



Dear Parents/Guardians,

We're excited to share our Summer Reading list for the 2024-2025 school year. We continue to adjust the program to give students the best experience while upholding the desire to turn them into life-long readers. We know that people who read are more successful in all spheres of life, and we want to give your child her/his best opportunity to be successful both here at OSS and beyond. On the other side of this sheet, you'll find the summer reading lists. Note that you do not need to purchase copies of these books, and the only summertime requirement is their selected book is read before the first day of school. It is **highly recommended** that students complete the project attached to this letter upon completion of reading, as information will be fresh in their minds, but the project will be due 8/30/24. Students will **not** be given time in their ELA class to complete the project.

A note on the books assigned for Summer Reading: We know that there are some difficult ideas in the books we've assigned. We know that there are events and language that you may question, albeit very minimal. We want you to know that we don't assign these texts lightly or without serious consideration about what is best for your student and their educational future. It is our job and our privilege to prepare your student for what lays ahead, both in their education and in their future. We have carefully selected each text we'll encounter this year based on age-appropriateness, complexity, thematic content, and an awareness of what we know higher educational institutions will expect they've been exposed to.¹ There is a certain canon of literature that students *must* be familiar with upon graduating from middle school, and we work very hard to balance that with the literary appropriateness of each piece selected.

More than that, however, we also believe in the power of literature to encompass the human experience in a way that not only enlightens us but that connects us to the great, wide world around us. We believe that literature faces the human experience without flinching and that some of that experience is difficult. That being said, we don't intend to let your student float through these texts without guidance and help, and we *know* that they will have the opportunity to emerge on the other side with deeper insight, more compassion, a better understanding of themselves and the world around them.

We hope that, at the end of their time at OSS, all our students leave with a deep love of the English language and for the stories that connect us. We hope that they are more compassionate, thoughtful, and intelligent people. We hope that they will develop wisdom and the ability to look beyond the surface of a thing to see its deeper truths, whether that "thing" is a book, a political situation, or another person. We hope that they are wise and just and true in their dealings with the world, and we *know* that great literature can help them to become all those things. We thank you for entrusting them to us, and we thank you for your support as we guide them through these literary encounters, even those that may not make immediate sense to you. We also welcome your feedback and conversation.

Sincerely,

The OSS ELA Department

¹ The books listed in addition to the Sunshine State list are provided as sample text by benchmark in the FLDOE B.E.S.T. Standards for each grade level. "Ela B.E.S.T. Standards: English Language Arts." <https://www.fldoe.org>, www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7539/urlt/elabeststandardsfinal.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2024.

It's important to note that students are expected to complete all summer reading ***prior to the first day of school***. Please make arrangements to complete the reading even if you will be traveling during the summer as only those students who register *after* the 2024-2025 school year has begun will be exempt from this expectation. Project grading will take place during the first grading period, at the teacher's discretion, and it will not be completed during class. Every student must complete the project on time and participate in the literacy event(s) held during the first semester. This is part of their ELA grade. Information about the literacy event(s) will be given to students after school has begun.

INCOMING 6th Graders:

1. A book from the current Sunshine State list
2. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs
3. *Tales of the Greek Heroes* by Roger Lancelyn Green
4. *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson
5. *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

INCOMING 7th Graders:

1. A book from the current Sunshine State list
2. *Freedom Walkers* by Russell Freedman
3. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass
4. *The Red Umbrella* by Christina Diaz Gonzalez
5. *The Prince and the Pauper* by Mark Twain

INCOMING 8th Graders:

1. A book from the current Sunshine State list
2. *Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela
3. *Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon* by Catherine Thimmesh
4. *Trapped: How the World Rescued 33 Miners from 2,000 Feet Below the Chilean Desert* by Marc Aronson
5. *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien

Sunshine State Young Readers Award Books



2024 – 2025



The Story of a Hero Summer Reading Project

This project is due on Friday, August 30, 2024, in ELA class. Students will **not** have time in class to work on this project. It is **highly recommended** that students complete this project as soon as they finish reading, so that the story is fresh in their minds.

You must create a visual representation of the journey the hero of your story took. All stories have a protagonist (main character) whether it is a fiction or nonfiction book. We recommend watching the [TED-ED talk “What makes a hero?” by Matthew Winkler](#) to assist you.



Presentation Options: There are several ways that you can choose to structure your project. We are including options below:

- **Poster:** If you select the poster option, please ensure that it is comprehensive and colorful – you should include several pictures. You may want to structure the hero’s journey as a circle, but you can design the poster in any way that conveys the necessary components.
- **PowerPoint:** Create a PPT presentation that encompasses all aspects of the hero’s journey. Ensure your PPT features images. The PPT must be clearly organized. Google Slides and Canva are also acceptable mediums for this option.
- **Video:** Create a film trailer/short film of the hero’s journey of the protagonist.