



Dear Parents,

Reading is one of the most important skills there is. Indeed, it is the foundation of almost all future learning for your child at Hilldale School and beyond. Families who encourage daily reading and writing will have more successful children. Your support at home is essential!

Reading experts note that most young readers suffer a back slide in reading skills during the summer down time. But that need not be the case! Families can make reading a priority during the summer months. You can help your child succeed by the positive attitude you take toward reading to your child and hearing him/her read to you, by the expressive voice intonation you use, by questioning about what you and your child have read and about what your child can see in a book's pictures, and by the encouragement you express to your child as they try out their reading in a variety of venues. Please help to make reading a priority during the coming summer months!

Every Hilldale student is encouraged to read as much as possible during the summer vacation. A list of recommended titles follows, and each student is **required** to independently read **at least three books** from this list. One of them is a required book for all, so that we can start the year off right by discussing the story during the opening days of school. You may supplement the selections with other books that you and your child may find and enjoy.

In addition to reading the required reading book: Across Five Aprils, a student entering sixth, seventh, or eighth grade should keep a neat, well-written record of two additional books (chosen from the list below) by writing a short book report using the attached sheet. These are to be handed in to the teacher on the first day of school, and they will be graded. Therefore, students have to read three books (one of which has to be Across Five Aprils) and write two book reports on any two other books listed below. We encourage you to read an historical novel as one of your two choice novels, but we are not requiring it. Doing so would provide more depth and understanding to the curriculum students will encounter next year. Historical novels are marked with an asterisk. Enjoy a great summer of reading!

Summer Reading List—Incoming Sixth-Seventh-Eighth Grade  
Overall Themes: Social Activism, Civic Duty  
Time Period Theme: Civil War

Required for all:

Across Five Aprils

Irene Hunt

Choices:

*Good Brother, Bad Brother: Story of Edwin Booth & John Wilkes Booth	James Cross Giblin
*With Every Drop of Blood	James Collier & Christopher Collier
*Annie Between the States	L.M. Elliott
*We Were There Too: Young People in U.S. History	Phillip Hoose
*The Cay	Theodore Taylor
*Let the Circle Be Unbroken	Mildred Taylor
Gifted	Beth Evangelista
A Million Thanks	Shauna Fleming
Nothing But the Truth	Avi
Speak	Laurie Halse Anderson
I Heard the Owl Call My Name	Margaret Craven
The Highest Tide	Jim Lynch
Hoot	Carl Hiassen
The Effects of Gamma Rays on Man in the Moon Marigolds	Paul Zindel
Fire on the Mountain	John MacLean