and special Nova is, and all that she can't express.

The Season of Styx Malone, Kekla Magoon



Caleb Franklin and his big brother Bobby Gene have the whole summer for adventures in the woods behind their house in Sutton, Indiana. Caleb dreams of venturing beyond their ordinary small town, but his dad likes the family to stay close to home.

Stef Soto, Taco Queen. Jennifer Torres



Estefania "Stef" Soto is itching to shake off the onion-and-cilantro embrace of Tia Perla, her family's taco truck. She wants nothing more than for Papi to get a normal job and for Tia Perla to be a distant memory. Then maybe everyone at school will stop seeing her as the Taco Queen.

But when her family's livelihood is threatened, and it looks like her wish will finally come true, Stef surprises everyone (including herself) by becoming the truck's unlikely champion. In this fun and heartfelt novel, Stef will discover what matters most and ultimately embrace an identity that even includes old Tia Perla.

Remember to Read at Least 30 Minutes a Day During the Summer

