



ASCA Junior High School Summer Reading 2026



WHY SUMMER READING?

- ★ It promotes and supports reading for pleasure.
- ★ Reading everything and anything raises achievement.
- ★ Research shows that students who read over the summer actually gain reading skills at all grade levels.
- ★ It keeps students from losing what they've learned - summer learning loss is a real phenomena. Students can lose up to 1-2 months of knowledge during the summer. Reading over the summer months has been shown to counteract that learning loss.
- ★ It gives students access to new knowledge and points of view - one of the overarching benefits of reading is what people can learn from the content they read. They can be exposed to other cultures, new places, unique ideas and so much more.
- ★ It improves student performance in the classroom. The only way to get better at reading is to read more. Reading skills take a long time to develop and can't be taught in preparation for a test or assignment. Instead, students must include reading on a regular basis as part of their lifestyle.

2026 ASCA JUNIOR HIGH SUMMER READING GUIDELINES

- ❑ This summer, all junior high students must read **at least 2 books**
 - ❑ Book One: Each grade level will read a common book-
 - ❑ You will need to bring a copy of the book for the first week of school (We will complete activities based on the book when students return in August).
 - ❑ 6th: *The Labors of Hercules Beal* by Gary D. Schmidt
 - ❑ 7th: *The Schwa Was Here* by Neal Shusterman
 - ❑ 8th: *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie
 - ❑ Book Two: Select a book from the ASCA Junior High Summer Reading list on the following pages.
- ❑ Students are encouraged to read as many of these books as they wish.
- ❑ Pick a book that you will enjoy as well as one that will challenge you.
- ❑ If you find the book of your choice to be too easy or too difficult to read, choose another. One great way to find this out is to read a few pages to see how many words you do not recognize. If you cannot find any words you do not know, it might be too easy for you.

- ❑ Also, check out your local library for more suggestions to locate books that match individual interests and reading levels.
- ❑ The selected book should be a book you *have not previously read*. *Let your conscience be your guide.* 😊
- ❑ Students will read a book and then complete a Google Form entitled “ASCA Summer Book Chat” where they will answer **six questions** about their book.
 - ❑ How did the main character change throughout the book? Consider beginning, middle, and end.
 - ❑ How did the setting of the book (location, time period or both) impact the story?
 - ❑ What was your favorite moment in the book? Least favorite moment? Why?
 - ❑ How can you use what you have learned/experienced from this book and apply the lesson(s) to your own life?
 - ❑ How does this book represent the virtues or Fruits of the Spirit? Why?
 - ❑ What audience would you recommend this book to and why?
- ❑ Information on expectations of how the questions should be answered can be found in the following pages. Students should read over the prompts before they read each book. They may even consider taking notes while reading.
- ❑ When returning to ASCA after summer break, they will work in their ELA class on an activity based on the books they read over the summer and discuss the answers to the prompts they wrote on each of their “ASCA Summer Book Chat” forms.
- ❑ Books are available at Naperville Public Library and can be found in a variety of formats (print, digital, audio). *All formats are acceptable to complete summer reading, but students who listen to an audio version of the book should follow along with a print or digital copy as well.*
- ❑ When visiting the Naperville Public Library or a library in your own hometown, don’t forget to sign up for the Summer Reading Program! It’s free AND there are prizes! You do NOT need to have a Naperville library card to participate in their programs. Visit the website [here](#).

[6th Grade ELA/Honors ELA Form](#)
[7th Grade ELA/Honors ELA Form](#)
[8th Grade ELA/Honors ELA Form](#)

ASCA Jr. High Summer Reading List 2026

Fiction Titles

****Best for' suggestions are suggestions only! Again, consider your reading abilities and interest so you can pick the best book for you!**

Title	Author	Best for...*		
		6	7	8
Solo	Alexander, Kwame		☒	☒
Amari and the Night Brothers Series	Alston, B.B.	☒	☒	☒
Sweep: The Story of a Girl and Her Monster	Auxier, Jonathan	☒	☒	
The Ogress and the Orphans	Barnhill, Kelly	☒	☒	☒
The Blackbird Girls	Blankman, Anne	☒	☒	☒
Mr. Terupt Series	Buyea, Rob	☒		
Murder on the Orient Express	Christie, Agatha			☒
Scratch Scratch/What Lives in the Woods/Peculiar Incident on Shady Street/The Girl in White/Mystery of Locked Rooms	Currie, Lindsay	☒	☒	
Hour of the Bees	Eagar, Lindsay	☒	☒	
Michael Vey Series	Evans, Richard Paul	☒	☒	☒
Charlie Thorne Series	Gibbs, Stuart	☒	☒	☒
Space Case + Spy School Series	Gibbs, Stuart	☒	☒	
The Inquisitor's Tale	Gidwitz, Adam	☒	☒	☒
Ground Zero/Heroes/Refugee/Allies	Gratz, Alan	☒	☒	☒
When Friendship Followed Me Home	Griffin, Paul	☒	☒	
The Strangers (Greystone Secrets Series)	Haddix, Margaret Peterson	☒	☒	☒
Wildoak	Harrington, C.C.	☒	☒	
Freewater	Luqman-Dawson, Amina		☒	☒
The Lost Year	Marsh, Katherine	☒	☒	
Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky	Mbalia, Kwame	☒	☒	☒
Magnitude/Resistance/A Night Divided	Nielsen, Jennifer A.	☒	☒	☒
White Bird: A Wonder Story	Palacio, R.J.	☒	☒	

Ali Cross	Patterson, James	☒	☒	☒
Hatchet	Paulsen, Gary	☒		
City Spies Series	Ponti, James	☒	☒	
Dead City Series	Ponti, James	☒	☒	
Framed! Series	Ponti, James	☒	☒	
Amal Unbound	Saeed, Aisha	☒	☒	
Beneath/Above	Smith, Roland	☒	☒	☒
Zach's Lie/Jack's Run	Smith, Roland	☒	☒	
A Wish in the Dark/The Last Mapmaker	Soontornvat, Christina	☒	☒	☒
The Secret Keepers	Steward, Trenton Lee	☒	☒	☒
Nevermoor Series	Townsend, Jessica	☒	☒	☒
The Claiming (Last Resort 2), Other Words from Home, A Strange Thing Happened in Cherry Hall, Shape of Thunder, A Rover's Story	Warga, Jasmine	☒	☒	
Beyond the Bright Sea	Wolk, Lauren	☒	☒	☒
Front Desk	Yang, Kelly	☒	☒	

Non-Fiction Titles

Title	Author	Best for...		
		6	7	8
The Faithful Spy/The Mythmakers	Hendrix, John	☒	☒	☒
When Stars are Scattered	Jamieson, Victoria & Mohammed, Omar	☒	☒	☒
All But My Life: A Memoir	Klein, Gerda Weissman		☒	☒
The Boy on the Wooden Box	Leyson, Leon	☒	☒	☒
Swifter, Higher, Stronger	Macy, Sue	☒	☒	☒
Games of Deception	Maraniss, Andrew	☒	☒	☒
Hour of Need: The Daring Escape of the Danish Jews During World War II	Shayne, Ralph		☒	☒

Impossible Escape: A True Story of Survival and Heroism in Nazi Europe	Sheinkin, Steve	☒	☒	☒
The Duel: The Parallel Lives of Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr	St. George, Judith	☒	☒	☒
Chasing Lincoln's Killer/Chasing King's Killer	Swanson, James	☒	☒	☒
They Called Us Enemy	Takei, George	☒	☒	☒
Samurai Rising	Turner, Pamela S.	☒	☒	☒
I Am Malala: Young Reader's Edition	Yousafzai, Malala	☒	☒	☒

DESCRIPTION AND EXAMPLES OF HOW TO RESPOND TO THE SUMMER READING PROMPT

*Please look over the directions and examples below to see teacher expectations of how students should answer the SUMMER READING PROMPTS on the Google Docs Form.

1. You should write in complete sentences using proper spelling and punctuation.
2. Please incorporate the question in your answer.
3. Include your name, the title of the book, and the author on each form.
4. Be descriptive in your answer and write a **minimum of 3 (three) sentences** that really answer the question asked in the prompt. Use specific details/examples from the book to illustrate your points (include page numbers if possible!).
Responses should be representative of a student in your incoming grade.
5. When answering your question, be sure the answer shows your future ELA teacher that you read and understood the book. This is your first impression to your new teacher-wow her!

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES

PROMPT 1: How did the main character change in the book?

You should give evidence and examples from the book about how the main character behaved in the beginning as compared to later in the book or at the end of the book.

Example: In *Masterminds*, the main character, Eli, changed in this book because in the beginning he was very comfortable with and accepting of his life in Serenity. He did not question his environment or surroundings at all and accepted most everything the way his dad and other adults explained it. As the book progressed, Eli began to search for information online, sneak out of his house and explore the warehouse, which shows that he was starting to think for himself and was questioning and challenging the ideas and behavior around him.

PROMPT 2: How did the setting of the book (location, time period or both) impact the story?
You should describe the setting in the book and how it impacted the storyline or characters using evidence or examples from the book.

Example: The book, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, the setting plays a very important part of the story. This story takes place in the 1930's in rural Mississippi. The story's setting is during the height of the Great Depression. This accounts, in part, for why so many of the characters are poor, and provides an account of how blacks fared during the Great Depression. But the characters in the novel aren't just poor because of the Depression. They're also poor because of racial inequalities in America, and particularly in the South. This was still years before the Civil Rights movement, and still firmly in the era of open racism and segregation. The characters' lives revolve around this injustice and makes the conflicts between characters very strong.

PROMPT 3: What was your favorite part of this book? Least favorite part.

This is your opinion. Be as detailed as you can to explain these two parts. If you did not have a least favorite part, explain why.

Example: My favorite part of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee, was when the Reverend Sykes tells Scout to "Jean Louise. Stand up, your Father's passin'". I thought this showed the great respect the Reverend Sykes had for Atticus Finch and how Atticus tried to help clear Tom Robinson's name in court. On the other hand, my least favorite part was when Tom Robinson was shot. I feel he was set up and was killed without any justice. If he had lived, Atticus might have been able to appeal his guilty verdict. With Tom being dead, there was no need for the appeal and everyone will forever think he was guilty of hurting Mayella Ewell.

PROMPT 4: How can you use what you have learned/experienced from this book and apply the lesson to your own life?

This is where you connect the content of the book to your personal life. Speak specifically about what events/lessons from the book can apply to your life outside of the book. It could include information about settings, new ways to understand characters/people, a new perspective, or even a way to problem solve. Identify specific details from the book as well as specific ways to apply to yourself.

Example: One thing that I learned from *The Total Eclipse of Nestor Lopez* was how you can make yourself a Challenge list like his mom did for him on the first day of school. Each task earned points so it sort of forced Nestor to step out of his comfort zone to do things like introduce himself to new people or open his locker quickly. I really liked this idea because sometimes starting school can be overwhelming. However if you make yourself a fun checklist with some of the scary activities on it, maybe you are more likely to do them. By the end of the book, Nestor had checked off so many items; I hope I can check off as many when I start school!

PROMPT 5: How does this book represent the virtues or Fruits of the Spirit?

This is where you connect the content of the book to your faith. Speak specifically about what the characters do/don't do. How do the characters treat themselves and others? Identify specific details from the book and explain how they apply.

Example: The main character in *Island of the Blue Dolphin* obviously represents several virtues. First of all, she is patient. I mean, she did live on an island alone for many years and did not give up hope. She waited for food, she waited for seasons to change, she waited for someone to come back to her. Karana was also harmonious. She found a way to live among nature without harming it, even taking in Rontu when he previously threatened her. She was also prepared. Karana had supplies read to leave/hide in needed, she saved food for the colder months, and she made sure that she would have whatever she might need. This was hard since the only way to get anything was to do it herself. These are just a few of the virtues Karana represents.

PROMPT 6: Would you recommend this book to others? Why or why not?

This can be a hard question to answer well. If you choose to answer this, you need to give specific evidence that shows you read the book in your recommendation (or lack of recommendation) to others. It's not enough to say, "It was funny" or "It was really good". That does not show that you read the book. What happened in the book that made it funny or good or action-packed!?

Example: I would recommend the book *House Arrest* to anyone who enjoys a novel in verse and appreciates a "fast" read. The story of Timothy and his little brother, Levi, who was very medically fragile, was touching and also suspenseful as you follow along to see if Levi will get the medical help he needs and if Timothy will get out of the terrible trouble he made for himself trying to solve his family's problems. This is a great book not only for the compelling story of the brothers, but also for the way K.A. Holt connects you to Timothy and develops his character.

Additional Challenge. How many books can you read in 11 weeks? Every time you read a book, fill out an "[ASCA Summer Book Chat](#)" Google Form using your particular ELA teacher's link. The students who read the most books and/or read more than their ELA teacher will enjoy a surprise the first week back to school in August.

My Summer Reading Checklist

- o Read the required grade level book and one from the ASCA Summer Reading list and one other book
- o Fill out an "ASCA Summer Book Chat" form using my ELA Grade Level link for each book read- **you must have at least 2**
- o Read more books and fill out more "ASCA Summer Book Chat" forms to enter into our reading contest (Can you read more than your ELA teacher?)
- o Be ready to discuss the books the first week back in August
- o Relax and have a great summer!

May your summer reading be just the beginning of what hopes to be a wonderful and successful 2026-2027 school year here at All Saints Catholic Academy. Have a fabulous summer, and we look forward to seeing you in August!

Mrs. Galise

Mrs. Reid

Ms. Selwick