

Summer Reading Program for Rising Eighth Grade Students
Grace Snell Middle School
2011-2012

All the Broken Pieces by Ann E. Burg

Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson

Claudette Colvin: Twice Towards Justice by Phillip M. Hoose

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

Kira-Kira by Cynthia Kadohata

Watership Down by Richard Adams

Directions for 8th Grade Summer Reading:

- Each rising 8th grade student is **required to read one book from the reading list above** in preparation for the 2011-2012 school year. (Descriptions for each book are located on the back of this page.)
- After reading the book, students should complete the attached graphic organizer. (Key literary terms are defined below to help students complete the graphic organizer.)
- The graphic organizer should be brought to school at the beginning of the year and will help students prepare for a performance-based assessment on their book; this assessment will take place during the first two weeks of school.
- Additional copies of the graphic organizer are available on the Grace Snell Middle School website: <http://www.gracesnellms.org/home.html>

The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them.

Mark Twain

***All the Broken Pieces* by Ann E. Burg**

In 1977, 12-year-old Matt Pin lives a fractured life. He is the son of a Vietnamese woman and an American soldier and was airlifted to safety from the war zone. Adopted by a caring American couple, he has vivid and horrific memories of the war and worries about the fates of his mother and badly injured little brother. Matt's adoptive family adores him, and he is the star pitcher for his middle school baseball team, but there are those who see his face and blame him for the deaths of the young men they lost in the war. The fractured theme runs the course of this short novel in verse: Matt's family, the bodies and hearts of the Vietnam vets, the country that is "only a pocketful of broken pieces" that Matt carries inside him. Ultimately, everything broken is revealed as nonetheless valuable.

***Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson**

Set in New York City at the beginning of the American Revolution, *Chains* addresses the price of freedom both for a nation and for individuals. Isabel tells the story of her life as a slave. She was sold with her five-year-old sister to a cruel Loyalist family even though the girls were to be free upon the death of their former owner. She has hopes of finding a way to freedom and becomes a spy for the rebels, but soon realizes that it is difficult to trust anyone. She chooses to find someone to help her no matter which side he or she is on. With short chapters, each beginning with a historical quote, this fast-paced novel reveals the heartache and struggles of a country and slave fighting for freedom. The characters are well developed, and the situations are realistic. An author's note gives insight into issues surrounding the Revolutionary War and the fight for the nation's freedom even though 20 percent of its people were in chains. Well researched and affecting in its presentation, the story offers readers a fresh look at the conflict and struggle of a developing nation.

***Claudette Colvin: Twice Towards Justice* by Phillip M. Hoose**

In Montgomery, Alabama, in March 1955, 15-year-old Colvin refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. She was arrested, and although she received some help from local civil rights leaders, they decided that the sometimes-volatile teen was not suitable to be the public face of a mass protest. Later that year, Rosa Parks sparked the famous bus boycott. Colvin was left with a police record and soon faced the additional problems of an unwed pregnancy and expulsion from school. In spite of those troubles, she consented to be named as a plaintiff in the court case that eventually integrated Montgomery's buses. Thus Colvin played a central role in the city's civil rights drama, but her story has been largely lost to history.

***The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman**

Somewhere in contemporary Britain, "the man Jack" uses his razor-sharp knife to murder a family, but the youngest, a toddler, slips away. The boy ends up in a graveyard, where the ghostly inhabitants adopt him to keep him safe. Nobody Owens, so named because he "looks like nobody but himself," grows up among a multigenerational cast of characters from different historical periods that includes matronly Mistress Owens; ancient Roman Caius Pompeius; an opinionated young witch; a melodramatic hack poet; and Bod's beloved mentor and guardian, Silas, who is neither living nor dead and has secrets of his own. As he grows up, Bod has a series of adventures, both in and out of the graveyard, and the threat of the man Jack who continues to hunt for him is ever present.

***The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins**

In a not-too-distant future, the United States of America has collapsed, weakened by drought, fire, famine, and war, to be replaced by Panem, a country divided into the Capitol and 12 districts. Each year, two young representatives from each district are selected by lottery to participate in The Hunger Games. Part entertainment, part brutal intimidation of the subjugated districts, the televised games are broadcasted throughout Panem as the 24 participants are forced to eliminate their competitors, literally, with all citizens required to watch. Katniss volunteers to take the place of her younger sister, and she and her male counterpart, Peeta, will be pitted against bigger, stronger representatives who have trained for this their whole lives.

***Kira-Kira* by Cynthia Kadohata**

Katie's first word is "*kira-kira*," the Japanese word for "glittering," and she uses it to describe everything she likes. It was taught to her by her older sister, Lynn, whom Katie worships. Both girls have trouble adjusting when their parents move the family from Iowa to a small town in rural Georgia, where they are among only 31 Japanese-Americans. They seldom see their parents, who have grueling jobs in chicken-processing plants. Then Lynn becomes deathly ill, and Katie is often left to care for her, a difficult and emotionally devastating job.

***Watership Down* by Richard Adams**

The story follows a warren of Berkshire rabbits fleeing the destruction of their home by a land developer. As they search for a safe haven, skirting danger at every turn, we become acquainted with the band and its compelling culture and mythos. Adams has crafted a touching, involving world in the dirt and scrub of the English countryside, complete with its own folk history and language (the book comes with a "lapine" glossary, a guide to rabbitese). As much about freedom, ethics, and human nature as it is about a bunch of bunnies looking for a warm hidey-hole and some mates, *Watership Down* will continue to make the transition from classroom desk to bedside table for many generations to come.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Summer Reading Graphic Organizer

As you read your novel you are to complete the following information. ***You will need to bring this with you when you return to school and turn it into your teacher.*** Before you start working, review the definitions for each of the terms on the following page. If you need more room to write you may do so on another sheet of paper. Descriptions are to be written in complete sentences with plenty of details.

Name of Book: _____ Author's Name: _____

Description of setting:

Description of a major character(s):

Description of the plot:

Description of conflict:

Description of resolution:

Key Literary Terms

setting- is the time and place where the story takes place; geographical location, historical period, season, etc.

character - is a person, an animal, or an imaginary creature that takes part in the action of the story

plot – the storyline; what the novel is about

conflict – is a struggle between opposing forces

resolution – solution to the problem