

SIXTH GRADE SUMMER READING Novel Choices & Assignment Activities

Directions: Choose one novel from the following list to read. Then, refer to the Assignment Activities chart. Be ready to turn in your work on the first day of school, September 4, 2007.

These books are available in paperback and can also be found at the public library.

Questions?

Email a sixth grade teacher!

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NOVEL CHOICES:

The City of Ember
Jeanne DuPrau

For generations, the people of the City of Ember have flourished in an amazing world of glittering lights. But Ember's once powerful generator is failing... and the great lamps that illuminate the city are starting to flicker. Now, two teenagers in a race against time, must search Ember for clues that will unlock the ancient mystery of the city's existence, and help the citizens escape before the lights go out forever.

The city of Ember was built as a last refuge for the human race. Two hundred years later, the great lamps that light the city are beginning to flicker. When Lina finds part of an ancient message, she's sure it holds a secret that will save the city. She and her friend Doon must decipher the message before the lights go out on Ember forever!

This stunning debut novel offers refreshingly clear writing and fascinating, original characters.

The Witch's Boy
Michael Gruber

A wondrous journey through the realms of magic.

They call him Lump. Ugly, misshapen — more goblin than human child — abandoned as an infant and taken in by a witch, he is nursed by a bear, tutored by a djinn; his only playmates are the creatures of the forest, whose language he learns to speak. But when Lump inevitably stumbles into the human world, his innocence is no match for

the depths of people's cruelty, which turns his heart to stone, and fuels a vengeance that places him and his witch mother in deadly peril. Yet these disasters also send Lump on a journey of self-discovery, to realms deep within the earth and far beyond mortal imagination.

In this stunning fantasy debut, Michael Gruber has created a world that is at once deceptively familiar and stunningly original, a world of cruelty, beauty, legend, truth, and above all, wonder. Readers will delight in the author's ingenious retelling of classic fairy tales and will marvel at the stunning new tale of a boy raised by a witch, a cat, a bear, and a demon.

Elsewhere
Gabrielle Zevin

What happens when you die? Where do you go? What do you do? Zevin provides answers to these questions in this intriguing novel, centering on the death of Liz Hall, almost 16 years old and looking forward to all that lies ahead: learning to drive, helping her best friend prepare for the prom, going to college, falling in love. Killed in a hit-and-run accident, Liz struggles to understand what has happened to her, grief-stricken at all she has lost, and incapable of seeing the benefits of the Elsewhere in which she finds herself. Refusing to participate in this new life, Liz spends her time looking longingly down at the family and friends back on Earth who go on without her. But the new environment pulls her into its own rhythms. Liz meets the grandmother she never knew, makes friends, takes a job, and falls in love as she and the other inhabitants of Elsewhere age backward one year for each year that they are there. Zevin's third-person narrative calmly, but surely guides readers through the bumpy landscape of strongly delineated characters dealing with the most difficult issue that faces all of us.

Best Foot Forward
Joan Bauer

Lots of teenage girls go crazy for shoes, but 16-year-old Jenna Boller is gaga for the shoe business — especially as it's run by her employer and role model Madeline Gladstone, matriarch of Gladstone Shoes. In this fittingly kicky companion to *Rules of the Road*, readers accompany Jenna on a personal and professional journey that leaves her standing taller than ever in her *Rolling Walkers*. The road to a job well done is littered with detours, however. Bauer takes Jenna emotionally deeper here, as the heroine struggles in her home life — she is trying to accept her now-absent alcoholic father and be supportive of her mother and younger sister — and these challenges are always on her mind, even as things get especially chaotic at work. Gladstone's recent merger with a larger company is fraught with problems and Jenna finds herself helping to untangle an unpleasant web of corporate corruption. She must also micromanage (at Mrs. Gladstone's insistence) a new hire who once shoplifted shoes from the store. That leaves little time for having fun or for exploring a budding romance with Charlie from the local doughnut shop. But in Bauer's sure hand, Jenna's compassion and burgeoning confidence bubble up when she needs them most and slowly harden into a solid, likeable core. The teen's efforts to put her best foot forward pay off in ways she couldn't imagine. And via vivid characterizations, crisp,

believable dialogue and some exciting scenarios, Bauer keeps her fans hooked for an entertaining ride.

Runner
Carl Deuker

When his alcoholic Gulf War veteran father is fired from the first steady job he has held in years, Chance Taylor is understandably glum. He has no idea where they'll get the money to pay the moorage fees for the run-down sailboat they call home. Since his parents' divorce, Chance has tried to keep a low profile in school, and his only pleasure is running by himself along the Seattle waterfront. When a marina office employee offers to pay him \$250 a week to pick up occasional packages at a tree along his running route, Chance is deeply suspicious of what they may contain but desperate enough to accept this opportunity to pay the bills. As this new job gradually becomes more dangerous and more clearly illegal, Chance's father is able to rise above his personal problems to help extricate his son. In a gripping climax complete with SWAT teams swarming throughout the marina as Coast Guard patrol boats close in on terrorists, Chance is afforded a final glimpse of the heroic man his father once was. Writing in a fast-paced, action-packed, but at the same time reflective style, Deuker uses fewer sports scenes than in his previous novels, and instead uses running as a hook to entice readers into a perceptive coming-of-age novel. A subplot involving Chance's friendship with a wealthy female classmate whose father was a close high school friend of Chance's father is nicely integrated into this timely, compelling story.

SUMMER READING

Assignment Activities

Directions: Choose any combination of assignments that add up to 50 points

10 Point Choices	15 Point Choices	20 Point Choices
Discuss in one paragraph how the main character is like or unlike a person (or animal) that you know.	Draw and color a map of where a major part of the story takes place. Label the major landmarks or points of interest.	Write a review of a movie or another book that is like your novel in plot or just general theme. Explain why. (Three paragraphs)
Pretend that you're the author and describe the part that was the most fun or hardest to write. Explain why in one paragraph.	Write a two paragraph review of the novel convincing someone else to read it.	Create a collage of a major theme of your novel or one that illustrates certain parts of your novel.
Describe in one paragraph an experience you've had that was like the experience of a character in the book.	Describe in writing (two paragraphs) what you think happened before the story began.	Review the book that you read and compare it to a movie that is like the book. What happened in each? Which was better? Why? (Three paragraphs)
Write any kind of poem about your book. (Min. 16 lines)	Write (two paragraphs) another part of the story where you describe what happened to the main character after the story ended.	Find 3 songs that seem to relate to your novel. Write out the lyrics and then write an explanation (three paragraphs) of how the songs relate to your novel
Write a one paragraph obituary for one character.	Explain how you would make your book into a movie-- who would play the main characters, where would you film it, etc? Explain your choices in two paragraphs.	Pretend you are a character in the novel and describe the other characters in the novel and what you think of each of them. (Three paragraphs)
Explain in one paragraph how a character in the book changed from the beginning to the end.	Write a different (better?) ending for the story. (Two paragraphs)	Make a scrapbook of pictures of the main characters and/or places in your novel. You could use photographs, magazine clippings, newspaper clippings, internet images, etc.
If the book has a villain, explain in one paragraph why was his or her punishment justified.	Write a two paragraph letter to the author of the novel.	Compare your book with several TV shows that are similar to your novel. Use a chart to make your comparisons.
Explain in one paragraph why you would like to have one of the characters as a friend.	Write two articles for a newspaper published at the time of a major event in your book.	Create a video depicting a chapter from the book.

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10 Point Choices	15 Point Choices	20 Point Choices
What's the one most important thing the author wants the reader to know? Explain in one paragraph..	Write an interview with one of the major characters. Create at least 15 interview questions.	Design several pieces of art about the novel.
	Write several diary entries made by one of the major characters.	Keep a journal as you read your book: record the dates and your reactions, thoughts, feelings...a minimum of five entries.
	List 15 interesting words from your book and tell why each is interesting	Write a long poem or rap (20 lines or more) about the book.
	What problems did the major characters have and how did they solve them? (Two paragraphs)	
	Make a crossword puzzle with clues from your book	

Love to read?

Check out the "50 Nifty" book list on the Villa website for more book recommendations!