



Neuse Charter School Intermediate Academy 2019 Summer Reading Options

We are truly excited to share our book selections for the upcoming 2019 Summer Reading Project! We would like to thank our students, parents, and staff for providing us with detailed feedback from last summer. In an effort to make our Summer Reading Project even more meaningful, you will notice a few changes.

This summer students will be required to select ***one*** of the books listed for their grade level. Students will read their selected book and complete an assignment to demonstrate their knowledge throughout the summer. Students will submit their assignments at the end of August and their teachers will work together to assess their assignments and provide students with detailed feedback by the end of September.

So, how were the book options selected? All Intermediate Academy English Language Arts (ELA) teachers worked together to identify ten summer reading options for their upcoming students on NCWiseOwl, which is an online database that houses collections of ebooks, learning resources, and websites paid for by the state for all public school students. A cross functional team of staff members that serve the entire K-12 student body reviewed and evaluated the book selections using a rubric consisting of the following categories:

- NCS Mission, NCS Character Traits, and NCS Competencies Alignment
- NC Content Standards Alignment
- Lexile Level
- Age Appropriate Content

The top three books receiving the highest score and meeting the mandatory requirements were selected to be offered as options for students to read over the summer for the assignment. In addition, the book option from last summer will also be an option. In addition to the book titles, we've also included the NCWiseOwl review to help your students reach their decision. Please note that our teachers are still developing the assignments for each book option. This information and all other books meeting the mandatory requirements listed above will be released as additional reading options next month, so please be on the lookout! If you have any questions about the Summer Reading program, please contact our Dean of Academics, Dr. Silver, at jsilver@neusecharterschool.org.

Rising 5th Grade

- **Skylark and the Wallcreeper by Anne O'Brien Carelli (Historical Fiction)** For fans of non-historical fiction and natural disaster stories comes an engaging novel that alternates between WWII in rural France and 2012 in New York City. Lily is a brave, independent-minded tween tending to her elderly grandmother in a nursing home when the two become displaced amid intense flooding during Hurricane Sandy. Her grandmama Colette's memory is spotty, and when a beloved Montblanc pen goes missing, Lily sets out to recover it in what becomes an illuminating journey into her grandmother's past. As a child, Colette—A.K.A Wallcreeper—disguised herself as a boy and aids the French Resistance. The one hundred time lines make for a fast-paced read, with danger and suspense in both narrative arcs. The intense friendship forged by war and Lily's own deep bond with her grandmother provide tender moments of connection. While an author's note provides some further context, for many this will be an interesting jump point into the French Resistance.
- **Space Case by Stewart Gibbs (Science Fiction)** Here's a whodunit set on the moon. The sudden, mysterious death of MoonBase Alpha's physician threatens the entire underfunded lunar-colonization program. Worse, though the base commander and her NASA superiors insist it was an accident, an overheard conversation leads 12-year-old Dashiell to suspect that it was nothing of the sort. Shrugging off hostility from the powers that be and even an anonymous threat, he enlists the aid of a pair of tech-savvy peers and—encouraged by an oddly elusive new arrival—goes digging. Gibbs stocks the cast with multiple suspects and red herrings, suggestive (if sometimes contrived) clues, hints of secret agendas, and unexpected encounters. Ultimately, the investigation culminates in a suspenseful murder attempt out on the lunar surface, followed by a game-changing revelation. Though relatively standard issue as murder mysteries go, this is notable for its unusual setting and features a narrator who displays a realistic mix of wonder at his location and annoyance at having to deal with the Spartan life on another planet. The exposed killer's rationale actually has merit, too. **Last year's 5th grade Summer Reading text.**
- **Front Desk by Kelly Yang (Realistic Fiction)** Set in the early 1990s in Anaheim, California, this earnest debut is partially inspired by the author's childhood. When Mia Tang's parents find a new job managing the Calivista motel, it seems like the answer to their prayers: free housing and a stable, secure job, neither of which have come easy to the recent Chinese immigrants. Fifth-grader Mia takes pride in working the front desk and becomes fast friends with the weeklies, for whom the motel is a semi permanent residence. But the hotel's owner, Mr. Yao, is beyond mean—he's flat out racist—so Mia enters a writing contest to win their very own motel. It's the details that sing in this novel, particularly the small moments that feel like everything when you're a kid: winning (or not) the beloved classroom object, having your prized possession stolen, or being hurt

by a parent's words. When Mia's mother says, "You're a bicycle and the other kids are cars," meaning Mia's English will never be as good as a native speaker's, it's a crushing and lingering blow, especially for a budding writer. This book will help foster empathy for the immigrant experience for young readers, while for immigrant children, it is a much-needed and validating mirror. Though some of the events toward the end may stretch believability in an otherwise realistic novel, there is plenty to appreciate and admire. Deserving of shelf space in every classroom and library.

Rising 6th Grade

- **Leon's Story by Leon Walter Tillage (Autobiography)** In this riveting autobiography, Baltimore janitor Leon Walter Tillage reflects on his life with all the vitality of a storyteller gathering his audience around him. He recalls his childhood as an African American sharecropper's son in 1940s Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina.
- **The Librarian of Basra: A True Story From Iraq by Jeanette Winter (Biography)** When war seemed imminent, Alia Muhammad Baker, chief librarian of Basra's Central Library, was determined to protect the library's holdings. In spite of the government's refusal to help, she moved the books into a nearby restaurant only nine days before the library burned to the ground. When the fighting moved on, this courageous woman transferred the 30,000 volumes to her and her friends' homes to await peace and the rebuilding of a new library. In telling this story, first reported in the New York Times on July 27, 2003, by Shaila K. Dewan, Winter artfully achieves a fine balance between honestly describing the casualties of war and not making the story too frightening for young children. The text is spare and matter-of-fact. It is in the illustrations, executed in acrylic and ink in her signature style, that Winter suggests the impending horror. The artist uses color to evoke mood, moving from a yellow sky to orange, to deep maroon during the bombing, and then blues and pinks with doves flying aloft as the librarian hopes for a brighter future. Palm trees, architecture, dress, and Arabic writing on the flag convey a sense of place and culture. Although the invading country is never mentioned, this is an important story that puts a human face on the victims of war and demonstrates that a love of books and learning is a value that unites people everywhere.
- **Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by Eleanor Coerr (Biography)** Using soft-focus pastel images (created for a 1990 video) and a shortened text, Coerr's poignant story of Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes (1977) is recast in picture-book format. The author's abridgement omits transitional passages and details of Sadako's illness and rearranges events slightly, but the heart of her moving story is intact. Young's inexhaustible imagination creates images with dual meanings: the jacket close up of Sadako's eyes is also a crane in flight and, in a series of small images on the

first three pages, a mushroom cloud is transformed into a crane. A sensitive adaptation that makes a classic story accessible to a younger audience.

Rising 7th Grade

- **Island of the Blue Dolphins: by Scott O'Dell (Adventure/ Survival Story)** Left alone on a beautiful but isolated island off the coast of California, a young Indian girl spends eighteen years, not only merely surviving through her enormous courage and self-reliance, but also finding a measure of happiness in her solitary life.
 - **Outcasts United by Warren St. John (Narrative Nonfiction)** St. John presents the remarkable, inspiring story of a persevering female coach, a soccer team of refugee boys, and the Georgia town that is their home. With conviction and skill, Jordanian Luma Mufleh established and coached three soccer teams known as the Fugees. Her players were haunted by memories of war-torn homelands and personal tragedies and were struggling to adjust to life in the United States. However, her high expectations and willingness to help families impacted her young players. Despite challenges to locate a practice field, minimal funding for uniforms and equipment, and zero fans on the sidelines, the Fugees practiced hard and demonstrated a team spirit that drew admiration from referees and even their competitors. Featuring pivotal soccer games and anecdotes about interactions between a coach and her players, tension among the boys, family responsibilities, and a town wrestling with its changing identity, St. John delivers a vivid, cohesive story about hope and determination. Profiles are enriched with background information on the conflicts that drove the players from their homes in Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. Respecting cultural differences, building a global community, and the importance of getting involved are powerful, motivating messages that will resonate with teen readers, not just soccer fans. **Last year's 7th grade Summer Reading text.**
 - **The Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare (Historical Fiction)** Although he faces responsibility bravely, thirteen-year-old Matt is more than a little apprehensive when his father leaves him alone to guard their new cabin in the wilderness. When a renegade white stranger steals his gun, Matt realizes he has no way to shoot game or to protect himself. When Matt meets Attean, a boy in the Beaver clan, he begins to better understand their way of life and their growing problem in adapting to the white man and the changing frontier.
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Rising 8th Grade

- **I am Malala by Malala Yousafai (Autobiography/ Memoir)** The Nobel Peace Prize winner retells her experiences at home and at school and discusses the impact of the Taliban presence in Pakistan. Her strong voice and ideals come across on every page, emphasizing how her surroundings and supportive family helped her become the relevant figure she is today. Yousafzai highlights the importance of school and how it was the only space where she felt empowered. Although at times the transitions between personal accounts and historical background feel abrupt, Yousafzai effectively summarizes her story and her advocacy for girls' education, peace, and human rights. Above all, she stresses that she doesn't want to be known as the girl shot by the Taliban but rather as a young person who actively fought for education. **Last year's 8th Grade Summer Reading text.**
 - **Hidden Figures - Young Readers' Edition by Margot Lee Shetterly (Collective Biographies)** This is the amazing true story of four African-American female mathematicians at NASA who helped achieve some of the greatest moments in our space program.
 - **Temple Grandin: How the girl who Loved Cows Embraced Autism and Changed the World by Sy Montgomery (Narrative Nonfiction)** Montgomery paints a picture of a woman who overcame enormous odds to be highly successful in her chosen career as an animal scientist, designing humane livestock facilities. Although autism can be a devastating diagnosis, Grandin's own words help readers understand why she says her autism adds a dimension to her life that she would not want to be without. The descriptions of the many people who knew her when she was a child and the ways they either helped or hindered her progress give a clear understanding of some of the obstacles in her path. Montgomery includes a thorough explanation of the disorder, helping readers to comprehend this atypical neuropathy. The lively, well-worded narrative is complemented by ample use of photographs and Grandin's complicated drawings of her inventions.
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Rising 8th Grade English I

- **The Good Earth by Pearl S. Buck (Historical Fiction)** The Good Earth is a novel by Pearl S. Buck published in 1931 that dramatizes family life in a Chinese village in the early 20th century. A Chinese peasant overcomes the forces of nature and the frailties of human nature to become a wealthy landowner.

- **Lord of the Flies by William Golding (Psychological Fiction)** Read as adventure or as a study in child behavior, this story of a group of English boys stranded by an air crash on an uninhabited tropical island has a compelling, haunting quality. Time and place are unspecified but are irrelevant to the narration of the attempt of some of the older boys, approximately age twelve, to establish a form of law and order, and their inability to overcome the irresponsibility, the fear of the unknown, and the savagery to the point of murder to which the group falls prey. **This text is also a selection for 9th Grade Honors English I.**
- **Light as a Feather by Zoe Aarsen (Supernatural mysteries)** In a small Wisconsin town, life is uneventful until Violet arrives. Invited to Olivia's sixteenth birthday party, she livens things up by suggesting the girls play Light as a Feather, Stiff as a Board. As Violet tells each girl's violent death story, the girls chant and "levitate" the subject. What starts out as an innocent game turns into a paranormal string of events in keeping with Violet's predictions, which McKenna desperately needs to prevent before she and her friends die. Originally published on Wattpad, this version of the story has undergone a few changes and is slated to become a Hulu original series. The first of a planned trilogy, book one is told from McKenna's point of view, so the reader experiences everything as it happens to her. Like Twilight, the writing isn't polished and the characters often seem interchangeable, but the story's popularity may rise because of its compelling darkness and come-from-behind creepiness. Readers looking for something to give them the shivers and tingles of a good horror story will want to read this.