

Summer Reading 2025

Please view the appropriate grade level that students will be entering in September 2025.

Each grade level includes two activities and a project. Please be sure to read each activity's directions carefully.

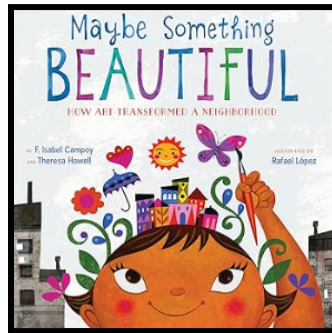
[Summer Reading Poster](#)

[Spanish Titles Summer Reading Assignments](#)

[Portuguese Summer Reading Assignments](#)

<u>Rising Grade Level</u>	<u>Title</u>
Pre-K	Maybe Something Beautiful by Isabel Campoy & Theresa Howell
K	Dreaming Up by Christy Hale
1	Just Help! How to Build a Better World by Sonia Sotomayor
2	The Water Princess by Susan Verde
3	Five Stories by Ellen Weinstein
4	Once Upon a Tim by Stuart Gibbs
5	Ban This Book by Alan Gratz
6	The Last Cuentista by Donna Barba Higuera
7	Black Star by Kwame Alexander
8	We Beat the Street by Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, Rameck Hunt & Sharon Draper
9	The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
10	Furia by Yamile Saied Méndez
11	Dear Martin by Nic Stone
12	I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban by Malala Yousafzai & Christina Lamb

Rising Pre-Kindergarten 4
Maybe Something Beautiful
by Isabel Campoy & Theresa Howell



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

The book *Maybe Something Beautiful* tells the story of how a gray community transformed. What do you see in the book that you also have seen in your community or communities you have visited? Draw a picture. Be creative. Use color in your drawing.

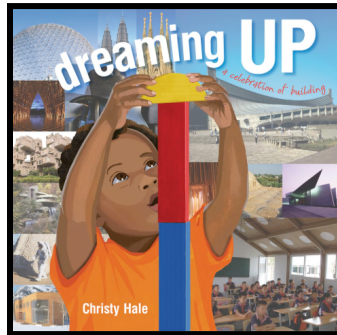
Activity 2

In *Maybe Something Beautiful*, Mira loves to draw pictures of her favorite things. Draw a picture of your favorite thing. Label your drawing.

Activity 3: Get Creative

In *Maybe Something Beautiful*, Mira and her community work together to help their community come alive with color by creating a community mural (a painting or other work of art on a wall). On the [attached brick wall piece](#), draw a picture of something that represents your community.

Rising Kindergarten
Dreaming Up
by Christy Hale



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

As you read *Dreaming Up*, point out the different shapes that you see throughout the book. Think about your dream house or playground. What does it look like? What items would be in it? [Draw your dream house or playground](#). Label your drawing with the different shapes you have used. Write one sentence describing your structure.

Activity 2

The children in the book, *Dreaming Up*, used materials to build their structures. Identify the materials that the children used to build. Using the [Dreaming Up Materials Organizer](#), draw a picture of three of the materials used. Do your best to write the names of the materials the children are using to build their structures.

Activity 3: Get Creative

In *Dreaming Up*, the children use different objects to build structures. Using objects in your home, build a structure. Write one sentence about the materials you used to build your structure.



Rising 1st Grade

Just Help! How to Build a Better World by Sonia Sotomayor



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

In *Just Help*, we learn that Sonia wants to help others just like her mommy. Think about one way you can help your community. Draw a picture and write 1 to 2 sentences about how you will help your community.

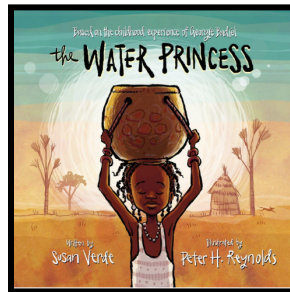
Activity 2

In *Just Help*, every night when Sonia goes to bed, her mommy asks her the same question: How did you help today? Pretend you are Sonia and think about how you have been helpful this summer. Draw a picture of how you helped. At the bottom of your picture write 1 sentence to describe how you helped. You can begin the sentence with **I helped today by _____**.

Activity 3: Get Creative

In *Just Help*, we learn about the different ways Sonia and her friends lend a helping hand to their community. Using your hands, you will create a "Helping Hands" poster. Using the [Helping Hands Template](#), write one way you can help someone in each hand.

Rising 2nd Grade
The Water Princess
by Susan Verde



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

In *The Water Princess*, we learn that water is not always easy to access for everyone. For some people, it is very hard to get water. In the story, Gie Gie hopes to find access to clean water close to her village someday. Is there a problem in your city that you hope will be solved someday? In at least four sentences, explain the problem and come up with one possible solution.

Activity 2

In *The Water Princess*, Gie Gie and her mother walk a long way every day to get water for their family. Imagine you are Gie Gie. You are carrying a heavy pot of water on your head as you walk home.

- How does your body feel?
- What are you thinking about?
- What will you use the water for when you get home?

Now, pretend it is nighttime. You are finally home after your long journey. Write a diary entry to tell about your day.

Start with: Dear Diary. Tell how you felt during the walk and what you did with the water when you got home.

Activity 3: Get Creative

In *The Water Princess*, we learn about how precious water is to Gie Gie, her family, and her village. Write an acrostic poem using the word **water**.

In an acrostic poem, the first letter of each line spells out the subject of the poem ([see example using 'rain'](#)). Remember to bring your acrostic poem to school, so your poem can be shared with your school community.

Example:

Rumbling thunder
And flashes of lightning
In the distance
Now I know it will rain.

Rising 3rd Graders
Five Stories
by Ellen Weinstein



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

Five Stories tells the stories about five children and their experiences living in the same Lower East Side building. Among all the cultures represented—Russian, Italian, Dominican, Puerto Rican and Chinese—which story did you find the most interesting? Write a paragraph explaining why you found their story interesting. Did you learn anything new? Did their story remind you of your own experience or of someone you know?

Activity 2

Each of the children in the book has a connection to one of the previous children and each dreams of what they might do in the future. What are your dreams for the future? Who or what has helped you believe in this possibility? Write a 5-sentence paragraph telling your new classmates what you want to do and where your inspiration comes from.

Activity 3: Get Creative

Use a cereal box to [create a book report](#) and a 30-second commercial to persuade people to read/buy it! After you have written your commercial, practice performing it and be ready to present to your classmates. Have fun!

Rising 4th Graders
Once Upon a Tim
by Stuart Gibbs



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

Keep track of the IQ Booster words from the book using this [tracker](#). Then choose two words to create a visual that represents the meaning of each word. On an index card, write the word on one side and on the back, draw a picture to help define the word. See the sample at the bottom of the tracker.

Activity 2

Belinda tells Princess Grace, "Let me get this straight . . . You could have rescued yourself at any time, but you stayed because society has taught you to wait for a man to come and save you?" (Chapter 15) What does this quote mean to you? Why is it significant to Grace's journey? Write a paragraph explaining your answer and consider how this story challenges the traditional fairy tale story.

Activity 3: Get Creative

Throughout *Once Upon a Tim*, readers encounter Tim's fr-dog, as well as several fantastical and scary monsters on the journey to rescue Princess Grace. Whether it's bloodthirsty butterflies, gargantuan grasshoppers, elephantine earwigs, Brobdingnagian bees, or a pair of terrible trolls, these creatures strike fear in Tim and others on the quest. Think of a new creature and [create a "Beware of..." poster](#) warning the people. Include the name of the new creature that would fit into the story, a drawing of the creature, and why people should be careful. Be prepared to present your new creature to the class!

Rising 5th Graders

Ban This Book

by Alan Gratz



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

Ban This Book is told by Amy Anne, a character who often finds herself unable to speak up for herself. Make a list of at least four moments in the story where Amy Anne stays silent. For each moment, write a paragraph describing how the story might have been different if Amy Anne had spoken up. [Link](#) to graphic organizer.

Activity 2

One of the themes in *Ban This Book* is that different readers can have different ideas about the same book. At the last school board meeting, Amy Anne confronts Mrs. Spencer on a book that was banned and how it could potentially affect someone's character. In this activity, you will summarize what occurs at the school board meeting and explain whether you agree or disagree with Amy Anne's argument. Be sure to include examples from the text to justify your point of view.

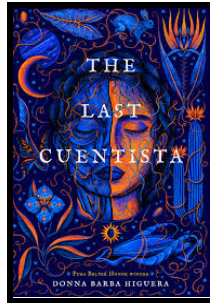
Activity 3: Get Creative

Create a Newsletter poster to report what happened during the last school board meeting. Use [this template](#) as an example when creating your poster. Be prepared to present your newsletter to the class!

Be sure to include the following:

- Catchy opening sentence;
- 5 Ws (Who, What, Where, When, Why);
- Direct quotes; and
- Words that help readers visualize, feel, and understand the scene.

Rising 6th Graders
The Last Cuentista
by Donna Barba Higuera



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

Early in the novel, during a flashback, Petra and her father go to a state park to look for Jasper. When Petra says “the rocks won’t match,” her father responds, “They’re not meant to be identical; they’re meant to complement one another. Differences make things beautiful as a whole,” (page 63). Write a paragraph explaining the significance of this statement and how it connects to the theme of the story.

Activity 2

Choose one of the [following quotes](#) from the novel and create an original story that incorporates the theme of the quote you selected. Ensure that your story reflects the meaning or message of the quote throughout the narrative. You can use your own experiences to tell the story or make up a fictional character. The story should be up to two pages long.

Points to consider:

- This is a narrative writing task, be sure to:
 - include dialogue and story elements
 - include a problem and solution, relating to the chosen quote
 - check your work for spelling and grammar

Activity 3: Get Creative

Create a 4-square quilt to represent “The Last Cuentista” visually. Each square should be no larger than 6 inches.

You can design each of the squares to represent key scenes from the novel, such as the journey to the pod, life on the new planet, or Petra’s storytelling. The quilt can be made of any material you would like: fabric, cardboard, or paper, for example. You can use these [examples](#) to guide you. The designs should be colorful and help to visually show the story of the novel.



Roger León
Superintendent

Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress

Rising 7th Graders

Black Star

by Kwame Alexander



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

When Charley insists that they "should be able to play wherever," Willie Green responds, "should and can is two different words" (p. 38-39). What do you think he means by that? What restrictions and unspoken rules are they expected to follow by the "wonderfuls"? Also, what additional expectations are there for Charley as a girl? Use this [graphic organizer](#) to plan your work.

Activity 2

Only Nana Kofi wants Charley to understand the truth about slavery and segregation- other adults want to shield her from these harsh realities. What are the repercussions of their decision to withhold the information? Write an essay with an introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion to share your thoughts.

Activity 3: Get Creative

Using only words and phrases from Black Star, create a found poem by rearranging them into a new, original poetic work that reflects your interpretation or message. Once your poem is complete, design a poster to showcase it. Your poster should include artistic elements—such as drawings, colors, or other visual details—that help bring your poem to life and reflect its tone, mood, or theme. Read more about found poetry [here](#) and see examples [here](#).



Roger León
Superintendent

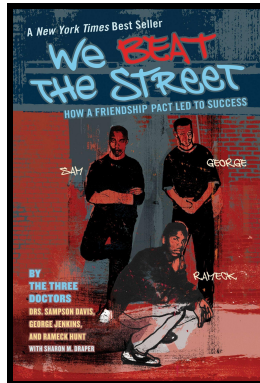
Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress

Rising 8th Graders

We Beat the Street

by Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, Rameck Hunt & Sharon Draper



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

Choose one of the central themes of the book and explain how it shapes the characters' decisions and actions. Use specific examples from the text to support your argument, citing at least two key moments from the book where this theme is evident in their journey. Use this [graphic organizer](#) to plan your work.

Activity 2

Write a 2-page letter to one of the authors (Sampson, George, or Rameck) reflecting on their experiences and the lessons you learned from their story. How has their journey inspired you? What would you want to ask them if you had the chance?

Activity 3: Get Creative

Create a visual timeline that chronicles the life of Sampson, George or Rameck from their early years to their medical school graduation. Include key moments, challenges, and decisions that shaped their paths. Add images, quotes, or summaries to add visual interest and depth to the work. You can work on paper or create a digital timeline using a free tool like [CANVA](#).

Challenge: Your Future Timeline

Build a timeline that outlines your goals and dreams for the future. Think about where you want to be in 5, 10, or 20 years. What are your aspirations in terms of career, education, or life experiences? Consider the choices or steps you'll need to take to achieve those goals. See your future.



Roger León
Superintendent

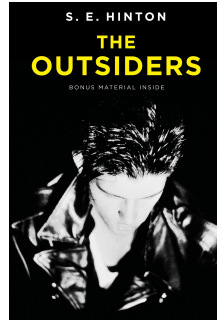
Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress

Rising 9th Graders

The Outsiders

by S.E. Hinton



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

Greasers vs. Socs Debate: Explore the differences and similarities between the two groups by researching and defending their group's perspective in a script for debate discussing themes like privilege, loyalty, and identity.

Activity 2

Character Diary Entries: Demonstrate your understanding of a character (Ponyboy, Johnny, Dally, etc.) from the book by writing a diary entry from one of the characters' perspectives. You can choose to write from the point of view of any major character from the text. Your diary should have a minimum of 5 entries and should include specific details from the text and reflect on key events the character experiences in the book.

Activity 3: Get Creative

1960s Pop Culture Exploration: Get immersed in the setting of The Outsiders through research on 1960s pop culture, including fashion, slang, music, and cars. Bring the time to life by creating a poster, a diorama, or take a photo of yourself dressing in 1960s style for a day. If your school permits it on your presentation day, consider wearing your 1960s themed outfit.

Rising 10th Graders

Furia

by Yamile Saied Méndez



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

Furia centers around the desire for freedom and independence, coming of age, and family. As you read, select and analyze at least **six** important quotes from the text that are meaningful to you from the story. Complete [this chart](#) describing the quotes that stand out to you.

Activity 2

Read the following article, [“Women’s Football in Argentina: Feminism Takes to the Field”](#), and respond to one the [following questions](#) in 2-3 paragraphs response using specific and relevant textual evidence.

Activity 3: Get Creative

Reflect on your reading of *Furia* and create an “[artistic one-pager](#).” A One-Pager is a single-page that shows your understanding of a text you have read by creatively combining texts, images, your personal reflections, and designs.



Roger León
Superintendent

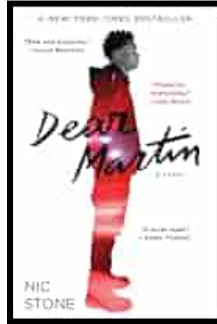
Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress

Rising 11th Graders

Dear Martin

by Nic Stone



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

Dear Martin centers around the themes of resilience, identity, and racism. As you read, select and analyze at least six important quotes that are meaningful to you within the story. Complete [this chart](#) describing the quotes that stand out to you.

Activity 2

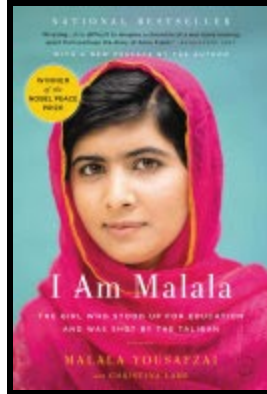
In your first unit in Grade 11, you will be reading Nic Stone's *Dear Justyce*. Both *Dear Martin* and *Dear Justyce* deal with issues of identity, systemic inequities, and the choices people make in the face of challenging circumstances. Be sure to keep that in mind as you complete this [activity](#). You will be asked in September to reflect upon these connections.

Activity 3: Get Creative

Reflect on your reading of *Dear Martin* and create an "[artistic one-pager](#)." A One-Pager is a single-page that shows your understanding of a text you have read by creatively combining texts, images, your personal reflections, and designs.

Rising 12th Graders

I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban by Malala Yousafzai & Christina Lamb



Summer Reading Activities

Directions

Please make sure to write your name on every assignment and bring it with you on the first day of school, September 2nd. Be prepared to present the completed activities to your class during your assigned presentation day.

Activity 1

Please complete six (6) of the [following anticipatory questions](#) based on your thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences **BEFORE** reading *I Am Malala*. There are no right or wrong answers for these questions, but they are simply meant to get you thinking about some of the larger themes and questions that come up when reading the book. Please respond in complete sentences.

Watch the [following two videos](#) and respond to ALL of the following questions in complete sentences. Be sure to refer back to the details in the videos to support your responses and to make predictions about what you think might happen in the text. Please respond in complete sentences.

Activity 2

I Am Malala centers around themes of education, resilience, and activism. As you read, select and analyze at least six important quotes that are meaningful to you within the story. Complete [this chart](#) describing the quotes that stand out to you.

Activity 3: Get Creative

[From the attached list](#), select a young activist and design an informational poster showcasing how that individual has made significant impacts for their cause and why it is important to stand up for one's beliefs. Be sure to include a mix of pictures, images, and text to share what you have learned about your chosen activist.