

Eighth Grade Summer Reading

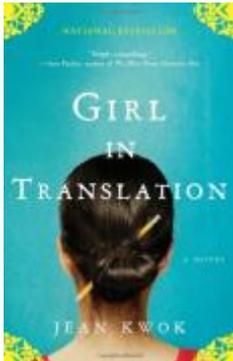
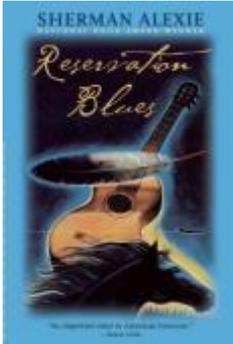
P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School, 2017-2018

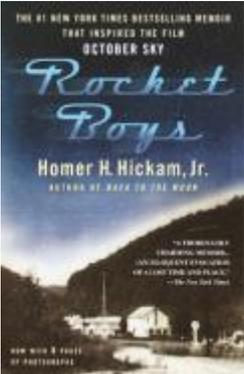
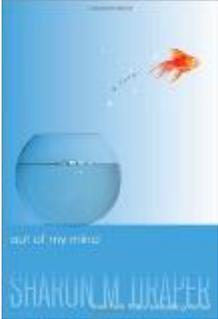
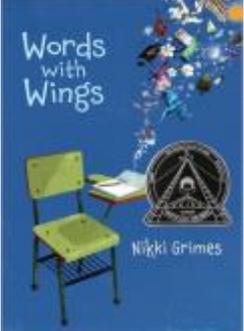
“Marcus Aurelius insisted that to become world citizens we must not simply amass knowledge; we must also cultivate in ourselves a capacity for sympathetic imagination that will enable us to comprehend the motives and choices of people different from ourselves, seeing them not as forbiddingly alien and other, but as sharing many problems and possibilities with us.”

Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*

Summer Reading is a longstanding school tradition that still holds value today. In eighth grade language arts, a focus for the year will be examining how our collective and diverse cultural pasts are enhanced by working together as a community of readers and writers. Because you will be talking about “big ideas” with people who will be different from you, summer is a good time to explore a narrative that features someone whose experiences are different from your own. This will get us ready to have important conversations together in class.

There is no required assignment associated with summer reading. All ideas below are optional. Completing summer reading is not a requirement to do well in my class next fall. However, I believe we should be reading all the time. Some suggestions of books I like are listed below. I also love hearing from future students, so don't be shy about emailing me at jcheveallier@pky.ufl.edu.

Title	Author	Cover Art*	Summary*
Girl in Translation	Jean Kwok		When Kimberly Chang and her mother emigrate from Hong Kong to Brooklyn squalor, she quickly begins a secret double life: exceptional schoolgirl during the day, Chinatown sweatshop worker in the evenings. Disguising the more difficult truths of her life-like the staggering degree of her poverty, the weight of her family's future resting on her shoulders, or her secret love for a factory boy who shares none of her talent or ambition, Kimberly learns to constantly translate not just her language but herself back and forth between the worlds she straddles. Through Kimberly's story, author Jean Kwok, who also emigrated from Hong Kong as a young girl, brings to the page the lives of countless immigrants who are caught between the pressure to succeed in America, their duty to their family, and their own personal desires, exposing a world that we rarely hear about.
Reservation Blues	Sherman Alexie		Many may remember the tale of Robert Johnson, the musician who sold his soul to the devil at the crossroads in exchange for being the best blues guitarist around. What many may not know is that after this tragic deal in Mississippi, Johnson ended up in a small town on the Spokane Indian reservation in Washington state—at least that's how author Sherman Alexie tells it. Alexie uses music as a crosscultural bridge, without compromising the cultural integrity of his characters. The band members seem to take on the gamut of problems faced by Indians on the reservation today.

Title	Author	Cover Art*	Summary*
Rocket Boys	Homer Hickam		<p>The #1 <i>New York Times</i> bestselling memoir that inspired the film <i>October Sky</i>, <i>Rocket Boys</i> is a uniquely American memoir—a powerful, luminous story of coming of age at the dawn of the 1960s, of a mother's love and a father's fears, of a group of young men who dreamed of launching rockets into outer space . . . and who made those dreams come true. With the grace of a natural storyteller, NASA engineer Homer Hickam paints a warm, vivid portrait of the harsh West Virginia mining town of his youth, evoking a time of innocence and promise, when anything was possible, even in a company town that swallowed its men alive. A story of romance and loss, of growing up and getting out, Homer Hickam's lush, lyrical memoir is a chronicle of triumph—at once exquisitely written and marvelously entertaining.</p>
Out of My Mind	Sharon Draper		<p>Melody is not like most people. She cannot walk or talk, but she has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She is smarter than most of the adults who try to diagnose her and smarter than her classmates in her integrated classroom—the very same classmates who dismiss her as mentally challenged, because she cannot tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by cerebral palsy. And she's determined to let everyone know it . . . somehow. In this breakthrough story—reminiscent of <i>The Diving Bell and the Butterfly</i>—from multiple Coretta Scott King Award-winner Sharon Draper, readers will come to know a brilliant mind and a brave spirit who will change forever how they look at anyone with a disability.</p>
Words with Wings	Nikki Grimes		<p>Gabby's world is filled with daydreams. However, what began as an escape from her parents' arguments has now taken over her life. But with the help of a new teacher, Gabby the dreamer might just become Gabby the writer, and words that carried her away might allow her to soar. Written in vivid, accessible poems, this remarkable verse novel is a celebration of imagination, of friendship, of one girl's indomitable spirit, and of a teacher's ability to reach out and change a life.</p>

Here are some big questions to consider as you read:

- *How is the protagonist (main character) developed over the course of the novel, and how are his or her experiences different from your own?*
- *How does the setting (time and place) of the novel affect the story, and how does that setting differ from your own experiences?*
- *What is the theme (deeper meaning) of the novel, and what factors of the story contribute to this theme? How have you learned this theme in your own life, and how are the experiences within the narrative different from your real-life experiences?*

Some ideas of how to respond to summer reading include:

- Reading journal—write what you think as you read, making predictions or connections to other texts/experiences
- Reflection—after you're done reading, write about what the book meant to you
- Creative response—retell the story from a different perspective or write a prequel/sequel
- Annotations (for returning students)—create a blank Google Doc using your PK login and follow the style you learned from Dr. Mundorf

*Cover art and summaries taken from Amazon.com