

June 15, 2020

Dear Willow Hill Middle School Student,

This year, we will be doing the summer reading assignment differently. This year, students who choose to complete the assignment will be entered into a raffle for a gift card.

The requirements are simple. We will provide you lists of recommended reading books to choose from. You choose a book from the list and read it. When you are finished reading the book, you will write a personal response. After you turn in your response, your name will be entered into a raffle to win a free gift card!

### **Requirements for personal response**

Middle school students should write a **one-paragraph minimum personal response**. The response must include:

- 1) Your name
- 2) Title and author of the book
- 3) Briefly summarize key problems and events of the book (2-3 sentences)
- 4) Which character was most likeable for you? Why? (fiction)(3-4 sentences)
- 5) Which fact was most surprising or interesting for you? Why? (non-fiction)(3-4 sentences)

When your response is complete, it should be submitted to Mark Hall:  
mhall@willowhillschool.org

Feel free to email if you have any questions, but check the **Frequently Asked Questions** section on the backside first.

Have a great summer and we can't wait to see you in the Fall!

Andrew Petzold-Eley  
ELA Department Chair  
[apetzold-eley@willowhillschool.org](mailto:apetzold-eley@willowhillschool.org)

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **Q: Can I read a book that I have read before?**

A: Expand into new books that you have not read before. If you did enjoy a particular book, look for other titles by the same author, or other books in a similar series or genre. You can also try something completely new!

### **Q: I don't know what book to read. Where should I start?**

A: Think about topics you're interested in. Is there a topic you'd like to learn more about? Consider different genres and styles: Would you like to read a realistic novel about someone like you? Would you like to try a nonfiction book about someone from a different country or time period?

### **Q: Can I listen to the audio book instead of reading?**

A: Listening is not the same as reading. It uses a different part of your brain and uses different skills than reading does. You may pair a "read-aloud" by listening to the audio book while you read along in the text, but you may not only listen to the book.

### **Q: I love reading! If I read fifteen books this summer, can I enter fifteen different times?**

A: Great question, love your enthusiasm. Read and write as many responses as you like, and your name will be entered **up to three times**. This will give you an advantage to win, but also gives others a chance to win, too.

### **Q: What should I write about in my response?**

A: Another great question. See "Requirements" above.

### **Q: Do I have to read it on my own? Can I read it with my mom or dad?**

A: You are welcome to read along with someone at home. Take the opportunity at the end of each section or chapter to talk with them about what you're reading. Try to summarize what happened or make a prediction about what you think will happen next.

### **Q: If my library is still closed, how can I get one of these books?**

A: Excellent question! This is a good time to problem-solve. You can purchase books online through sellers such as Amazon or Barnes & Noble, or safely purchase from a brick-and-mortar store. However, even during quarantine, there are lots of great digital options as well. Check your local library website to see what digital options might be available for you. Also read the next page for options from the Willow Hill School library...

## **School is closed, but the Willow Hill School library is open virtually.**

### **OverDrive - The Willow Hill School Digital Library**

<https://willowhillma.libraryreserve.com/10/45/en/SignIn.htm?url=Default.htm>

Email Nilima ([njamsandekar@willowhillschool.org](mailto:njamsandekar@willowhillschool.org)) if you need your library card number and pin.

### **Sora**

**Sora** is an app that provides thousands of e- and audiobooks on your phone, your tablet, or your computer. You can access overdrive books through the Sora app.

### **SYNC**

SYNC offers free audiobooks. Each week, from now through the end of August, two free books will be available for download from the Sora app. No waiting - there's a copy for everyone who wants one. You do NOT need to already have Sora to participate in SYNC. If interested, sign up here:

<https://www.audiobooksync.com/>

## **Middle School Summer Reading List**

### **The Lie Tree by Frances Hardinge**

"On an island off the south coast of Victorian England, fourteen-year-old Faith investigates the mysterious death of her father, who was involved in a scandal, and discovers a tree that feeds upon lies and gives those who eat its fruit visions of truth"--Provided by publisher.

### **Okay for Now by Gary D. Schmidt**

*Horn Book Magazine (May/June, 2011)*

Bad-boy Doug Swieteck from *The Wednesday Wars* (rev. 7/07) -- grudgingly respected for his bravado (he knew 410 ways to get a teacher to hate you) but feared because of his bullying older brother -- is back in a stand-alone story. Readers meet Doug's mean-spirited father, a man Doug dislikes but unconsciously emulates. When the family moves upstate after Mr. Swieteck's temper gets him fired, Doug's discontent mirrors his father's. They live in a "stupid" town, in a house

Doug christens "The Dump," and people sit on stoops because there isn't "any boring thing else to do in boring Marysville." But what "boring" Marysville, New York, offers Doug is something unexpected: kindness and a future. He gets a part-time job; meets Lil, a sweet love interest; has teachers willing to teach him (as Schmidt gradually reveals, his need is dire); and, above all, is captivated by a book of Audubon bird prints when a caring librarian helps Doug discover a talent for composition and art appreciation. Schmidt incorporates a myriad of historical events from the 1968 setting (the moon landing, a broken brother returning from Vietnam, the My Lai massacre) that make some of the improbable plot turns (the father's sudden redemption, for example) all the more unconvincing. Still, Doug's story emerges through a distinctive voice that reflects how one beat-up kid can become a young man who knows that the future holds "so much for him to find."

### **Schooled by Gordon Korman**

*School Library Journal (August 1, 2007)*

Gr 6-9-Capricorn, 13, lives with his hippie grandmother on a farm commune. He's never been to school, never watched TV, and doesn't even own a phone. When Rain falls out of a tree while picking plums and is sent to rehab for several weeks, Cap stays with a social worker and is sent to the local junior high school. There he is introduced to iPods, cell phones, spit balls, and harassment. Cap, with his long frizzy hair, hemp shoes, and serene ignorance of everything most of the kids care about, is the dweebiest of the dweebs, and it's the custom at this school to elect such a kid to be eighth-grade class president (which offers extra humiliation opportunities). The story is told from multiple points of view, adding depth to even the most unsympathetic characters. Korman's humor is a mix of edgy and silly, the plot moves along at a steady pace, and the accessible and smooth writing style brings all the elements together to make a satisfying whole. The plot is not long on plausibility, but maybe that's not important in this case. Will Cap's ingrained peacefulness and sense of self win out in the end? Will it matter that he's entrusted with writing checks to help pay for the eighth-grade dance, even though he's not clear on the concept of what a check is? Readers will stay tuned to the last page, and Korman's many fans won't be disappointed.-Lauralyn Persson, Wilmette Public Library, IL Copyright 2007

### **Bone, by Jeff Smith (graphic novel)**

In this hilarious but action-packed graphic novel, three brothers (Fone, Phoney, and Smiley Bone) find themselves lost in the desert. They stumble into a strange new world filled with locusts, fire-breathing dragons, loyal warriors, and a strange prophecy!

### **Wonderstruck by Brian Selznick**

Ben and Rose secretly wish their lives were different. Ben longs for the father he has never known. Rose dreams of a mysterious actress whose life she chronicles in a scrapbook. When Ben discovers a puzzling clue in his mother's room and Rose reads an enticing heading in the newspaper, both children set out alone on desperate quests to find what they are missing. Set fifty years apart, these independent stories-Ben's told in words, Rose's in picture-weave back and forth with mesmerising symmetry. How they unfold and ultimately intertwine will surprise you, challenge you, and leave you breathless with wonder.

### **Ghost by Jason Reynolds**

A National Book Award Finalist  
A Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award Winning Author  
Ghost. Lu. Patina. Sunny. Four kids from wildly different backgrounds with personalities that are explosive when they clash. But they are also four kids chosen for an elite middle school track team -- a team that could qualify them for the Junior Olympics if they can get their acts together. They all have a lot to lose, but they also have a lot to prove, not only to each other, but to themselves. Grades 5-6 | Ages 10 and Up | Lexile 730

### **Endurance: A Year in Space, a Lifetime of Discovery by Scott Kelly**

Inspired by Tom Wolfe's book *The Right Stuff* (1979), Kelly became a navy pilot and astronaut. Before retiring from NASA, he earned the record for the most total time spent in space, including 340 consecutive days at the International Space Station. This memoir is filled with stories of the daring, patience, and humanity necessary to be an effective leader in space, along with the stress of being away from family. His brother Mark Kelly is also a retired astronaut; Scott tells of hearing about the 2011 shooting of his sister-in-law U.S. congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, from afar and subsequently leading a moment of silence in honor of the victims. While Kelly's story is personal, it's also a cautionary tale about the future of space exploration, especially if deeper investment is not made. VERDICT Kelly's down-to-earth personality, humor, and blog -- [SteveKelly.com](http://SteveKelly.com) have earned him a devoted following. Highly recommended to anyone who has an interest in memoirs or space travel. -Beth Dalton, Littleton, CO © Copyright 2017.

### **Wings of Fire by Tui T. Sutherland (Series)**

*Horn Book Guide (Spring 2013)*

Five young dragons have been raised under guard by a group of rebel adults; the dragonets are destined to fulfill a prophecy to end the war among dragon tribes. Immediately upon escaping their captivity they are pursued by a wicked dragon queen. Thrilling battles, exciting plot twists, and complex characters will have young fantasy fans eagerly awaiting further volumes in the series.

### **Beverly, Right Here by Kate DiCamillo**

Beverly Tapinski has run away from home plenty of times, but that was when she was just a kid. By now, she figures, it's not running away. It's leaving. Determined to make it on her own, Beverly finds a job and a place to live and tries to forget about her dog, Buddy, now buried underneath the orange trees back home; her friend Raymie, whom she left without a word; and her mom, Rhonda, who has never cared about anyone but herself. Beverly doesn't want to depend on anyone, and she definitely doesn't want anyone to depend on her. But despite her best efforts, she can't help forming connections with the people around her -- and gradually, she learns to see herself through their eyes. In a touching, funny, and fearless conclusion to her sequence of novels about the beloved *Three Rancheros*, #1 New York Times best-selling author Kate DiCamillo tells the story of a character who will break your heart and put it back together again.

### **I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai**

Malala Yousafzai describes her fight for education for girls under Taliban rule, the support she received from her parents to pursue an education, and how the Taliban retaliated against her by trying to kill her.

### **Flipped By Wendelin Van Draanen**

*School Library Journal (November 1, 2001)*

Gr 6-9-Van Draanen has another winner in this eighth-grade "he-said, she-said" romance told in alternating chapters by two teens who describe how their feelings change about themselves and each other. The first time Juli Baker saw Bryce Loski, she flipped. The first time he saw her, he ran. That was in second grade. Not much changes until eighth grade, when Juli's enthusiastic infatuation wanes just as Bryce's begins to kick in. Like the author's intelligent, gutsy, quirky heroine Sammy Keyes, Juli is fresh, distinctive, and different. After raising chickens for a science-fair experiment, she can't bear to part with "her girls," and begins an egg business. When she learns that Bryce, fearful because her yard is so unclean, has been throwing out the free eggs she has been giving his family for two years, she is devastated and begins to see him in a new light. At the same time, Bryce learns that Juli's family's devoted care of her mentally challenged uncle is what makes them seem poor. Right from the upside-down chick on the book's cover, there's lots of laugh-out-loud egg puns and humor in this novel. There's also, however, a substantial amount of serious social commentary woven in, as well as an exploration of the importance of perspective in relationships. Well-rounded secondary characters keep subplots rolling in this funny, fast-paced, egg-cellent winner.

### **The Boy Who Challenged Hitler by Phillip M. Hoose**

Hoose (Moonbird) vividly recounts the true story of the courageous and brazen teens who inspired the Danish resistance movement in WWII. Angered and embarrassed by his nation's lack of opposition to the German invasion, 15-year-old Knud Pedersen, his older brother, and a few classmates formed the secret Churchill Club (named for the British prime minister they admired). For five months in 1942, club members committed daring acts of sabotage, often from their bikes and mostly in broad daylight ("Arson became our game. We took to carrying a small quantity of petrol with us... stuffing the canister in a school bag "). Hoose's narrative alternates with Pedersen's verbatim recollections (taken from a weeklong interview with him in 2012). Though readers initially may have trouble knowing when Pedersen's quotations end and the author's segues begin, this gripping story quickly gathers momentum, and the shifts between narrators flow smoothly. Archival photos break up the text, while an epilogue details what happened to each young resister after his imprisonment and the war's end. A bibliography and source notes conclude this inspiring account. Ages 12-18.

### **All's Faire in Middle School by Victoria Jamieson (Graphic novel)**

Eleven-year-old Imogene (Impy) has grown up with two parents working at the Renaissance Faire, and she's eager to begin her own training as a squire. First, though, she'll need to prove her bravery. Luckily Impy has just the quest in mind--she'll go to public school after a life of being homeschooled! But it's not easy to act like a noble knight-in-training in middle school. Impy falls in with a group of girls who seem really nice (until they don't) and starts to be embarrassed of her

thrift shop apparel, her family's unusual lifestyle, and their small, messy apartment. Impy has always thought of herself as a heroic knight, but when she does something really mean in order to fit in, she begins to wonder whether she might be more of a dragon after all. As she did in *Roller Girl*, Victoria Jamieson perfectly--and authentically--captures the bittersweetness of middle school life with humor, warmth, and understanding.

### **Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes**

Twelve-year-old Jerome is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat. As a ghost, he observes the devastation that's been unleashed on his family and community in the wake of what they see as an unjust and brutal killing. Soon Jerome meets another ghost: Emmett Till, a boy from a very different time but similar circumstances. Emmett helps Jerome process what has happened, on a journey towards recognizing how historical racism may have led to the events that ended his life. Jerome also meets Sarah, the daughter of the police officer, who grapples with her father's actions. Once again Jewell Parker Rhodes deftly weaves historical and socio-political layers into a gripping and poignant story about how children and families face the complexities of today's world, and how one boy grows to understand American blackness in the aftermath of his own death.