



City Honors School
Summer Reading 2026

Entering Grade 5



What our ELA faculty expects you to read this summer:

Out of My Mind

Sharon Draper

If you cannot find a free version from a public library, and purchasing books is not in the family budget this summer, please contact Mr. Paterson, who will work with Dr. Kresse to make the books available.

Why we expect you to complete this reading:

Literature is one of the best vehicles we have for developing a sense of empathy in our young scholars. By being engaged in the book above, our new CHS students will certainly further develop their capacity to be caring, open-minded, and thoughtful citizens.

What you should do before you read these texts:

Read the back cover and inside jacket of the required text. Another helpful suggestion is to go to YouTube and search “*Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper Book Trailer.*” Watch one or two of these, as these trailers usually preview the characters and plot of the book, and better prepare you to successfully read it.

What you should do while you are reading:

Have a lined piece of paper or two by your side to take some notes. This can also be folded up and become a bookmark! As you move through the book, take some quick notes on the following:

- A lot of people come in and out of Melody's life that have an effect on her. Based on their interactions with Melody, jot down what you are thinking about the following characters:
 - Mrs. V., Rose, Mr. Dimming, Catherine, Claire, and Molly
- A theme is a lesson or a moral. After you complete the book, write down a theme that you think was developed in this book. Then, provide paraphrased evidence from the book that supports your theme.
- After you complete the book, jot down a reason or two about why you think Mr. Paterson wanted all incoming 5th graders to read this book.

How we will make use of the reading when we return to school:

In the first few days of school, we will use this book for a small assessment and for classroom activities and discussions. For your child to be successful with these activities, it is critical that this is completed before the start of the school year.

Whom to contact for questions:

Nick Paterson 716-880-7054

nmpaterson@buffaloschools.org

I strongly encourage you to contact me ASAP with any questions or concerns as they arise over the summer. I would be more than happy to help. Have a great summer and see you soon!



City Honors School
Summer Reading 2026

Entering Grade 6



What our ELA faculty expects you to read this summer:

The Giver By Lois Lowry

Choose ONE of the following recommended texts:

Heroes, Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths

Eragon

Holes

The Book Thief

Ghost

Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus

Fish in a Tree

New Kid

Bernard Evslin

Christopher Paolini

Louis Sachar

Markus Zusak

Jason Reynolds

Phillip Hoose

Dusti Bowling

Linda Mullaly Hunt

Jerry Craft

If you cannot find a free version from a public library, and purchasing books is not in the family budget this summer, please contact Mrs. Becker, who will work with Dr. Kresse to make the books available.

- YA literature often includes mature subject matter. The title chosen should be approved by a parent based on appropriateness and student maturity. This list includes a range of literary topics and voice in hopes of offering student choice and an enjoyable, educational reading experience for all. [CLRI Guidance for Sensitive Language in Texts](#)

Why we expect you to complete this reading:

6th Grade is a year of a lot of personal growth and independence. We are excited to help you gain independence in your social skills, organizational skills and academic skills. With this independence will come many choices about who you want to shape yourself to be! Following the journey of Jonas helps us to reflect on how we make choices, how our choices are influenced and affect ourselves and those around us. I look forward to diving into some GREAT reading with you this year!

What you should do before you read these texts:

Prepare yourself: Get either a notebook or a folder with paper in it to record notes and keep them organized. For your book of choice, be sure to pick something you think you will enjoy! One of our goals in 6th grade is to cultivate an appreciation for reading. This starts with finding something interesting to read!

What you should do while you are reading:

For *The Giver* - Think about and take notes on the following:

- For each chapter, create a summary statement and a question or prediction for the next chapter. This only needs to be a few sentences long.

- Consider Jonas' choices. What motivates his choices? How do we see this and him as a character change over the course of the book?
- Make text to self, text to text and text to world connections as you read. Ask yourself: if someone were to assign you to the job you would have for the rest of your life, what job would it be and why would they have picked that for you?

For your book of Choice:

- Create a new cover design for the book.
- Write a "book blurb" that could be included on the back of the cover to entice readers to give it a try!

How we will make use of the reading when we return to school:

In September, we will use *The Giver* for classroom discussions and activities. You will be expected to make connections and apply what you learned through reading this text to an ungraded mini project and a graded multiple choice quiz in the first few weeks of school. Annotating, notetaking, and analyzing themes and characters are all skills we will be focusing on throughout the year. Your annotations and/or notes will also be useful in completing these assignments. Please be prepared to bring your notes to school with you to assist you.

The additional book of your choice will help to build your background knowledge about a topic or skill we will explore together in 6th grade or help build your appreciation for reading. In addition, the students will be partaking in a year long reading challenge. These books will count towards their goals. For this book of your choice, be ready to submit your book cover design and book blurb during the first week of class

Whom to contact for questions:

Rachael Becker – rbecker@buffaloschools.org



City Honors School
Summer Reading 2026

Entering Grade 7



What our ELA faculty expects you to read this summer:

One Crazy Summer

Rita Williams-Garcia

And choose ONE of the following:

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian

Sherman Alexie

Ender's Game

Orson Scott Card

A Wrinkle in Time

Madeline L'Engle

White Fang

Jack London

Chinese Cinderella: The True Story of an Unwanted Daughter

Adeline Yen Mah

When My Name Was Keoko

Linda Sue Park

Stargirl

Jerry Spinelli

If you cannot find a free version from a public library, and purchasing books is not in the family budget this summer, please contact Ms. Shea, who will work with Dr. Kresse to make the books available.

- YA literature often includes mature subject matter. The title chosen should be approved by a parent based on appropriateness and student maturity. This list includes a range of literary topics and voice in hopes of offering student choice and an enjoyable, educational reading experience for all. [CLRI Guidance for Sensitive Language in Texts](#)

Why we expect you to complete this reading:

Research has shown that children who do not read during the summer vacation can lose approximately 3-4 months of reading gains made during the previous school year. Reading during the summer fosters reading growth (*The Reading Teacher Journal*; April 2013). We want all our students to make reading a favorite part of their free time... and take a vacation through a good book!

What you should do before you read these texts:

There are a variety of books on the choice list. If you enjoy adventures, biographies, mysteries, realistic or historical fiction, there is something available for everyone. Research to find the book that interests you the most and then read it.

What you should do while you are reading:

You should be able to identify and discuss the various elements of the story (exposition, plot summary, setting, characterization, climax, resolution, and theme) for both books. You are allowed to write notes down and bring them into class on these elements.

Another small note...You can preview most books online through Barnes and Noble. If you read the excerpt and you cannot comprehend or are not enjoying the book you have selected for the

second choice, ***choose a different one***. You **cannot** do this for *One Crazy Summer*, but **you can** for your independent selection. **If you have questions, e-mail me.**

How we will make use of the reading when we return to school:

When we return to school, we will discuss the books you have read and will use the information contained in each text as we connect to the literature used in class for the coming school year. You will be discussing the literature with a partner and completing reading and essay tests.

Whom to contact for questions:

Ms. Anne Marie Shea
ashea@buffaloschools.org



City Honors School
Summer Reading 2026

Entering Grade 8



What our ELA faculty expects you to read this summer:

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time

Mark Haddon

If you cannot find a free version from a public library, and purchasing books is not in the family budget this summer, please contact Ms. Meyers, who will work with Dr. Kresse to make the books available.

[CLRI Guidance for Sensitive Language in Texts](#)

Why we expect you to complete this reading:

There are so many ways that reading will help you as a student: it increases your reading speed, expands your vocabulary, and exposes you to time periods and places you are not able to visit yourself. Reading does not just make you a better student; it also makes you a better person. Reading allows you to access experiences you may never live through yourself, giving you a partial glimpse of what another's life is like.

What you should do while you are reading:

Please record the following in your notebook for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*:

- **Record three (3) key quotes from the text, along with analysis/commentary about why each quote is significant.** You might answer: *How do the main character's choices reveal their values and motivations? -OR- This quote resonates with me because... -OR- What is the author's central message or theme?*
- The commentary for your quotes should be approximately 1 notebook page in length, recorded beneath each selected quote. Your work will be assessed within the opening week of school.

How we will make use of the reading when we return to school:

In September, we will briefly discuss your reading and you will complete a written response to the book. Your notes will be useful in completing this assignment.

Whom to contact for questions:

Please email Ms. Meyers with any questions: sameyers@buffaloschools.org



City Honors School
Summer Reading 2026



Entering Grade 9

What our ELA faculty expects you to read this summer:

The House on Mango Street

Sandra Cisneros

If you cannot find a free version from a public library, and purchasing books is not in the family budget this summer, please contact Dr. Ziolkowski, who will work with Dr. Kresse to make the books available.

- YA literature often includes mature subject matter. The title chosen should be approved by a parent based on appropriateness and student maturity. This list includes a range of literary topics and voices in hopes of offering student choice and an enjoyable, educational reading experience for all. [CLRI Guidance for Sensitive Language in Texts](#)

Why we expect you to complete this reading:

Literature exposes us to human experience. It reminds us that our emotions are shared and understood by all humans and awakens us to unfamiliar worlds, creating empathy for otherness. Read often; read well. Become curious about media and texts. Explore genres you have not read, by authors with which you are unfamiliar, about cultures you have yet to understand. Be a voracious scholar of books, articles, podcasts, lectures, art and film. Independent reading will be encouraged throughout your English II course.

What you should do before you read these texts:

Begin with a fresh composition notebook. This will serve as your journal for the summer and this year. We advise that before you study any work, you spend a bit of time doing light research on the author, as well as the time and place in which the work was written.

What you should do while you are reading:

Annotations and notes are essential in discussing and writing about literature. Be thoughtful about your notes; they are preparation to share your findings/insights through a variety of responses. Please record the following in your notebook, for *The House on Mango Street*:

- **Record five (5) quotes from the text, along with brief commentary about why each quote is significant to the work or your reading.** You might answer: *What does this part of the text tell you in relation to the message of the entire work? -OR- This quote resonates with me because...*

The commentary for your quotes should be approximately 1 notebook page in length, recorded beneath each selected quote. Your work will be assessed within the opening week of school.

How we will make use of the reading when we return to school:

In September, we will briefly discuss your reading and you will complete a written response to the book. Your notes will be useful in completing this assignment.

Whom to contact for questions:

Dr. Nicole Ziolkowski

Email: nziolkowski@buffaloschools.org



City Honors School
Summer Reading 2026

Entering Grade 10



What our ELA faculty expects you to read this summer:

Please consider purchasing a copy of *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology* (6th edition) by Samuel Cohen as it will be used throughout our course in grade ten and students find it easier to annotate directly on the pages. Prices range from \$12 used to \$25 new.

The specific edition of this text can be difficult to find, so a physical copy of the book will be provided to all students in September. While possessing your own copy would certainly help with annotations, the linked PDFs provided below can easily be downloaded and printed to provide the same annotation opportunity for summer reading.

Read these selections from *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology*, Samuel Cohen (6th edition)

*These essays are also available to download by following the link underneath.

“Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space”

Brent Staples

<https://www.ohlone.edu/sites/default/files/documents/imported/justwalkonbyblackmenandpublicspace.pdf>

“The Declaration of Independence”

Thomas Jefferson

<https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/lesson/354/Declaration%20of%20Independence%20Full%20Text.pdf?rev=1997>

“Letter from Birmingham Jail”

Martin Luther King Jr

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/general/Letter%20from%20Birmingham%20Jail%20MLK.pdf>

(While “Letter from Birmingham Jail” was first introduced in grade 9, our class will offer a deeper analysis as we analyze how rhetorical appeals, rhetorical fallacies, and argument arrangement – all topics/skills introduced in marking period one – can provide insight as to the complex nuances of the text and will be used as the model for all future texts covered in the first half of the year!)

[CLRI Guidance for Sensitive Language in Texts](#)

Why we expect you to complete this reading:

In AP Language, we will focus on the art of a writer’s craft, so the more experience you have contemplating how and why a work was composed, the more comfortable you will become writing about it and discussing it. With that in mind, read beyond the assigned work. Read all that you can! Take notice of *how* a text is composed and what it calls the reader to contemplate. Become curious about the topics that people write about and pay attention to the choices authors make when discussing complex ideas. Consider keeping a curiosity journal or a learning log, not for a grade, but to engage with the world around you.

What you should do before you read these texts:

This anthology contains 50 incredibly important essays from a broad variety of respected writers taking a close look at societal issues of their time. To understand the context of the book, conduct brief research on the three writers in question – MLK Jr, Staples and Jefferson – to better understand the historical eras in which the work was originally published.

What you should do while you are reading:

It is expected that you will read the four essays *in their entirety* and annotate or keep notes for both the literary elements and authorial choices. By maintaining a two-sided journal, include quotes that contain significant literary devices or authorial choices on one side, with an explanation of their importance on the other side. As you read, also consider the historical context in your annotated notes.

How we will make use of the reading when we return to school:

We will begin the year using these texts in class discussion and for a variety of analysis. Further, all students will participate in multiple Socratic Seminars and Fishbowl discussions to share your annotations as we work toward building a deeper appreciation of how the writing was constructed. Your annotated text and/or notes will be useful in completing these assignments.

Additional things you need to succeed in English Language Arts for the upcoming school year:

Please be sure that your AP Journal (composition notebook) is intact and ready for another year of notes. Prior to entering Grade 10, review and organize your Pre-AP notes.

Whom to contact for questions:

Mr. Dallas Belge

Email: dbelge@buffaloschools.org



City Honors School
Summer Reading 2026

Entering Grade 11



What our ELA faculty expects you to read this summer:

Americanah

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

If purchasing the book is not in the family budget this summer, please contact Dr. Weaver who will work with Dr. Kresse to make the book available. You will be using this book during the school year.

[CLRI Guidance for Sensitive Language in Texts](#)

Why we expect you to complete this reading:

Our English A: Language and Literature (HL) course studies the complex and dynamic nature of language in both its practical and aesthetic dimensions. Students explore the crucial role language plays in communication, reflecting experience and shaping the world, and the roles of individuals themselves as producers of language. Throughout the course, students will explore the various ways in which language choices, text types, literary forms and contextual elements all effect meaning. Through close analysis of various text types and literary forms, students will consider their own interpretations, as well as the critical perspectives of others, to explore how such positions are shaped by global influences, cultural belief systems and to negotiate meanings for texts.

What you should do before you read these texts:

Purchase a new composition notebook and begin with notes on *Americanah*. Prior to reading, complete research and take notes (1-2 pages) on the context of the work, giving attention to the ways in which **time and place matter**.

You might respond to questions such as:

1. *Where/when was the piece written/published?*
2. *What is the background of the author?*
3. *What was happening culturally, historically, regionally, or globally that the author may have taken interest in?*
4. *What global influences likely shaped the style of the author's work?*
5. *What was the state of affairs for the author?*
6. *What special interests did the author have?*

What you should do while you are reading:

Carefully read the text, annotating and taking notes as you read. Complete the following in your NB:

- 1) Make a list in your composition notebook of character names and roles in the novel. (Ifemelu, Obinze, Auntie Uju, and a short list of minor characters)
- 2) Then, track the following concepts/ideas: **identity, race and racism, romantic love, separation vs. connection, and cultural criticism**. To track these things, dedicate 2-4 pages in your notebook to each topic record quotes, page numbers, and commentary for each entry. **(Consider the two-column set up, with more space given to the commentary on the right. Shorten quotes and note page numbers to save space).**

- 3) In addition, please track and map some **literary element, stylistic device, or rhetorical technique featured in the book (setting, allusion, characterization, structure of time, tone)**. Find an element of style that you understand, recognized, and find interesting in the writing. Take notes on how Adichie utilizes this element of style (Think: what does Adichie *do* as a writer? **This should be something you are noticing throughout your reading of the work**).

How we will make use of the reading when we return to school:

Americanah will be a foundational text for the first semester, serving as a resource for class discussion, literary analysis, and an anchor text - from which we will draw examples- throughout IB coursework. Expect assessment of your notebook work, a written test, and the use of your notes to complete essays and assignments when we return.

Whom to contact for questions:

Dr. Cheryl Weaver

cweaver@buffaloschools.org



City Honors School
Summer Reading 2026



Entering Grade 12

IB English A: Language and Literature (HL)

What our ELA faculty expects you to read this summer:

Their Eyes Were Watching God

Zora Neale Hurston (First 100 pages, Chapters 1-10 ONLY)

If purchasing the book is not in the family budget this summer, please contact Dr. Ziolkowski who will work with Dr. Kresse to make the book available. You will be using this book during the school year.

[CLRI Guidance for Sensitive Language in Texts](#)

Why we expect you to complete this reading:

Our IB English A: Language and Literature (HL), Senior Level course aids students in the development of their ability to engage in close, detailed analysis of literary works, as well as building understanding of the techniques involved in literary criticism.

NOTE: Students may use *Their Eyes Were Watching God* as a work in the first formal IB assessment (the HL paper) completed in first semester or in the Paper Two final exam administered in May.

What you should do before you read this text:

Get to know the author. Begin by reading "About the Author: 'She Was the Party'" at the back of the book.

Address the following questions (in Learner Portfolio):

- What is important to know about the background of the author?
- Where/when was the piece written/published?
- What was happening culturally, historically, regionally or globally that probably influenced the writing of the essays?
- Research the following terms: frame story, dialect

Their Eyes Were Watching God is written in dialect, as well as Standard English. Consider listening to the novel or reading it aloud, for ease of understanding. <https://vimeo.com/323493265>

What you should do while you are reading:

Take notes! Taking notes in a journal-like fashion will give you a valuable resource for later class discussion and study.

Address (succinctly, but in full sentences) the points below:

1. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* has a "frame" structure (basically a story within a story). Why do you think Hurston chose this structure? Give your opinion: Is the structure effective? Why or why not?

2. Choose a symbol, some imagery, or other literary device you deem important, and be ready to articulate (communicate) its function in the work. Be ready to give at least **ONE** direct quotation/reference as support, with page number.
3. After completing the reading: Consider and be ready to give your opinion on the significance of the title of the work.
4. Please bring with you in September, one found object that relates to your reading of the book. This object will be used in a creative project within the first week of school.

IMPORTANT: Be sure to save your work! Information/notes you gather over the summer will be utilized at the beginning of the school year.

How we will make use of the reading when we return to school:

Their Eyes Were Watching God will be a foundational text for the year, serving as a resource for class discussion and literary analysis throughout the IB coursework. Assessments will include a check of your portfolio work, objective test, group work and individual project.

Whom to contact for questions:

Dr. Nicole Ziolkowski

nziolkowski@buffaloschools.org

Have a good summer!