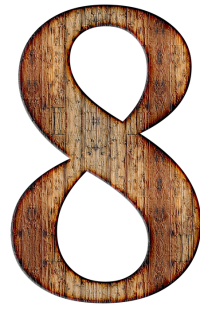




C.C.A. BALDI MIDDLE SCHOOL
Empowering All Students to Be Successful



Recommended Summer Writing Assignment for 2021-2022 School Year Students Entering Grade 8

Dear Future Eighth Grader & Parents of a Future Eighth Grader:

In order to prepare our future 8th graders for the high school selection process in the Fall, we are **recommending** all 8th grade students to complete a summer writing assignment before the start of the school year. Many high schools require an essay from students as part of the high school selection process.

The essay must be typed, Times New Roman and 12pt font. The essay may be single or double spaced, but must not exceed a 1 page limit. The student must include their name and ID# at the top of their essay. This is an opportunity for the student to explain to a school(s) why he/she/they is a perfect fit for that school.

The topics addressed in the essay should include answers to the following prompts:

Who am I?

What do I want to get out of my high school experience?

What can I contribute to the school?

It is recommended that the student and parents visit the website of various high schools to gain information about the mission statement of the school, the programs and activities offered and other important information to help the student and parent make an informed decision before the high school selection process. Students and parents can also visit [The School District of Philadelphia High School Directory Fall 2021 Admissions for a list of high schools in the Philadelphia School District](#) link.

Recommended Summer Reading for 2021-2022 School Year Students Entering Grade 8

Studies have shown that students can lose a month or more of academic progress if they do not continue reading over the summer. This combined with the challenges of remote instruction place a priority on staying actively engaged in reading as preparation for next year. The 8th Grade Literacy teachers at Baldi Middle School have **recommended summer reading** for all students. There is no assignment associated with these summer reading options, they are simply an opportunity for students to stay engaged throughout the summer.



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Directions: Please select *one novel* from the list below. You are not required to purchase the novel. [You may borrow an online version or hardcover copy of the book from a library.](#)



Office of Curriculum and Instruction
440 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Summer Reading 2021

Grades 6-8

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Some books may contain graphic content in the form of themes, language, violence, and/or explicit sexual content:

Mild 🍏

Moderate 🍏 🍏

High 🍏 🍏 🍏

1. The Poet X- Acevedo, Elizabeth	🍏
HarperTeen, 2018 A young girl in Harlem discovers slam poetry as a way to understand her mother's religion and her own relationship to the world.	
2. Love, Hate, And Other Filters- Ahmed, Samira	🍏 🍏
Soho Teen, 2018 Maya Aziz, seventeen, is caught between her India-born parents world of college and marrying a suitable Muslim boy and her dream world of film school and dating her classmate, Phil, when a terrorist attack changes her life forever.	
3. The Crossover- Alexander, Kwame	🍏 🍏
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2014 Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health.	
4. Saints and Misfits- Ali, S.K.	🍏 🍏 🍏
Salaam Read, 2017 15-year-old Janna Yusuf, a Flannery O'Connor- obsessed book nerd and the daughter of the only divorced mother at their mosque, tries to make sense of the events that follow when her best friend's cousin--a holy star in the Muslim community--attempts to assault her at the end of sophomore year.	
5. The Nazi Hunters: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World's Most Notorious Nazi-	



Blake, Ashley Herring



Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2018 | When a tornado rips through town, twelve-year-old Ivy Aberdeen's house is destroyed and her family of five is displaced. Ivy feels invisible and ignored in the aftermath of the storm--and what's worse, her notebook filled with secret drawings of girls holding hands has gone missing.

6. Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World- Blake, Ashley Herring



Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2018 | When a tornado rips through town, twelve-year-old Ivy Aberdeen's house is destroyed and her family of five is displaced. Ivy feels invisible and ignored in the aftermath of the storm--and what's worse, her notebook filled with secret drawings of girls holding hands has gone missing.

7. Be Prepared- Brosgol, Vera



First Second, 2018 | All Vera wants to do is fit in—but that's not easy for a Russian girl in the suburbs. Her friends live in fancy houses and their parents can afford to send them to the best summer camps. Vera's single mother can't afford that sort of luxury, but there's one summer camp in her price range Russian summer camp. _____

8. Pashmina- Chanani, Nidhi

First Second, 2017 | Priyanka has many unanswered questions: Why did her mother abandon her home in India years ago? What was it like there? And who is her father, and why did her mom leave him behind? But Pri's mom avoids these questions. For Pri, her mother's homeland can only exist in her imagination. That is, until she finds a mysterious pashmina. When she wraps herself in it, she is transported to a place more vivid and colorful than any guidebook.

9. Anu Shah and the End of Time- Chokshi, Roshani



Disney Hyperion, 2018 | Twelve-year-old Aru stretches the truth to fit in at her private school, but when she is dared to prove an ancient lamp is cursed, she inadvertently frees an ancient demon.

10. Trickster: Native American Tales, A Graphic Collection- Dembicki, Matt, ed

Fulcrum Publishing, 2010 | In Trickster, the first graphic anthology of Native American trickster tales, more than 20 Native American tales are adapted into comic form. An inspired collaboration between Native writers and accomplished artists, these tales bring the Trickster back into popular culture in vivid form.

11. The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor- Sotomayor, Sonia

Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2018 | Discover the inspiring life of Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina and third woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court, in this middle-grade adaptation of her bestselling adult memoir, My Beloved World.

12. It Ain't So Awful, Falafel- Dumas, Firoozeh



Clarion Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016 | Eleven-year-old Zomorod, originally from Iran, tells her story of growing up Iranian in Southern California during the Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis of the late 1970s

13. The Night Diary- Hiranandani, Veera



Dial Books, 2019 | It's 1947, and newly independent India, has been separated into 2 countries: Pakistan and India. The divide has created much tension between Hindus and Muslims, and hundreds of thousands are killed crossing borders. Half- Hindu, Half-Muslim, 12 year old Halfold Nisha doesn't know



where she belongs. When Papa decides it's too dangerous to stay in what is now Pakistan, Nisha and her family become refugees and embark first by train but later on foot to reach her new home.

14. Piecing Me Together- Watson, Renee



Bloomsbury USA, 2017 | A timely and powerful story about a teen girl from a poor neighborhood striving for success, from acclaimed author Renée Watson.

15. Rhyme Schemer- Holt, K.A.



Chronicle Books, 2014 | A novel in verse about Kevin's journey from bully to being bullied, as he learns about friendship, family, and his talent for poetry.

16. Fresh Ink: An Anthology- Giles, Lamar, ed



Crown Books for Young Readers, 2018 | All it takes to rewrite the rules is a little fresh ink in this YA collection from 13 of today's most recognizable diverse authors (Nicola Yoon, Jason Reynolds, Melissa de la Cruz)

17. Refugee- Gratz, Alan



Scholastic Press, 2017 | Although separated by continents and decades, Josef, a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany; Isabel, a Cuban girl trying to escape the riots and unrest plaguing her country in 1994; and Mahmoud, a Syrian boy in 2015 whose homeland is torn apart by violence, embark on harrowing journeys in search of refuge, discovering shocking connections that tie their stories together.

18. My Family Divided: One Girl's Journey of Home, Loss, and Hope (Young Reader Adaption)-



Guerrero, Diane

Henry Holt and Company, 2018 | The star of Orange Is the New Black and Jane the Virgin, personal story in this Diane Guerrero presents her memoir about her parents' deportation and the struggles of undocumented immigrants and their American children.

19. The Great Greene Heist- Johnson, Varian

Jackson Greene has a reputation as a Levi prankster at Maplewood Middle School, but he is trying to go straight -- but when it looks like Keith Sinclair may steal the election for school president from his former am to make best friend Gabriela, he assembles a team to make sure Keith does not succeed.

20. Hey, Kiddo- Krosoczka, Jarrett



Graphix, an Imprint of Scholastic, 2018 | Hey, Kiddo is a profoundly important memoir about growing up in a family grappling with addiction, and finding the art that helps you survive.

21. Warcross- Lu, Marie



Penguin, 2017 | When teenage coder Emika Chen hacks her way into the opening tournament of the Warcross Championships, she glitches herself into the game as well as a sinister plot with major consequences for the entire Warcross empire.

22. Akata Witch- Okorafor, Nnedi



Viking, 2011 | Often referred to as "the Nigerian Harry Potter" Akata Witch transports the reader to a magical place where nothing is quite as it seems. Born in New York, but living in Aba, Nigeria, twelve year old Sunny is understandably a little lost.

23. Shadowshaper- Older, Daniel Jose





Arthur A Levine, 2015 | When the murals painted on the walls of her Brooklyn neighborhood start to change and fade in front of her, Sierra Santiago realizes that something strange is going on--then she discovers her Puerto Rican family are shadowshapers and finds herself in a battle with an evil anthropologist for the lives of her family and friends.

24. Long Way Down- Reynolds, Jason



Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2017 | As Will, fifteen, sets out to avenge his brother Shawn's fatal shooting, seven ghosts who knew Shawn board the elevator and reveal truths Will needs to know.

25. The Unlikely Hero of Room 13b- Toten, Teresa



Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2015 | Adam not only is trying to understand his OCD while trying to balance his relationship with his divorced parents, but he's also trying to navigate through the issues that teenagers normally face, namely the perils of young love.

26. Other Words for Home- Warga, Jasmine



Jude never thought she'd be leaving her beloved older brother and father behind, all the way across the ocean in Syria. But when things in her hometown start becoming volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives. At first, everything in America seems too fast and too loud. The American movies that Jude has always loved haven't quite prepared her for starting school in the US --and her new label of "Middle Eastern," an identity she's never known before.

27. Displacement- Hughes, Kiku



Kiku is on vacation in San Francisco when suddenly she finds herself displaced to the 1940s Japanese-American internment camp that her late grandmother, Ernestina, was forcibly relocated to during World War II. These displacements keep occurring until Kiku finds herself stuck back in time. Living alongside her young grandmother and other Japanese-American citizens in internment camps, Kiku gets the education she never received in history class. She witnesses the lives of Japanese-Americans who were denied their civil liberties and suffered greatly, but managed to cultivate community and commit acts of resistance in order to survive.

28. King and the Dragonflies- Kacen Callendar



Twelve-year-old Kingston James is sure his brother Khalid has turned into a dragonfly. When Khalid unexpectedly passed away, he shed what was his first skin for another to live down by the bayou in their small Louisiana town. Khalid still visits in dreams, and King must keep these secrets to himself as he watches grief transform his family. It would be easier if King could talk with his best friend, Sandy Sanders. But just days before he died, Khalid told King to end their friendship, after overhearing a secret about Sandy-that he thinks he might be gay. "You don't want anyone to think you're gay too, do you?" But when Sandy goes missing, sparking a town-wide search, and King finds his former best friend hiding in a tent in his backyard, he agrees to help Sandy escape from his abusive father, and the two begin an adventure as they build their own private paradise down by the bayou and among the dragonflies. As King's friendship with Sandy is reignited, he's forced to confront questions about himself and the reality of his brother's death.

29. Born Just Right- Jordan Reeves

From tween advocate for limb difference and founder of Project Unicorn Jordan Reeves and her mom, Jen, comes an inspiring memoir about how every kid is perfect just the way they are. When Jordan Reeves was born without the bottom half of her left arm, the doctors reassured her parents that she was "born just right." And she has been proving that doctor right ever since!



With candor, humor, and heart, Jordan’s mother, Jen Lee Reeves, helps Jordan tell her story about growing up in an able-bodied world and family, where she was treated like all of her siblings and classmates—and where she never felt limited. Whether it was changing people’s minds about her capabilities, trying all kinds of sports, or mentoring other kids, Jordan has channeled any negativity into a positive, and is determined to create more innovations for people just like her.

30. Everything Sad is Untrue- Nayeri, Daniel



At the front of a middle school classroom in Oklahoma, a boy named Khosrou (whom everyone calls "Daniel") stands, trying to tell a story. His story. But no one believes a word he says. To them he is a dark-skinned, hairy-armed boy with a big butt whose lunch smells funny; who makes things up and talks about poop too much. But Khosrou’s stories, stretching back years, and decades, and centuries, are beautiful, and terrifying, from the moment his family fled Iran in the middle of the night with the secret police moments behind them, back to the sad, cement refugee camps of Italy, and further back to the fields near the river Aras, where rain-soaked flowers bled red like the yolk of sunset burst over everything, and further back still to the Jasmine-scented city of Isfahan.

31. The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora- Pablo Cartaya

Save the restaurant. Save the town. Get the girl. Make Abuela proud. Can thirteen-year-old Arturo Zamora do it all or is he in for a BIG, EPIC FAIL?
For Arturo, summertime in Miami means playing basketball until dark, sipping mango smoothies, and keeping cool under banyan trees. And maybe a few shifts as junior lunchtime dishwasher at Abuela’s restaurant. Maybe. But this summer also includes Carmen, a poetry enthusiast who moves into Arturo’s apartment complex and turns his stomach into a deep fryer. He almost doesn’t notice the smarmy land developer who rolls into town and threatens to change it. Arturo refuses to let his family and community go down without a fight, and as he schemes with Carmen, Arturo discovers the power of poetry and protest through untold family stories and the work of José Martí.

32. Tight- Torrey Maldonado



Tight: Lately Bryan’s been feeling it in all kinds of ways. He knows what’s tight for him in a good way--reading comics, drawing superheroes, and hanging out with no drama. But drama’s hard to escape where he’s from, and that gets him wound up tight.
And now Bryan’s new friend Mike is challenging him to have fun in ways that are crazy risky. At first, it’s a rush following Mike, hopping turnstiles, subway surfing, and getting into all kinds of trouble. But Bryan never feels right acting wrong. So which way will he go when he understands that drama is so not his style? Fortunately his favorite comic heroes shed light on his dilemma, reminding him that he has power--the power to choose his friends and to stand up for what he believes is right . . .
Torrey Maldonado delivers a fast-paced, insightful, dynamic story. Readers will connect with Bryan’s journey as he navigates a tough world with a heartfelt desire for a different life.

If you have any questions about the Required Summer Writing Assignment or the Recommended Summer Reading, please contact Mrs. Nuskey (jillevy@philasd.org), Mrs. Eiler (deiler@philasd.org), or Mrs. Stavakis (jstavakis@philasd.org) before June 10, 2021. We hope you enjoy your summer and look forward to seeing you in the fall.