



Dear Students and Parents,

All incoming MTS fifth-, sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students have a required reading assignment over the summer. Please refer to the following pages for specific details on each grade's reading requirement.

Of course, we sincerely hope and would encourage our students to read more than what is required. Summer reading is one of life's great pleasures, not to mention the best way to keep the mind nimble over a long vacation.

Many of these books should be available at your local library. You can search the Marin County Library and the city libraries from home at [marinet.lib.ca.us](http://marinet.lib.ca.us). While it is not necessary to purchase summer reading books, local bookstores will be happy to help you. Book Passage in Corte Madera gives a 4–6% school rebate if you mention MTS. Our school code is 30. In addition, MTS receives a percentage of your purchases from Amazon.com if you link through our school's library homepage ([www.mttam.org/library](http://www.mttam.org/library)).

Enjoy your summer vacation, and happy reading!

Sincerely,

The MTS English Department



Dear Parents of 8th Grade Students,

The great naturalist John Muir called Yosemite "Nature's greatest creation." What he couldn't foresee was that it would become nature's greatest classroom as well. Yosemite National Park is the site of the Yosemite Institute, an acclaimed outdoor education school that our students will attend from September 11-16. As mentioned at the May 19 parent meeting, the trip this fall will be spent entirely in the backcountry, allowing students to experience the very best of the Sierra wilderness first hand. The week in Yosemite will be a busy one, filled with daylong hikes, field activities, writing and sketching, group games, evening programs, and visits to places of natural and historical interest. The week will also be a challenging one, both academically and physically, and it is important for our students to be as prepared as possible. There are two things I am asking they do during the summer months to get ready for the trip.

We will be on our feet all day, everyday, while in Yosemite, in all types of weather and over all kinds of terrain. It has been my experience with previous student groups that proper and comfortable footwear is perhaps the most important equipment item they need. **Properly fitted, lightweight, high-top hiking boots are a necessity** and should be purchased this summer so they can be broken in prior to the trip. Heavy, all-leather boots should be avoided, as they are expensive, difficult to break in, and unnecessary.

Several types of lightweight, hightop hiking boots are available at outdoor equipment and sporting goods shops throughout Marin and the Bay Area. They are often no more expensive than a pair of tennis shoes but offer much better support and traction while carrying a pack on the trail. If possible, the boots should be waterproofed with a silicone sealer before the trip. Also, refer to the gear and equipment list that was distributed at the parent information meeting, and remember to make arrangements during the summer months for a warm sleeping bag and suitably sized backpack.

The second request is that students complete their assigned summer reading before school resumes in September. Prior to the end of school in June, we discussed as a class the two assigned reading books and students know what is expected of them. Handouts that described how to approach the reading were distributed, we began some of the reading together, and engaged in related discussion. Two books have been assigned. The first book is *My First Summer in the Sierra*, John Muir's personal account of his early experiences in the high country meadows near Tuolumne. This journal will serve as a model for our students as they keep their own journals in Yosemite and later prepare an anthology of selected entries for publication. Students will need to purchase this book, and copies are available at bookstores throughout Marin County, at local libraries, or can be purchased over the Internet.

The second book is *Yosemite* by Margaret Sanborn. This book, while lengthy and quite detailed, is an excellent resource of the human and natural history of Yosemite. The school has loaned a copy of this book to each student and these books will be collected when our study and discussions are completed in the fall. These texts are **required reading**, and students will be expected to participate in discussion and refer to them while preparing related writing assignments prior to the trip.

Additional information about the Yosemite trip will be distributed to students and parents the first week of school. Until then, have a relaxing and enjoyable summer.

Sincerely,

Eric Kielich

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To Parents of Incoming MTS Seventh and Eighth Graders:

To keep pace with the high schools' expectations that their students be proficient in graphing calculator technology, we require each of our 7th and 8th graders to own a TI-84 or TI-84 Plus graphing calculator. (The lowest price we found was at the Office Depot and Target, although you may find more competitive prices on-line.) Because stores tend to be sold out during the first weeks of school, we recommend procuring the calculator as early as possible. The graphing calculator, a competent mathematics computer, will be of use throughout high school, if not beyond. Most high schools use them, with independent high schools generally requiring their purchase.

The calculators are not a substitute for written or mental calculation, as we require our students to be proficient in both. Students will not be allowed to use the calculators on routine homework assignments except as specified by the teacher. Tests are taken without the calculators or in two parts designated to be done with and without the calculators.

Sincerely,

MTS Mathematics Department



Dear Parents and Students of Grades 6-8

We think that it is critical for our program to include a cross section of enrichment classes, with adequate time to pursue and enjoy these classes in depth. In order to do so, we schedule all students in Grades 6-8 for an ENRICHMENT BLOCK, a double period that meets during seventh and eighth periods (1:30 2:10/ 2:10 2:50) on Thursdays throughout the school year. Students will have an opportunity to select classes from the Creative Arts Block (Art, Computers and Current Events), or the Performing Arts Block (Scene Study, MTS Chorus, Dance Ensemble, Vocal Ensemble, Music & Computers and African Drum Ensemble.)

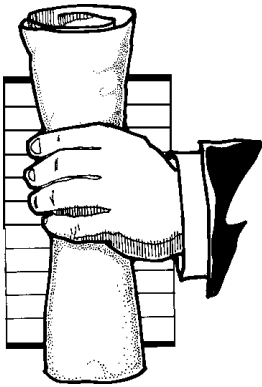
Some classes will meet for a double period (Art, Computers. and Scene Study), while other classes (Boys' Dance, Girls' Dance, MTS Chorus, Vocal Ensemble, Current Events, Music & Computers, and African Drum Ensemble will meet for one period and change to another class for the second period.

Anyone with questions about their selection may direct those questions to the school office or to Cathy Angelo. Please note that students will be scheduled according to their preference in descending order; i.e., 8th grade choices will be filled first, then 7th, and finally 6th. Students will have an opportunity to sign up for the Enrichment classes on the first day of school, Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, with the clear understanding that not all choices can be honored in the first trimester.

We encourage all 8th grade students who are interested in being involved in the Spring Musical to seriously consider enrolling in the Performing Arts Block (especially if they have not taken any of these classes in previous years), in order to gain some performance experience in the concerts that will be scheduled at the end of the first and second trimester. We encourage students in grades 6 and 7 to explore their artistic talents and try different classes.

We will certainly do our very best to satisfy the wishes of all students, but we reserve the right to schedule students as we see fit, taking into consideration all criteria involved in that decision. Class assignments will be based on: limited size for some classes, previous classes each student has taken, and assignments will be made to insure the very best overall program for all.

Enrichment classes begin on Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, the first week of school. We hope that you will enjoy your Enrichment classes.



Dear 8th Grade Parents,

To avoid any confusion, we are requesting that you state your child's full legal name as it appears on the official certificate of birth and will appear on his/her diploma. Please be sure to include the correct spelling.

Thank you for your cooperation,

MTS Staff

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My child's name as it appears on the official certificate of birth and will appear on his/her diploma is:

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First Name

Middle Name(s)

Last Name

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Parent Signature

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Date

## 5th-Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Incoming fifth graders must choose two mysteries from the list below and a “free choice” book that is appropriately challenging.

The following books may be borrowed from the Marin County Public Library System and the city libraries or purchased through our *MTS on Amazon Store* or at local bookstores. The “\*” indicates that the author has written other mysteries which are acceptable choices.

Emma Jean Lazarus Fell in Love by Lauren Tarshis  
The Eye of the Crow by Shane Peacock  
The London Eye Mystery by Siobhan Dowd  
Way Down Deep by Ruth White  
The Traitor’s Gate by Avi  
Gilda Joyce, Psychic Investigator by Jennifer Allison\*  
Mr. Chickee’s Funny Money by Christopher Curtis  
Chasing Vermeer by Blue Balliet\*  
Alien Secrets by Annette Curtis Klause  
Shadow Horse by Alison Hart  
Spiderweb for Two by Elizabeth Enright  
Sammy Keyes and the Hotel Thief by Wendelin Van Draanen\*  
A Summer in the South by James Marshall  
Peppermints in the Parlor by Barbara Wallace\*  
Mansion in the Mist by John Bellairs\*  
Danger in the Dark by Tom Lalicki\*  
The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin  
The Case of the Goblin Pearls by Laurence Yep\*  
The Dollhouse Murders by Betty Ren Wright\*  
The 100-Year-Old Secret by Tracy Barrett  
Dark Stairs by Betsy Byars\*  
Letters from Camp by Kate Klise\*  
Key to the Treasure by Peggy Parish\*  
Spider Kane and the Mystery at Jumbo Nightcrawler’s by Mary Pope Osborne\*  
Secrets of Vesuvius by Caroline Lawrence\*  
Ghost in the Tokaido Inn by Dorothy Hoobler\*  
Little Wolf: Forest Detective by Ian Whybrow\*  
Running Out of Time by Margaret Haddix  
Hamster of the Baskervilles by Bruce Hale\*  
Case of the Cat with the Missing Ears: From the Notebooks of Edward R. Smithfield by Scott Emerson.  
Man in the Moon by Melanie Jackson\*  
Princess for a Week by Betty Ren Wright\*  
Problem Child by Michael Buckley\*  
Fall of the Amazing Zalindas by Tracy Mack  
Half-Moon Investigations by Eoin Colfer  
Midnight in Lonesome Hollow by Kathleen Ernst  
The Case of the Left-Handed Lady: An Enola Holmes Mystery by Nancy Springer\*  
Raven League: Sherlock Holmes is Missing by Alex Simmons\*  
Exile by Grace Cavendish  
Door to Time by Pierdomenico Baccalariu\*  
Club of the Linoleum Lederhosen by M.T. Anderson\*  
Deep Secrets by Emily Rodda\*  
Shadow Beast by Justin Richards\*

# 6th-Grade Summer Reading Assignment

In preparation for English class, you are required to read **(at least) three books over the summer:**

◆ ***Tangerine***

by Edward Bloor  
Harcourt  
ISBN 0152057803



and

◆ **Two free-choice novels**

The books must be by different authors (which means you can't count more than one book from a series). Beyond that, the only other constraint is that you choose something that is at, or even slightly above, your reading level. The books should not be too "easy" or too short. (The average length of a novel is 200 pages; if you choose a book that is significantly less than that, it will attract suspicion.)



## How to Find What to Read

The best choices are books that come highly recommended to you by avid readers. Trading book suggestions with friends is a great place to start.

Here are two good resources for additional suggestions:

- The **Mt. Tam Summer Reading List**—sent home in a Friday Folder by our widely read librarian, Kathy Teree—is an excellent resource for age-appropriate recommendations.
- There is a carefully tended list of novels posted on the **website of the Book Passage**, Marin's treasure of a book store in Corte Madera:  
<http://bookpassage.com/book-kids>

*A word of advice: Don't stick with a book that you don't like; free choice books should be books that engage you.*

## When You Return to School

**If possible, please bring your copies of *Tangerine* and your two free-choice books to the first day of school.** If you don't have copies because you borrowed any or all of the books from the library, or read them on an e-reader, that is okay; instead, bring in a written list of what you read that includes both titles and authors.

For *Tangerine*, you won't be expected to know fine-grained plot details—e.g. What was the name of the dog in chapter three?—but you will be expected to name the major characters, summarize the significant plot events, and identify the novels' themes in a reading comprehension quiz. Therefore, it does make sense to read this book later in the summer, so it is still fresh in your mind when you return to school.

For your free-choice books, you will be expected to write short essays in the form of book reviews after you return to school. (You don't need to be worried about the details of the assignment until your return.)

# 7th-Grade Summer Reading Assignment



## What to Read

In preparation for English class, you are required to read **at least four books** over the summer. There are no required titles; you are **free to choose what you read**.

- The books must be by different authors. You can't count more than one book from a series.
- The only other constraint is that you choose something that is at, or even slightly above, your reading level. The books should not be too "easy" or too short. (The average length of a novel is 200 pages; if you choose a book that is significantly less than that, it will attract suspicion.)
- The books you read don't have to be fictional novels. In fact, you are encouraged to read at least one non-fiction book that interests you.

## How to Find What to Read

The best choices are books that come highly recommended to you by avid readers. There are lots of good readers in this class; you are already trading suggestions. Keep it going through the summer.

Here are two good resources for additional suggestions:

- The **Mt. Tam Summer Reading List**—sent home in a Friday Folder by our widely read librarian, Kathy Teree—is an excellent resource for age-appropriate recommendations. There are good non-fiction recommendations on this list. (I will also post a copy of this list in the English First Class conference.)
- There is a carefully tended list of novels posted on the **website of the Book Passage**, Marin's treasure of a book store in Corte Madera:  
<http://bookpassage.com/book-kids>

*A word of advice: Don't stick with a book that you don't like; this is a free choice and each book should engage you.*

## When You Return to School

**If possible, please bring in physical copies of the books you read to the first day of school.** If you don't have copies because you borrowed any or all of the books from the library, or read them on an e-reader, that is okay; instead, bring in a written list of what you read that includes both titles and authors.

For these books, you will be expected to write short essays in the form of book reviews after you return to school. (You don't need to be worried about the details of the assignment until your return.)

## 8th-Grade Summer Reading Assignment

You are required to read four books over the summer (two for English class, and two in preparation for Yosemite):

1. ***My First Summer in the Sierra* by John Muir**  
Most of you already have a copy which we've been reading in class at the end of the year.
2. ***Yosemite: Its Discovery, Its Wonders, and Its People* by Margaret Sanborn**  
This is not a book you need to purchase; Eric will distribute a school copy to you to take home for the summer. You do not need to read the entire book, just chapters 1–6, 10–11, 13–14, 18, 20, 22, and 23.
3. **One book from Justin's classics list on the back of this page**  
In the interest of exposing you to good books that you might not read on your own, I have compiled a list of twelve books from which you must *choose one*. Take time to learn more about these books before you make your choice. And if you don't like how your first choice is starting, don't hesitate to drop it and try another one.
4. **One free-choice novel**  
But choose your book carefully. You will write an essay/book review on this when you return, and you will be graded in part on the quality of your choice. By quality, I mean that the book represents a mature choice on your part; it is not too "easy" or too short. (The average length of a novel is 200 pages; if you choose a book that is significantly less than that, it will attract suspicion.) The best choice might be a work that comes highly recommended to you by multiple adults, a book that challenges you in some way. That said, don't stick with a book that you don't like; this is a free choice and the book should engage you.

### When You Return to School

**If possible, please bring in physical copies of the books you read to the first day of school.** For the Yosemite books, this is mandatory. For your English books, if you don't have copies because you borrowed any or all of the books from the library, or read them on an e-reader, that is okay; instead, bring in a written list of what you read that includes both titles and authors.

For your English choices, you will be expected to write short essays in the form of book reviews after you return to school. (You don't need to be worried about the details of the assignment until your return.)

# **Eighth Grade Summer Reading Classics List**

*One of the books you choose for summer reading must come from this list of “classics”:*

***Call of the Wild*** by Jack London

The adventures of an unusual dog—part St. Bernard, part Scotch shepherd—forcibly taken to the Alaskan gold fields where he eventually becomes the leader of a wolf pack.

***Fahrenheit 451*** by Ray Bradbury

A man whose job it is to burn books in a future fascist state finds out books are a vital part of a culture he never knew.

***Frankenstein*** by Mary Shelley

Victor Frankenstein discovers the secret of generating life from lifeless matter and creates a monster who, scorned for being ugly, swears revenge on his creator and the human race.

***Little Women*** by Louisa May Alcott

A heart-warming classic based on the author’s family life growing up in a household of four girls, each with a unique personality.

***My Antonia*** by Willa Cather

A successful lawyer remembers his boyhood in Nebraska and his friendship with an immigrant gypsy girl.

***Of Mice and Men*** by John Steinbeck (or any novel by John Steinbeck)

A story of friendship and tragedy for two migrant workers, George and Lennie, on a farm in Central California.

***The Once and Future King*** by T.H. White

The story of the youth and reign of King Arthur, the establishment of the Round Table, and the search for the Holy Grail.

***Pride and Prejudice*** by Jane Austen (or any other novel by Jane Austen)

In early nineteenth-century England, a spirited young woman copes with the courtship of a snobbish gentleman as well as the lives of her four sisters.

***Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*** by Mildred Taylor

Living in the South during the 1930s, the African-American Logan family faces devastating discrimination and prejudice.

***The Secret Garden*** by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Mary, a self-centered girl, and Colin, a pampered invalid boy, come to understand compassion and generosity within a mysterious abandoned garden.

***A Separate Peace*** by John Knowles

Against the backdrop of WWII, the rivalry of two roommates at a boys’ school turns into a private war.

***Watership Down*** by Richard Adams

A tale of survival, this story records the adventures of a band of wild rabbits that leave their ancestral home, hoping to build a more humane society.