

To: All Heskett English Language Arts Students
From: Heskett Middle School English Language Arts Department
Re: Summer 2019 Reading

As an English Department, it is our suggestion that you read this summer! Just like exercising keeps muscles in shape, reading keeps the brain in shape. If you don't exercise, you lose muscle, and if you don't read, you will lose literacy skills.

We have some book suggestions for you, but the most important thing is that you READ! We recommend that you spend at least 30 minutes reading daily! We can't wait to talk with you about your chosen book(s) when you return in August!

See below for suggestions:

Grade 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•“Nightjohn” by Gary Paulsen•“Out of My Mind” by Sharon Draper•“A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story” by Linda Sue Park
Grade 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•“A Gift of Magic” by Lois Duncan•“A Mango-Shaped Space” by Wendy Mass•“All of the Above” by Shelley Pearsall

****Please note, students enrolled in Pre AP English 1 have a separate required project to complete.****

Copies of these books may be purchased at local bookstores or obtained from the library. (Reserve your copies early; avoid the August rush!) Additionally, copies can be obtained from online sellers such as eBay or Amazon for far less than bookstore prices. Many titles can be obtained for less than \$3.

Enjoy your summer reading!

Grade 7:

“Nightjohn” by Gary Paulsen (630 Lexile)

Sarny, a female slave at the Waller plantation, first sees Nightjohn when he is brought there with a rope around his neck, his body covered in scars. He had escaped north to freedom, but he came back--came back to teach reading. Knowing that the penalty for reading is dismemberment, Nightjohn still returned to slavery to teach others how to read. And twelve-year-old Sarny is willing to take the risk to learn.

“Out of My Mind” by Sharon Draper (700 Lexile)

Eleven-year-old Melody is not like most people. She can't walk. She can't talk. She can't write. All because she has cerebral palsy. But she also has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She's the smartest kid in her whole school, but NO ONE knows it. Most people—her teachers, her doctors, her classmates—dismiss her as mentally challenged because she can't tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by her disability. And she's determined to let everyone know it...somehow.

“A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story” by Linda Sue Park (820 Lexile)

The *New York Times* bestseller *A Long Walk to Water* begins as two stories, told in alternating sections, about two eleven-year-olds in Sudan, a girl in 2008 and a boy in 1985. The girl, Nya, is fetching water from a pond that is two hours' walk from her home: she makes two trips to the pond every day. The boy, Salva, becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan, refugees who cover the African continent on foot as they search for their families and for a safe place to stay. Enduring every hardship from loneliness, to being attacked by armed rebels, to having contact with killer lions and crocodiles, Salva is a survivor, and his story goes on to intersect with Nya's in an astonishing and moving way.

Grade 8:

“A Gift of Magic” by Lois Duncan (740 Lexile)

When the old woman died, she left her grandchild Nancy with the extraordinary gift of magic. Nancy can read people's minds, know their thoughts, and make them do what she wants. Will she use her gift for good, or satisfy her own selfish desires?

“A Mango-Shaped Space” by Wendy Mass (870 Lexile)

Thirteen-year-old Mia Winchell is far from ordinary: she suffers from a rare condition called synesthesia, the mingling of perceptions whereby a person can see sounds, smell colors, or taste shapes. But because she has kept it a secret from everyone, she appears to be the most normal kid in her family. Her younger brother Zack keeps a chart of all the McDonald's hamburgers he's eaten in his lifetime. Her older sister Beth dyes her hair a different color every week. When trouble in the school finally convinces Mia to reveal her secret, she feels like a freak; and as she embarks on an intense journey of self-discovery, her family and friends have trouble relating to her. By the time she realizes she has isolated herself from all the people who care about her, it is almost too late. Mia has to lose something very special in order to understand and appreciate her special gift.

“All of the Above” by Shelley Pearsall (950 Lexile)

Based on a true story, “All of the Above” is the delightful and suspenseful story of four inner city students and their quest to build the world's largest tetrahedron. Weaving together the different personal stories of the kids, their teacher, and the community that surrounds them, award-winning author Shelley Pearsall has written a vividly engaging story about math, life, and good-tasting barbecue.

Here are some questions we will discuss about your chosen book(s) upon your return to school this fall. Write out your responses for the possibility of first quarter bonus points in your English Language Arts class!

1. What about the book(s) kept you reading?
2. Which moment(s) made you gasp, cry, or laugh out loud? Why?
3. Would you like to see your book as a movie? If so, who would you cast in the film?

4. What new place did you visit through your reading? Did any part of your book remind you of your own life? Tell us about it.
5. Did your reading cause you to want to learn more about something? What?