



**AVOYELLES**  
— Parish Schools —

**8TH GRADE  
SUMMER READING  
2024**



# Avoyelles Parish Schools

221 Tunica Drive West  
Marksville, Louisiana 71351

Karen L. Tutor  
Superintendent  
Thelma J. Prater  
Assistant Superintendent

Dear Eighth Grade Students and Parents,

We aim to ignite a love of reading in all of our children in Avoyelles Parish. This summer we are sending free books home with your child to continue to grow our readers. Just reading 20 minutes a day will grow their vocabulary by 1.8 million words a year. The reading gift your child received today contains some of the books listed below. It contains some family activities that we hope you will dive into with your child. Use the activities in the journal to connect with what you are reading and engage in conversations with others. Invite your family and friends to read with you and talk about the topics in the books. **Your child is required to choose ONE book and return pg. 13 Word Workout and four additional activities from the reading journal upon arrival at school next year to be graded.**

Eighth Grade Summer Reading List
Class Act by Jerry Craft
Ground Zero by Alan Gratz
Show Me a Sign by Ann Clare LeZotte
King and the Dragon Flies by Kacen Callender
Parachute Kids by Betty C. Tang

Note: Some packets may have other Scholastic Books not on the list. They are still approved and can be used.

The MORE  
that you read,  
the MORE things  
you will know.  
The MORE that you  
Learn,  
the MORE places you'll go.



Have a great summer!

## **DEAR STUDENT,**

Good news! Your school has partnered with Scholastic to give you a great set of books to read over the summer. These books are a gift for you to enjoy, share with others, and keep. Inside this packet, you will find:

- ▶ Interesting and fun books
- ▶ Activity Sheets that go with each book
- ▶ A Summer Reading Journal

The goal of My Books Summer is for you, your family, and your friends to engage with books in a way that is fun and interactive. Reading can be so much more than the words on a page when you use the text as a springboard for conversations and ideas.

As you read, take a look at the Activity Sheet that goes with the book. Complete the different sections in any order and at any pace that is comfortable for you. Ask your family to read the Activity Sheets with you, and see whether you can turn a single book into an experience for you and your family.

The Summer Reading Journal is another way for you to get the most out of what you are reading. The journal can be used with any book in this packet or any book in general. Enjoy your summer, and happy reading!

## **DEAR FAMILY,**

Even though your child is now an independent reader, there are still many ways to enjoy literature together. Sometimes you may read a book together; other times, your child may read independently. You might simply scan the title and read the information on the back cover. Whether you read alongside your child or have conversations with him or her about the book, partnering together can make reading more fun and meaningful.

Use the Activity Sheets provided in the My Books Summer packet as a way to talk with your child about what they are reading. Share any connections that you may have to the stories, and ask your child questions about the books. Use the conversations that stem from these books as a window into your child's world. Enjoy the experience of connecting with your child in a way that promotes learning, conversation, and family engagement.

**HAPPY READING!**



## **Parachute Kids**

by Betty C. Tang

### **Before Reading**

Read the book's front and back covers. Are you familiar with the term "parachute kids"? If yes, what does it mean? If no, what do you think it might mean?

### **While Reading**

As you read, pause and think or write about these questions:

- After pages 1–59: What do Feng-Li, Jia-Xi, and Ke-Gāng's parents reveal in Los Angeles? How do the siblings feel about this? Why do they change their names? Why does Ma have to go back to Taiwan?
- After pages 60–134: How does Ke-Gāng deal with Simon bullying Jia-Xi?
- Why is Rebecca angry? How does Ke-Gāng's earlier defense of Jia-Xi against Simon backfire? How does Ke-Gāng feel about Pete? How does this affect his choices?
- How does Auntie and Uncle Tian's plan to move make Feng-Li and her siblings feel?
- After pages 135–205: How does Jia-Xi get scammed? How does this affect her? What leads Feng-Li to steal from Toyland?
- After pages 206–284: How does Ke-Gāng get hurt? What good comes out of Ke-Gāng being in the hospital?
- How does Feng-Li take matters into her own hands? What does Rebecca explain to Feng-Li? What happens—and what doesn't happen—when the family talks after Ma and Ba arrive?

### **After Reading**

What threat are the siblings living with? In what ways do they each try to cope with it throughout the book?

#### **Literacy Tip**

By the end, the siblings are finding their way, but Ke-Gāng is still struggling with revealing his sexual identity to his family. By leaving this unresolved, the author drives home the point that, in addition to issues of cultural identity, parachute kids also have to contend with the regular challenges of growing up.

## ***Parachute Kids***

by Betty C. Tang

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### **Write It**

Although there are some commonalities between what the siblings are dealing with at school, each is having a unique experience. In whatever format you choose, write about why going to school is complicated for Feng-Li, Ke-Gāng, and Jia-Xi. How do they each feel about school? What microaggressions and racist behaviors do they face? In what ways do they feel isolated at school? How do they help each other?



## **Show Me a Sign**

by Ann Clare LeZotte

### **Before Reading**

Study the cover image and think about the title. What does the cover reveal about the main character? What does the image suggest about the book's setting?

### **While Reading**

As you read, pause and think or write about these questions:

- After Prologue–Chapter 8: How does Mary explain how her mind works? What is the source of discord between the Vineyarders and the Wampanoag?
- Why is there a significant deaf community on Martha's Vineyard? What does Thomas say when Mary asks about his life before coming to the island?
- After Chapters 9–19: In what ways does Andrew demonstrate his lack of respect for the deaf community? What has brought him to the island?
- What do Mary and Nancy learn from spying on Andrew? What does Mary discover when she sneaks into Andrew's room? When Mary says to Thomas, "We are all Americans now," what does his response mean?
- How has Andrew "tipped the scale" between Mary's parents? Why does Mary finally tell her mother what happened with George?
- After Chapters 20–27: How does Andrew control and manipulate Mary? What does being in Boston make Mary wonder about her life on the Vineyard?
- After Chapters 28–37: How does Mary use Dr. Minot's journal to save herself? How does the kidnapping change Mary and Mary's mother?
- How does Miss Hammond's story help Mary envision her future?

### **After Reading**

What advice does Papa give Mary when she asks how to address racist behavior (pp. 255 and 256)? Do you agree with his advice? Why or why not?

#### **Literacy Tip**

The author cleverly uses the moment when Mary writes to Dr. Minot to reveal that Mary's intelligence and humanity surpasses that of her captors.

## **Show Me a Sign**

by Ann Clare LeZotte

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### **Write It**

"It is different in Boston,' I tell Ezra Brewer. 'They don't sign. They look down on us, like we're animals.' 'I've been there,' he signs. 'Watched all their lips flapping, and I don't believe they are a wick smarter than Vineyard folk. Take you. I've been watching you for all your years. You've got something in you, girlie.' 'Some people don't think that's good,' I sign. 'Pay them no mind,' he signs. 'I never do.'" (p. 239)

How and why does Ezra Brewer see Mary in a unique way? What does this mean to Mary? How does Ezra Brewer's view of her help her see herself more clearly? Explain the important role that Mary's friendship with Ezra Brewer plays in her life.



## Class Act

by Jerry Craft

### Before Reading

Have you heard the expression “You have to work twice as hard to be just as good”? To whom do you feel like this expression applies, and why?

### While Reading

As you read, take time to pause and think, talk, or write about these questions:

After reading Chapters 1–3: What kinds of racial microaggressions—instances of subtle or unintentional discrimination—does Drew experience at school?

After reading Chapters 4–6: How is the police officer unaware of—or unconcerned about—what Mr. Banks, Jordan, and Drew are feeling when he pulls them over?

After reading Chapters 7–10: Why do Drew and Jordan make up names for each other? Why does Drew ghost Liam after visiting his house?

After reading Chapters 11–13: What’s good about the S.O.C.K. group? What’s not so good about it? In what ways are Drew, Jordan, and Liam finally honest with each other in Chapter 12? What does this conversation lead to?

### After Reading

Jordan draws a comic called “Look What I DREW! A comic about my friend.” Write a brief summary of the topics that Jordan covers in these comics about Drew (pages 42–43, 52–53, 204–205, and 222–223). What do they have in common? What do they add to the narrative of the book?

### Literacy Tip:

In a graphic novel, illustrations contain details that help tell the story. For example, in the bottom panels on page 4, hearts appear on Jordan and Mr. Banks, signaling that they are sharing deep, private feelings about their dreams. On pages 95–96, as Drew is overwhelmed by feelings of isolation after meeting the Cardi de Academy students, he starts to vanish from the panels.



## Class Act

by Jerry Craft

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### Write About It

In graphic novel form, in a brief essay, or in a chart of your own design, explain why attending Riverdale Academy Day School is complicated for Drew and Jordan. What kinds of issues does it bring up for them about who they are and where they come from? How are Drew's feelings different from Jordan's? Why does Drew feel isolated at school and at home? In what ways do his friends in both places make the situation worse? In what ways do they make it better?

## King and the Dragonflies

by Kacen Callender

### Before Reading

Why would an author name a character “King”? What do you—the reader—expect from a character with this name?

### While Reading

As you read, take time to pause and think, discuss, or write about these questions:

After reading Chapters 1–5: Why does King think Khalid is a dragonfly? What is King’s connection to Sandy Sanders? Why did King tell Sandy they couldn’t be friends anymore? How does King’s father feel about gayness in the Black community?

After reading Chapters 6–9: How do King’s parents’ views about Sandy going missing differ from each other? How does Sandy compare homophobia to racism when he confronts King about breaking off their friendship? Why is it so difficult for King to say “I love you” to his father?

After reading Chapters 10–13: What did Khalid mean when he told King, before he died, “Black people aren’t allowed to be gay, King”? What effect did this have on King? How does King put himself at risk by going to see Sandy at his house, and what does he say there to Sandy’s father?

After reading Chapters 14–19: How does Breanna help King after King helps her with Darrell? How does King’s mom help King untangle Khalid’s beliefs about gayness?

### After Reading

Throughout the book, King is grieving but wants to hide his tears from others. What is the author’s message about crying, specifically regarding boys and men?

#### Literacy Tip:

The author most likely chose the name Khalid—a name of Arabic origin that means eternal or immortal—to reflect the fact that Khalid will live on and will always be with King, even though he has died.



## King and the Dragonflies

by Kacen Callender

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### Write About It

“There’s something you have to understand about being a man in this country. About being a Black man.... [This] country fears you. The world fears you. They always will.... They’re going to fear you, and some people—they’ll want to hurt you because they’re afraid.” (pages 101–102)

Why does King’s father say this to King? What is he talking about? In what ways does this quote resonate (produce an emotional response) with you, either from personal experience or from your reading? Explain the meaning of the quote in the context of the book and in your own experience.

## **Ground Zero**

by Alan Gatz

### **Before Reading**

Think about what you may already know about 9/11? About the war in Afghanistan? Are you aware of a connection between these events?

### **While Reading**

As you read, pause and think or write about these questions:

- After pages 1–73: Why is Brandon at Windows on the World? What is the Taliban? How does meeting the translator, Mariam, affect Reshmina?
- What do Baba, Reshmina, and Mariam explain when they argue with the American soldier? How does Brandon save the people in the elevator—and himself? How does Anaa explain the three different Afghanistans that she, Mor, and Reshmina know?
- After pages 74–158: What role do textbooks—printed by the United States—play in Pagoon wanting to join the Taliban?
- Why does Brandon’s father tell Brandon to get out of the building as fast as he can?
- After pages 159–221: Why does Reshmina run to the village?
- How are people trying to help each other in the North Tower? Why does Brandon’s dad want to talk to Richard?
- In what ways do Brandon and Reshmina blame themselves for their situations?
- After pages 222–310: How does Reshmina “win” the argument with Taz in the cave? How does Brandon’s knowledge of the mall prove useful?
- What does Reshmina mean when she says that the United States makes its own rules? What conclusion does Taz come to about the United States being “the good guys”?

### **After Reading**

How do Reshmina and Pagoon see the Taliban differently, and what does this do to their relationship?

#### **Literacy Tip**

The author creates a sense of urgency in the book by putting both of the main characters in situations where they must make life-or-death decisions for themselves and others.



## **Ground Zero**

by Alan Gratz

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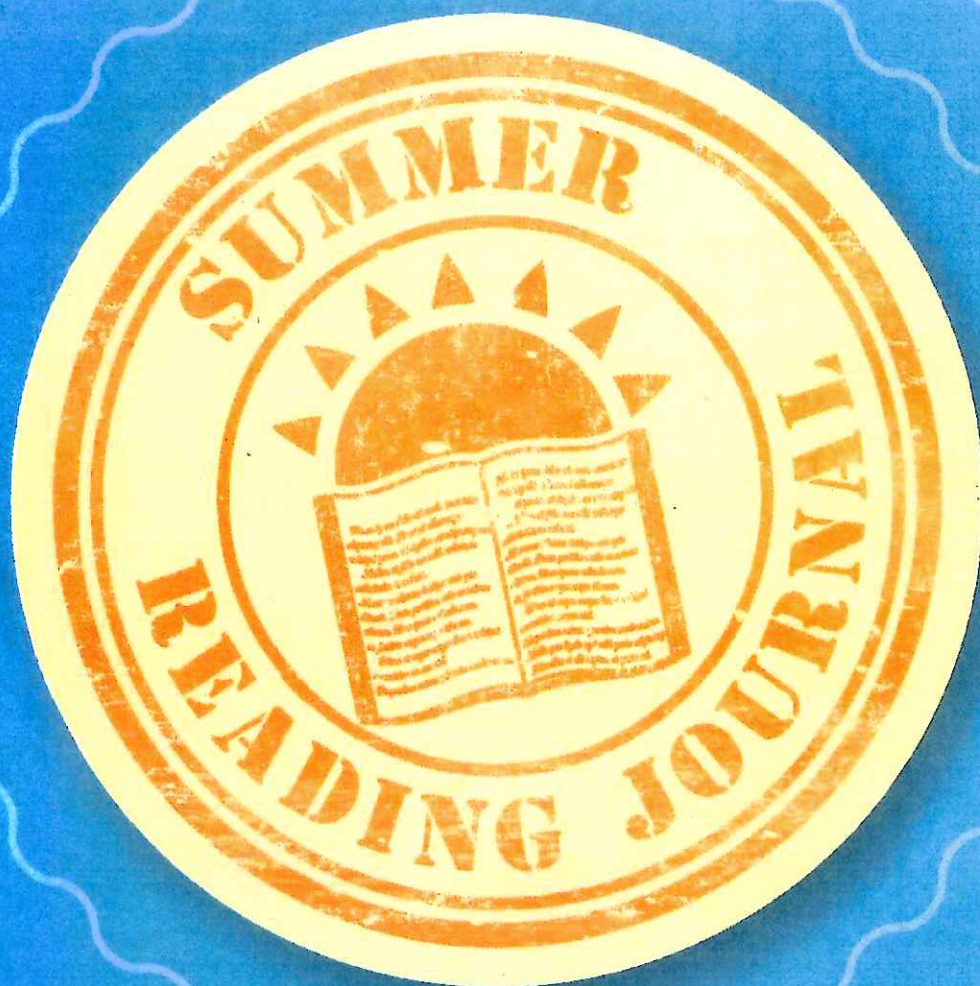
### **Write It**

The author uses a structure called “parallel narratives” to tell Brandon and Reshmina’s stories (which—although they occur 18 years apart—feel like they are happening at the same time). He connects the stories in ways big and small, through overarching themes, settings, and plot points. (For example, on p. 92, Brandon feels the “whoomp-whoomp” of an NYPD helicopter; several pages later, Reshmina feels the “whoomp-whoomp” of an American military helicopter.)

What similarities and points of connection can you find between the narratives? Why do you think the author wrote the book this way? What point is the author making about Brandon’s and Reshmina’s experiences, and about the human experience in general?



Grades  
6-12



 SCHOLASTIC



# Welcome to My BOOKS Summer

## Dear Student,

This Summer Reading Journal is intended to be used with books that you already have in your home or that you check out from your local library. Use the activities in the journal to connect with what you are reading and spark family conversations. Invite your family to read with you, and encourage them to talk about the topics in each book. Books can be amazing starting points for shared experiences of laughter, imagination, and insight! Use the following tips to enhance your reading experience.

**BEFORE READING:** It is important to think about what you are going to read before beginning. This can set the stage for a more powerful reading experience.

- **Investigate the front cover.** How does the title relate to the image on the cover? What do you think this book will be about?
- **Discuss what you know about the topic.** For nonfiction books, think about questions you hope are answered in the text.

**DURING READING:** Thinking about the subject matter and text while you are reading can lead to a deeper understanding of the book.

- **Read stories and sections of stories multiple times.** You can discover subtleties and deeper meanings in the text with each reading.
- For longer books, **pause at section or chapter breaks** to monitor your own understanding. Can you explain what has happened in the book? What do you think will happen next? Look up any words or ideas you may not know.
- Pay attention to **plot and character development** as you read. Think about how different characters change throughout the book and how events in the plot affect each character. Consider which events impact the resolution of the book.

- **Discuss the author's craft.** Did the author use a particular style to tell the story? Did the author use any literary devices that require you to think beyond the literal meaning of the text? What message is the author conveying with similes, metaphors, idioms, and irony? Think about why the author made these decisions.
- **Look beyond the text.** Look for photographs, illustrations, and images that provide deeper meaning to the story.

**AFTER READING:** The impact and experience of reading a book do not end when the last page is turned. Thinking about and discussing ideas from a book after reading add new levels of meaning and understanding.

- **Discuss personal connections.** Have you ever had an experience like the main character? Have you ever visited a place like the setting of the book? Imagine what it would be like to be a character in the story.
- **Find the common thread that ties the story together.** In fiction stories, look for a theme. What events support the theme? In nonfiction stories, look for the main idea. What evidence supports the main idea?
- **Think about how you feel about what you have read.** You may read stories about important social issues or injustices from the past. Sometimes these topics can be difficult to read or think about. It can be helpful to write down your reaction to a book after reading, or to discuss these feelings with a friend or family member.

Most importantly, make reading a thoughtful experience that extends beyond the pages of the book. Talk about what you are reading with family and friends. Think critically and creatively about what you have read, and enjoy the adventure of reading!

**Happy Reading,**  
**Your Friends at Scholastic**

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## Ready, Set, Text

Pretend you are texting with a friend. Answer each question to tell your pal about a book you just read.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

Read any good books lately? What?

Tell me about the main character. Would I like this person?

What was the tone of the story? How did it make you feel?

Should I read this book? Why or why not?

**EXTRA!**

On a separate sheet of paper, keep the pretend conversation going. Pose more questions about the book and answer them as texts.



# Decisions, Decisions, Decisions

There are usually crucial points in life that require people—whether real or fictional—to make important decisions. Choose two people or characters from a book you read, and write about a moment of decision for each of them. Then write about the outcomes of those decisions. Include page numbers to show where in the book you found the information you cite.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Character 1</b></p>	<p><b>Moment of Decision</b></p> <p>Page _____</p>	<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>Page _____</p>
<p><b>Character 2</b></p>	<p><b>Moment of Decision</b></p> <p>Page _____</p>	<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <p>Page _____</p>



Right or wrong decision? Choose one of the decisions. On another sheet of paper, write a paragraph telling whether you think the person or character made the right or wrong choice.

## The Way I See It . . .

Who's telling the story? The point of view—the perspective from which a story is told—affects how much is revealed about the characters and events in a story. Answer the questions below to explore the point of view of a book you read.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

1. Who's telling the story? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What evidence from the text can you cite that makes that clear? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why do you think the author chose to tell the story from that viewpoint? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now write a paragraph explaining how the story would be different if it were told from another character's perspective.





# Tweet, Tweet

Time to broadcast your opinion to the world! Compose four tweets to tell about a book you read, adding a fitting hashtag for each. Challenge yourself to make the tweets super exciting. And remember, the Twitter character limit is 140 characters.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the main character to a T:**



**Tell when and where the book is set:**



**Briefly recap the book's plot:**



**Blast a blurb that will make everyone on Earth want to read it:**



**EXTRA!**

Having fun? On a separate sheet of paper, compose more tweets about the same title.

# Incredible Quotation

Read any good biographies lately? Find two important quotations from a book you read. Then complete the chart below.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Quotation</b></p>          <p>Speaker _____ Page _____</p>	<p><b>This quotation made me think ...</b></p>          
<p><b>Quotation</b></p>          <p>Speaker _____ Page _____</p>	<p><b>This quotation made me think ...</b></p>          



# Find That Feeling

A book has the power to make you feel happy, sad, relieved, surprised—and every other emotion in between! Browse through a book you recently read and see if you can find an event that made you feel each emotion below. Describe the events in your own words and add page numbers for reference.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

I felt...	Event	Page(s)	Why I felt this way
happy			
sad			
relieved			
surprised			



What OTHER emotion did the book make you feel? On a separate sheet of paper, write about it.

## Switch Position

Pick an informational book you read in which the author took a stand and made his or her opinion known. First, write a paragraph in which you agree with the author. Be sure to back up your claims by citing information from the text. Then, switch your position and write a paragraph that disagrees with the author. When you're done, check the box to tell how you REALLY feel.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

Write a paragraph in which you **AGREE** with the author:

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Write a paragraph in which you **DISAGREE** with the author:

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Now tell how you REALLY feel:  I agree with the author.  I disagree.





# Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?

Imagine you could invite one of the characters in your book to dinner. Which character would you choose? Write four questions you would ask him or her.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

Character \_\_\_\_\_

Question 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 4: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In a short paragraph, explain why you chose the character you did.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



What food should be served at the dinner? On a separate sheet of paper, decide what your character would like to have for dinner and tell why.



# The Kind of Person Who...

How would you describe the characters in a book you read? Choose three characters and complete each of the sentences below.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the kind of person who ...  
character's name

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2. \_\_\_\_\_ is the kind of person who ...  
character's name

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3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the kind of person who ...  
character's name

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**EXTRA!**

On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph about the kind of person who would like to read the book you read and explain why.

# Word Workout

Give your vocabulary a workout! Keep track of the BEST new words you learned from books this summer.

	Word	Definition
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		



Love words? Start a word journal in which you write down all your favorites.



# My Reading Log

Time to kick back and read! Record the titles and genres of each new book you devour. Then rate it with one to five stars.

	Title of Book	Fiction or Nonfiction	How I Felt About It
1			★ ★ ★ ★ ★
2			★ ★ ★ ★ ★
3			★ ★ ★ ★ ★
4			★ ★ ★ ★ ★
5			★ ★ ★ ★ ★
6			★ ★ ★ ★ ★
7			★ ★ ★ ★ ★
8			★ ★ ★ ★ ★
9			★ ★ ★ ★ ★
10			★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grades 6-12

**My BOOKS**  
Summer

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