

## Directions for Summer Reading Assignments

8th Grade GATE 2017

Welcome! We have an exciting and challenging year planned for you, and it all starts with summer reading.

The texts you read this summer are filled with connections to essential questions we will be exploring from day 1 to day 180. We have high expectations and we know you can reach them!

Your 8th grade English course is:

### What is Purpose? Why Are We Here?

As we work to define purpose, ask “why” everyday, we will find ourselves bumping into more questions...

What is Success?

How do you know?

What is Freedom?

Why is it so hard to explain?

Can one person make a difference?

What does it mean?

What is Justice?

Who gets to decide?

Are there any right answers?

#### → 1. **Read** and **annotate**

- ◆ (a) *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee, and
- ◆ (b) *Warriors Don't Cry*, by Melba Patillo Beals.

Focus annotations on the development of **one** main character/person throughout each book, **two to three** annotations per chapter - **not more**.

#### → **Respond** to both books **in writing** by

- providing a gist statement summarizing each chapter - no more than 15 words.
- citing a specific quote, explain your reaction to the chapter - no more than 15 words.

#### ★ 2. Become an expert on one (or more) of the texts on the **annotated list**. You will present your expertise to your teachers and peers in the form of a project. (Create one project; read many books, always:)

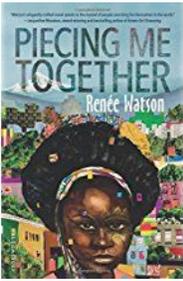
#### **Ideas for Book Projects:**

- Write diary entries in the voice of a character/person. Each entry must be at least one page long and include either drawings, pictures, or artifacts.
- Video-tape a movie that describes the events, people, setting, conflict, and themes or depicts a specific significant scene (five to seven minutes long).
- Write a graphic novel.
- Create a scrapbook that reveals a person's/character's development throughout the book.
- Create a memory box of items symbolic to a person in the book that reveals their development throughout the book. Each item must have written explanations of why they are important.

These are just a few examples, feel free to create a unique project. However, this cannot be an essay, you must have a physical project. Be creative!

## Annotated List of Summer Reading Book Choices

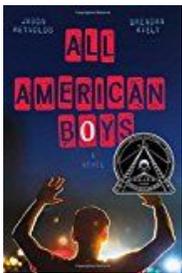
Texts that address racism, injustice, inequality, and efforts to combat these injustices often contain strong language and violent events. Both Harper Lee, in her novel and Melba Patillo Beals, in her memoir include strong, uncomfortable, and hurtful language because it is authentic to the fiction and the autobiographical stories that tell truths. In order for and your family may make informed decisions about the best book(s) for you to read this summer, included at least one review and, if available, reviews from <https://www.commonsemmedia.org/>.



Jade believes she must get out of her poor neighborhood if she's ever going to succeed. Her mother tells her to take advantage of every opportunity that comes her way. And she has. She accepted a scholarship to a mostly-white private school and even Saturday morning test prep opportunities. But some opportunities feel more demeaning than helpful. Like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for "at-risk" girls. Except really, it's for black girls. From "bad" neighborhoods.

And just because Maxine, her college-graduate mentor, is black doesn't mean she understands Jade. And maybe there are some things Jade could show these successful women about the real world and finding ways to make a real difference.

<https://www.commonsemmedia.org/book-reviews/piecing-me-together>



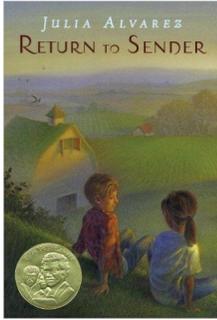
A 2016 Coretta Scott King Author Honor book, and recipient of the Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children's Literature.

In this award winning novel, two teens—one black, one white—grapple with the repercussions of a single violent act that leaves their school, their community, and, ultimately, the country bitterly divided by racial tension.

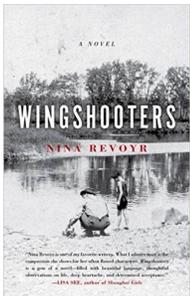
A bag of chips. That's all sixteen-year-old Rashad is looking for at the corner bodega. What he finds instead is a fist-happy cop, Paul Galluzzo, who mistakes Rashad for a shoplifter, mistakes Rashad's pleadings that he's stolen nothing for belligerence, mistakes Rashad's resistance to leave the bodega as resisting arrest, mistakes Rashad's every flinch at every punch the cop throws as further resistance and refusal to STAY STILL as ordered. But how can you stay still when someone is pounding your face into the concrete pavement?

There were witnesses: Quinn Collins—a varsity basketball player and Rashad's classmate who has been raised by Paul since his own father died in Afghanistan—and a video camera. Soon the beating is all over the news.

Written in tandem by two award-winning authors, this four-starred reviews tour de force shares the alternating perspectives of Rashad and Quinn as the complications from that single violent moment, the type taken from the headlines, unfold and reverberate to highlight an unwelcome truth. <https://www.commonsemmedia.org/search/all%20american%20boys>



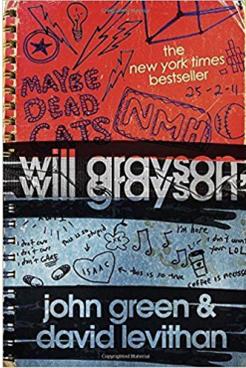
With quiet drama, Alvarez tells a contemporary immigration story through the alternating viewpoints of two young people in Vermont. After 11-year-old Tyler's father is injured in a tractor accident, the family is in danger of losing their dairy farm. Desperate for help, Tyler's family employs Mari's family, who are illegal migrant Mexican workers. Mari writes heartrending letters and diary entries, especially about Mamá, who has disappeared during a trip to Mexico to visit Mari's dying abuelita. Is Mamá in the hands of the border-crossing "coyotes"? Have they hurt her? Will Homeland Security (la migra) raid the farm? The plot is purposive, with messages about the historical connections between migrant workers today and the Indians' displacement, the Underground Railroad, and earlier immigrants seeking refuge. But the young people's voices make for a fast read; the characters, including the adults, are drawn with real complexity; and the questions raised about the meaning of patriotism will spark debate. Grades 6-9



Michelle LeBeau, the child of a white American father and a Japanese mother, lives with her grandparents in Deerhorn, Wisconsin--a small town that had been entirely white before her arrival. Rejected and bullied, Michelle spends her time reading, avoiding fights, and roaming the countryside with her dog Brett. She idolizes her grandfather, Charlie LeBeau, an expert hunter and former minor league baseball player who is one of the town's most respected men. Charlie strongly disapproves of his son's marriage to Michelle's mother but dotes on his only grandchild.

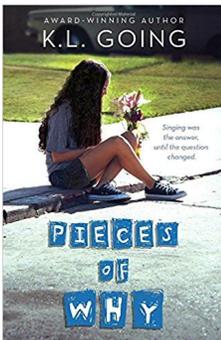
This fragile peace is threatened when the expansion of the local clinic leads to the arrival of the Garretts, a young black couple from Chicago. The Garretts' presence deeply upsets most of the residents of Deerhorn--when Mr. Garrett makes a controversial accusation against one of the town leaders, who is also Charlie LeBeau's best friend.

In the tradition of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A River Runs Through It*, and *Snow Falling on Cedars*, Revoyr's new novel examines the effects of change on a small, isolated town, the strengths and limits of community, and the sometimes conflicting loyalties of family and justice. Set in the expansive countryside of Central Wisconsin, against the backdrop of Vietnam and the post-civil rights era, *Wingshooters* explores both connection and loss as well as the complex but enduring bonds of family.



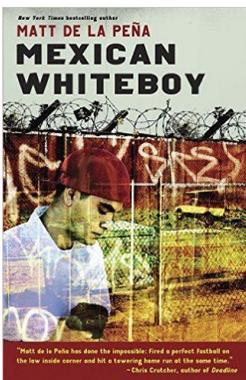
Told in alternating chapters, with alternating narrators, John Green and David Levithan's brilliant story is beautifully rendered. When Will Grayson, an awkward teen who is unsure of how to connect with others without getting hurt, and will grayson, an angry, gay teen, both living in the suburbs of Chicago, meet by chance, their lives are forever changed...and connected. Will Grayson's gay best friend, Tiny Cooper, suddenly becomes will grayson's new boyfriend. The relationship doesn't last, though, and the aftereffects almost shatter Will and Tiny's friendship. Delving deep into the relationships in each teen's life, the authors address friendship, self-identity and acceptance, true love, family, and prejudice in a novel sure to touch the

hearts of readers. This title contains some strong language and adult themes, but is an excellent addition to high school collections. *Jessica Miller, New Britain Public Library, CT - Grade 9 and Up*



From the award winning author of *Fat Kid Rules the World* and *The Liberation of Gabriel King* comes a lyrical gem that asks all the hard questions and hits all the right notes--perfect for fans of Cynthia Rylant and *Mockingbird* by Kathryn Erskine

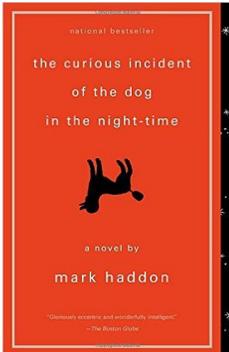
Tia lives with her mom in a high-risk neighborhood in New Orleans and loves singing gospel in the Rainbow Choir with Keisha, her boisterous and assertive best friend. Tia's dream is to change the world with her voice; and by all accounts, she might be talented enough. But when a shooting happens in her neighborhood and she learns the truth about the crime that sent her father to prison years ago, Tia finds she can't sing anymore. The loss prompts her to start asking the people in her community hard questions--questions everyone has always been too afraid to ask. "Skillfully tackles topics of race, class, and violence in a moving testament to family and friendship, love and loss, and the power of forgiveness."—*Publishers Weekly*



No matter where he lives, 16-year-old Danny Lopez is an outsider. At his private high school in wealthy northern San Diego County, "nobody paid him any attention...because he was Mexican." It didn't matter that he was half white. But when he visits the Mexican side of his family in National City, just a dozen miles from the border, Danny feels "Albino almost" and ashamed. He doesn't even speak Spanish. Rather than learning to blend in, Danny disengages from both worlds, rarely speaking and running his mind in circles with questions about how he might have kept his absent father from leaving the family. He decides to spend the summer in National City, hoping to get closer to his dad's roots and learn how to be "real" and stop feeling

numb. Instead, he finds that, by the end of the summer, he has filled the void through unexpected friendship and love. In this first-rate exploration of self-identity, Danny's growth as a baseball

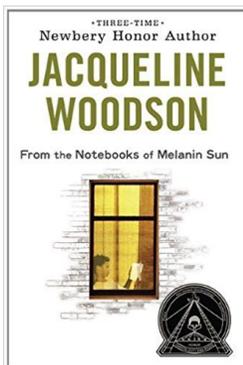
pitcher becomes a metaphor for the conflicts he must overcome due to his biracial heritage. Dialogue written in a coarse street vernacular and interwoven with Spanish is awkward to read at first—like Danny, readers are made to feel like outsiders among the hard-edged kids of National City. But as the characters develop, their language starts to feel familiar and warm, and their subtle tenderness becomes more apparent. A mostly linear plot (with occasional flashbacks), plenty of sports action, and short chapters make this book a great pick for reluctant or less-experienced readers. *Madeline Walton-Hadlock, San Jose Public Library, CA -Gr 9 Up*



Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow.

This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.

Curious Incident is not a book about asperger's ... if anything it's a novel about difference, about being an outsider, about seeing the world in a surprising and revealing way. The book is not specifically about any specific disorder" —*Mark Haddon*



from School Library - Grade 7-11 Fourteen-year-old Melanin Sun has a lot to say - not out loud, but in notebooks he keeps. Named for his dark skin, he knows about being on the outside of things. "Difference matters," he writes early on. What follows is not the usual identity crisis, however. His mother, a law student who sometimes acts more like a best friend, tells him she's in love with a woman, a white one, at that. His reaction is negative, strong, and hurtful. Nonetheless, at the end, Melanin seems to have sorted out his feelings slowly, believably and recognized in his mother and her lover a vulnerability he feels himself for other reasons. He comes around because of who he is, not because it's the "right" thing to do. Woodson has made

Melanin an affecting and memorable, even admirable, character. Once thought "slow" in school because of his reticence, he is in fact a well-read, gifted young man with a talent for writing. The author effectively alternates excerpts from his notebooks, the thoughts intended for his own eyes only, with first-person descriptions of the action. *Claudia Morrow, Berkeley Public Library, CA*