



Metropolitan Montessori Upper Elementary Summer Reading 2011

Dear Upper Elementary Families,

As I added student recommendations to the ever growing list of titles on our summer reading list, I was struck at how many recommended old classics. I expected the new best-sellers, but was pleased to see the popularity of some very old and still very beloved titles. So feel free to recommend some old favorites of your own to your children. After all enthusiasm is contagious! This list is not meant to limit your child's reading just to give you some ideas. Students should read five books and the required book for their grade level (total of six books).

All fourth graders must read – **The Real Thief** by William Steig

All fifth and sixth graders must read - **Chew on This** by Charles Wilson and Eric Schlosser

Students should bring their summer reading to school on the first day back. Fifth and sixth graders should actively read their books.

With so many book choices, I found this list of ideas about how to strategize an effective summer of reading for your child from www.pbs.org very helpful:

Create a reading plan with your child. Using a calendar, help your child make a schedule for summer reading. Helping your child plan ahead and stick to the schedule will help him avoid leaving his reading until the last few days of summer.

Set aside a consistent time each day for reading. Depending on your family's schedule, reading time might be in the morning, afternoon, or before bed. Whatever time you choose, stick to it, but also remember that flexibility around trips and special family events is OK.

Alternate required reading with your child's own choices. Your child will be more motivated to read when s/he has the opportunity to select some of his/her own reading.

Read books together and discuss them. You can read aloud together by taking turns by page, or you can get two copies of the book and each read silently. In either case, tell your child what you are thinking as you read and ask your child questions about what s/he reads. By reading together, you help your child to understand what s/he reads and motivate him/her to read by demonstrating that you enjoy sharing ideas about books.

Find audio books if your child is struggling. By listening to books on tape and discussing them with you, your child will learn new vocabulary and information. If audio books are not feasible, read required books aloud to your child and discuss them together. At the same time, help your child to find books at a comfortable level so s/he gets practice reading herself.

This is my annual summer exhortation/invitation to put reading at the top of your family to-do list! With Kindles, Nooks and iPads, carrying tomes in your pocket has never been easier. I love having many choices on my phone. **War and Peace** can now slide easily into a hip

pocket. It is essential that your children read outside of school and that they find a genre, an author, a topic, a magazine, or newspaper that they enjoy reading for pleasure. If you are interested in the profound impact summer reading has on kids go to:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/summer/research.htm>

Other resources for lists and summaries are:

The New York Public Library- www.nypl.org

The Horn Book Magazine- www.hbook.com

Children's Book Council- www.cbcbooks.org

For some students identifying what they enjoy is simple. They are the omnivores. But there are those with a more narrow taste range. Humor has an almost universal appeal. **Diary of a Wimpy Kid** is outselling many adult best-sellers. Many students prefer non-fiction.

American adults prefer non-fiction to fiction by a large margin.

I have included a reading list from the New York State Public Library that is based around books that are set in New York City and New York State during many different time periods, and it includes both fiction and non-fiction titles. If you want ideas about events and stories close to home check it out at:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/summer/readlist.htm#elementary>

One of our primary goals in providing a summer reading list is to foster the **habit of reading**. Whether students are reclining by the pool, gazing at the view on a mountaintop or riding on the subway, make sure they have a book in hand. Other important goals fostered by summer reading are the development of reading **fluency**, as well as to **deepen comprehension**.

Many students think they are reading when they begin at page one and continue to the final page. But they haven't truly read the book if they don't stop and **re-read** when they are confused. They haven't truly read the book if they don't ask about motivation and character. They haven't truly read the book if they don't **wonder** about the theme. Why did the author write the book? What's the lesson? They haven't truly read the book if they don't ask for the meanings of difficult vocabulary. Electronic and on-line dictionaries foster the habit of looking up unknown words more routinely. Being a critical reader is necessary to successfully read a math word problem, a science experiment or a biography.

Ask your child about what s/he has been reading. **Retelling** is a very effective comprehension strategy. Encourage your child **to ask questions** about how this book is similar to or different from others s/he has read, and about what does the author want the reader to understand about life and the world at the end. Have a restful, happy summer together.

Nancy Burton
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