



**8th Grade Summer Reading Suggestions and Aligned Assignments**  
**Welcome to the wonderful days of summer!**

*"I do believe something very MAGICAL can happen when you read a GOOD BOOK." ~ J. K. Rowling*

Reading is an integral part of your success. It should also be fun and enjoyable.

Studies show that lack of reading over the summer result in a "summer slide". Students have shown to lose achievement gains made during the previous year and reading levels have declined or become stagnant ([www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)).

For your summer reading assignment, I encourage you to take some time and browse the library, various websites and book stores to find a book that interests you. There are many websites available to browse books, such as: [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com) and [www.readbrightly.com](http://www.readbrightly.com)

Once you have chosen a book, read it. If at any time you realize your book isn't interesting, find another one. I want you to LOVE your book.

After reading, you must complete one project, due the week that you return to school.

The attached instructions will be used to guide the grading of your project. Should you have any questions, please email me at: [marian.hendershot@WacoISD.org](mailto:marian.hendershot@WacoISD.org).

Sincerely,

Marian Hendershot

8th ELAR ATLAS Academy

[marian.hendershot@WacoISD.org](mailto:marian.hendershot@WacoISD.org)

**When you come back to school, you will bring your book with you, and complete one of the following assignments.**

Fifty Alternatives to the Book Report Diana Mitchell (adapted )

**Character astrology signs.** After reading brief descriptions of the astrology or sun signs, figure out which signs you think three of the main characters from your book were born under. Write an explanation of why you think they fit the sign, drawing on their actions, attitudes, and thoughts from the book.

**Create a childhood for a character.** If your main character is an adult, try to figure out what he or she would have been like as a child. Write the story of his or her childhood in such a way that shows why he or she is the way he or she is in the novel.

**Social worker's report.** If the events in the novel merit it, write up a report as a social worker would on the conditions in the home and whether or not it's a good environment for a child. For example, if a social worker went to the McNabs' house in *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli (1990, Little, Brown) how would she describe the home and parenting style of Mr. McNab? What would her recommendations be?

**School counselor's recommendation letter.** Write a summary appraisal from the school counselor's point of view that assesses the character's academic and personal qualities and promise for study in college. The college is particularly interested in evidence about character, relative maturity, integrity, independence, values, special interest, and any noteworthy talents or qualities. Why do you feel this student would be well-suited to attend college?

**Yearbook entries.** Imagine what three or four characters from your novel were like in high school. Cut out a picture of a person from a magazine to represent each character. Mount one picture per page and under each picture place the following information which you will create: nickname of character; activities, clubs, sports they were in and what years; class mock award such as "class clown"; quotation that shows something about the person and what is important to him or her; favorites such as colors and foods; a book that has had a great impact on him or her; voted "most-likely-to" what?; plans after high school.

**Scrap book.** Think about all the kinds of mementos you would put in a scrap book if you had one. Then create a scrap book for your character, cutting out pictures from magazines or drawing the mementos he or she would have in a scrap book. Think about Willie in *The Crazy Horse Electric Game* by Chris Crutcher. He would probably have something in his scrapbook to represent his baby sister, his love of baseball, his accident, his experiences in L.A., and so on.

**Point of view column.** Write an opinion column like those that appear on the editorial page of the newspaper. Choose a theme or topic from the novel you just read and write the column from the point of view of one of the characters. Your character might write about the importance of education or why we should accept people who are not like us.

**Character monologues.** Select an event in the story that characters have different views on. (For instance, Willie in *Crazy Horse Electric Game*, his girlfriend, his mom, dad, and friends all had different views on his running away.) Then write up two or three characters' opinions on the same event in the form of monologue (one person talking to him or herself). 32. Make up a word test for the novel. Think of fifteen words that are essential to the understanding of the book. Explain why you picked the words you did and how you would define them in terms of the story.

**Found poems.** Select a chapter from the novel you have just read that you consider powerful or interesting. Then select words, lines, and phrases that you think project strong images and show the impact the chapter makes. Arrange this material into a poem. The following example comes from Chapter Twenty in *Spite Fences*

by Trudy Krisher (1994, Delacorte): Violence at the Lunch Counter Sit-in Fist slammed into George Hardy's face Glasses slid to his chin Shattered into a spider's web. River of red blood Running from his nose. It was the red color of the fence The red color of the earth on which I stood It was red The color of my life this summer The color of Kinship.

**A character's fears.** One way we get to know characters is to think deeply about them and make inferences based on their actions and on what they and others say about them. Through a person's actions we can learn what they fear and what they want to avoid the most. Select several characters from your novel and write short essays on what you believe they fear the most and what evidence you used to come to this conclusion.

**Current events.** Select five current news or feature stories from television or news magazines that you think your character would be interested in. Then explain how your character would respond to each of the stories and the opinions your character would have about what was happening in the story.

**Community resources for characters.** After looking in the phone book and on the Internet, create a file of community resources that would help a character in your novel cope with an issue. If the main character has alcoholic parents, you could collect pamphlets, names of self-help groups, and any agencies that address the problem. Then create a display board so others can see what is available.

**Family history.** Create the history of the family of one of the main characters in your novel. For instance, in *Spite Fences*, what would Mama's life have been like? What major events affected her family? How were such things as holidays and birthdays celebrated? What is important to this family?

**A character alphabet.** Choose a character you liked and then create sentences based on the alphabet scheme that demonstrate your knowledge of the character. If after reading *Spite Fences*, you decided to write Zeke's alphabet it could start like this: A is for the ABUSE Zeke took at the hands of a racist mob. B is for his BENDING OVER BACKWARDS to make sure the visiting civil rights activist could work in obscurity. C is for the CAMERA he gave Maggie so she could begin to look at the world in new ways.

<http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/EJ/0871-jan98/EJ0871Ideas.PDF>