



FIFTH GRADE SUMMER READING 2018

I know it is not truly official until you get my letter in August, but let me just say that I am really looking forward to getting to know you. I think summer should be filled with doing all the things you want to do, so that is my hope for you. It may be that reading books off a reading list may not be at the top your list of "Fun Things To Do", but I hope you can find something that will interest you. I will let you in on a little secret...it wasn't one of my favorite things either when I was your age. Here's what I thought might help...no book project hanging over your head to be completed by summer's end. Just read. All the authors I have selected for you are great story tellers. I hope you can find some enjoyment in that.

The long summer is ahead. Enjoy it, and know that I am already making plans for you. I love Fifth Grade, and I think Fifth Graders are the absolute best people at Wesley Prep! So...

"That's why I teach Fifth Grade". Have fun and I will see you in August!

- Ms. Herring

I have given you a great many choices and author websites so you can check out the writers themselves. Let's not worry about a project, I would prefer that you come ready to discuss the book from each category that you liked best. Read for the sheer enjoyment of the story that the author is spinning. Remember to give a book at least one hundred pages before you say, "This book stinks!" Just as you like to add details to the stories you tell your friends and adults, so does an author, so give them some time to let the story unfold.

Your Assignment:

- Pick two books from each category (that will be four books in all). Of course, there are some great books on this list and feel free to read more! You only have to be ready to discuss one of the two in each category.

- Before reading your selected books, go to the author's website and read his or her biography. "Why?" you ask. That's easy. We will go through this same process all year with the books we will study as a class. You will find that many times the author slips tidbits of their own life into the story, and you wouldn't know it if you hadn't read about their life. You may also find why they like to write about a particular genre. Or what was the reason behind the book you are reading. If you like the book, you may want to read other books.

Anyway, I think you will find it interesting. And, if you don't, just know that it will be good practice in reading biographical information since you will be doing that for your Wax Museum character.

Okay, here are the two categories:

Historical Fiction - Read two of these books:

1. Patricia Beatty: *Charlie Skedaddle*

Ms. Herring note: *"I couldn't find a website I liked but don't let that stop you, it is a great story. Also, you can only find this at the library, or Barnes and Noble. It is out of print. Boys, if you like war stories you will like this one."*

Synopsis: Charley is a member of one of the toughest gangs in New York City. When his older brother is killed at Gettysburg, Charley vows revenge against the Confederates. So, he joins the Union Army as a drummer boy. Charley thinks war will be glamorous and exciting. But then he sees two of his friends gunned down mercilessly. When Charley shoots a Confederate soldier in self-defense, he knows he can't take any more killing. He "skedaddles" away from the battle, convinced he's a coward. Hiding in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Charley encounters the ultimate test of courage. Can Charley prove his mettle once and for all -and restore his shattered self-image?

2. Karen Cushman: *Catherine Called Birdy*
<https://www.karencushman.com/about/bio.html>

Ms. Herring note: *“Girls, this is a wonderful story!”*

Synopsis: Catherine lives in the brutal world of the medieval times. She has no power and little value. This is the diary of her fourteenth year when her father tries to arrange her marriage and Catherine struggles to avoid it.

3. Esther Forbes: *Johnny Tremain*
www.sparknotes.com/lit/johnnytremain/context.html

Ms. Herring note: *“I know this looks like a story for boys, but it has enough girl stuff in it to make it interesting for both boys and girls. It is an unforgettable story!”*

Synopsis: *Johnny Tremain* tells of the times in Boston just before the American Revolution through the eyes of Johnny Tremain, a young silversmith who is drawn into the war after meeting Rab, a daring young member of the Sons of Liberty. Working closely with Paul Revere and the revolutionists, Johnny must learn to overcome the obstacles in his path through his courage and determination and help prepare Boston for the battle ahead.

4. Dan Gutman: *Honus and Me*
www.dangutman.com

Ms. Herring note: *“If you are a baseball fan you will really like this story, and the author became so famous for it he wrote several others about baseball stars.”*

Synopsis: While cleaning out an old lady's attic, a boy finds the most valuable baseball card in the world, the 1909 Honus Wagner T- 206. He also discovers he has the power to travel back in time using baseball cards as his time machine. So, he goes back to 1909 and has an adventure with the great Honus Wagner.

5. Lois Lowry: *Number the Stars*
<http://www.loislowry.com/>

Ms. Herring note: *“This is a very suspenseful book and one of my favorites for both boys and girls.”*

Synopsis: It is 1943, and to Annemarie Johansen life in Copenhagen is a complicated mix of ordinary home and school life, food shortages, and the constant presences of Nazi soldiers. Bravery seems a vague virtue but too soon she will be called upon for courage. Through Annemarie's eyes we see the Danish resistance as they manage to smuggle almost the entire Jewish population, nearly 7,000 people across the sea to Sweden. In this tale of an entire nation's heroism, Lois Lowery reminds us that there is pride and human decency in the world even during a time of terror and war.

6. Katherine Paterson: *Parzival, The Quest of the Grail King*
www.terabithia.com

Ms. Herring note: *"Boys, this is a great book by an author that respects your age, and writes about things that are of interest to you."*

Synopsis: Parzival, raised by his mother in the wilderness, is ignorant of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. Then one day, to his amazement, he meets three mounted men in shining armor. Parzival is determined to have a life of adventure, off he goes to the king's court, wearing sackcloth and riding a broken-down nag. Quickly gaining Arthur's favor, Parzival wins many combats and the heart of a beautiful queen. He also learns chivalry and honor. But when he fails to say the words that will heal a dying king's wound, he must undertake his greatest quest- a search for the Grail, the sacred vessel of hope and eternal life.

7. Katherine Paterson: *Lyddie*
www.terabithia.com

Ms. Herring note: *"Girls, this one is for you. I like anything that Mrs. Patterson writes; she writes for your age and seems to connect with things Fifth Graders are thinking about."*

Synopsis: Her parents are gone, and her brother and sisters sent to live with other people. Lyddie Worthen is on her own. When Lyddie hears about the mill jobs in Lowell, Massachusetts, she heads there with the goal of earning enough money to reunite her family. Six days a week from dawn to dusk Lyddie and the other girls run weaving looms in the murky dust filled factory. Lyddie learns to read and to handle the menacing overseer. But when the working conditions begin to affect her friends' health, she has to make a choice. Will she speak up for better working conditions and risk her job-and her dream? Or will she stay quiet until perhaps it is too late?

8. Elizabeth George Speare: *The Sign of the Beaver*
<https://www.biblio.com/elizabeth-george-speare/author/431>

Ms. Herring Note: *"Guys, this is a great book if you like adventure."*

Synopsis: Twelve-year old Matt is trying his best to survive on his own until his father returns to their cabin in the Maine wilderness with the rest of the family. Matt develops a deep friendship with a Native American boy. Matt must decide if he should continue waiting for his family or begin a new life with his friend.

9. Elizabeth George Speare: *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*
<https://www.biblio.com/elizabeth-george-speare/author/431>

Ms. Herring note: *"Girls, you will love this story....it has a wonderful love story hidden in it!"*

Synopsis: *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* is a romantic, historical tale about a young girl's rebellion against bigotry and her Puritan surroundings. Kit is a free-spirited sixteen-year-old colonial girl from Barbados who comes to live with relatives in the solemn, hard-working town of Wethersfield, Connecticut. Kit feels trapped and lonely in her new life until the day she finds refuge in the Meadows. There she meets an old Quaker woman named Hannah, who is known as the Witch of Blackbird Pond. Uncle Matthew forbids Kit to see Hannah, but Kit persists in visiting her friend and even helps an abused child named Prudence find solace there. When an epidemic causes the townspeople to go after Hannah for practicing witchcraft, Kit helps her escape. Then Kit herself becomes the subject of the witch hunt. Her incarceration and trial force her to reexamine her feelings towards two young men and her future. In the end, Kit must choose the direction her life will take.

Stand Alone Novels - Read 2 of these books:

1. Jean Craighead George: *My Side of the Mountain*
<http://www.jeancraigheadgeorge.com>

Ms. Herring note: *"This is a really cool book for both boys and girls. Some survival stories seem unbelievable, but this one will make you want to look for your own place in the "Bamboo Forest."*

Synopsis: Sam Gibley is tired of living in a crowded New York City apartment, so he runs away to the Catskill Mountain wilderness to forge a life of his own. With only a penknife, a ball of cord, an ax, \$40,

and some flint and steel, he must rely on his ingenuity and on the resources of the land to survive. And survive he does. This is Sam's fascinating account of his life in the wild and what he learns about wilderness and himself in the process.

2. Mary Downing Hahn: *Wait Till Helen Comes*

<http://www.hmhbooks.com/features/mdh/>

Ms. Herring Note: "...*this is a really scary read..... but what is summer without a ghost story?*"

Synopsis: Molly and Michael aren't too happy about moving in with their recently remarried mother to the home of their new stepfather and his bratty daughter, Heather. To make matters worse, the new home-- a converted church bordered by an old graveyard--gives Molly the creeps. Molly and Michael initially ignore Heather when she insists she has befriended a ghost that haunts the cemetery, but when Heather ends up in real danger, Molly must overcome her own fears and save her stepsister.

3. Norton Jester: *The Phantom Tollbooth*

<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/tollbooth/context/>

Ms. Herring note: "*This has lots of wordplay in it, example the watch dog named Tock is shaped like a clock. It is a great fantasy book if you like that sort of thing.*"

Synopsis: This ingenious fantasy centers around Milo, a bored ten-year-old who comes home to find a large toy tollbooth sitting in his room. Joining forces with a watchdog named Tock, Milo drives through the tollbooth's gates and begins a memorable journey. He meets such characters as the foolish, yet lovable Humbug, the Mathemagician, and the not-so-wicked "Which," Faintly Macabre, who gives Milo the "impossible" mission of returning two princesses to the Kingdom of Wisdom.

4. Jean Merrill: *The Pushcart War*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Merrill

Ms. Herring note: "*Have you ever been to New York City and seen the people on the streets selling things from carts? Maybe you even bought a hot dog and ate it right there. If you have or did, you will love this story. If you haven't, it is still on the top 100 best books for your age!*"

Synopsis: Jean Merrill's *The Pushcart War* is a satirical look at war through the eyes of the major participants. The war in this novel is between pushcart vendors and truck drivers who are battling over the right to use the streets of New York City. Ms. Merrill presents her fictional war as if it were non-fiction in order to show her readers how even a small war has the potential of affecting thousands of lives and how important it is for people to see how wars start so that they may be avoided in the future. This novel is entertaining as well as a learning experience for all who read it, whether they be the young or the young at heart.

5. Katherine Paterson: *Come Sing Jimmy Jo*
www.terabithia.com

Ms. Herring note: *“Once again, I love Mrs. Patterson’s work.”*

“You got the gift” his grandma told him. But every time eleven-year-old James thought of singing and playing the guitar in front of people, he felt sick. Now, with the family’s big chance to appear on Country Time TV, James had no choice. Everything was changing. Not only did he have to leave Grandma and his mountain home, he had to change his name for the fans his Mamma said. What if he really becomes Jimmy Jo Johnson? The crowds, the applause, and the aggressive fans frighten him. How would the kids treat him at school if they found out that he is a celebrity? And who is the mysterious stranger who followed him in a pickup and waited for him at the schoolyard fence.

6. Gary Paulsen: *Hatchet*
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/23384/gary-paulsen>

Ms. Herring note: *“Gary Paulsen writes great suspenseful stories, this one was one of his first and still stands as one of his best.”*

Synopsis: The survival adventures of 13-years-old Brian Robeson in *Hatchet* have sparked the imagination of millions of young readers. Following a plane crash, Brian was stranded alone in the Canadian wilderness with nothing but a small hatchet and painful memories of his parents' recent breakup. Facing hunger, wild animals and harsh weather, Brian acquires inspiring survival techniques and on the same time develops as a human being.

7. Gary Paulsen: *How Angel Petersen Got His Name*

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/23384/gary-paulsen>

Ms. Herring note: "*Sounds fun to me!*"

Synopsis: When you grow up in a small town in the north woods, you have to make your own excitement. High spirits, idiocy, and showing off for girls inspire Gary Paulsen and his friends to attempt: Shooting waterfalls in a barrel, jumping 3 barrels like motorcycle daredevils except they only have bikes, hang gliding with an Army surplus target kite, and wrestling... a bear? Extreme sports lead to extreme fun.