

History With a Dash of Fiction

All We Have Left—a 2019 Nutmeg Nominee

Wendy Mills

Muslim teen Alia is trapped in the World Trade Center as chaos descends on September 11, 2001. Fifteen years later, Jesse is doing community service as punishment for hateful graffiti. Her brother died in the Twin Towers, and her family was shattered. Alternating chapters tell the girls' stories, eventually connecting them across time.

Anthem

Deborah Wiles

The remarkable story of two cousins who must take a road trip across American in 1969 in order to let a teen know he's been drafted to fight in Vietnam. Full of photos, music, and figures of the time, this is the masterful story of what it's like to be young and American in troubled times.

Also *Countdown & Revolution*.

Lincoln's Grave Robbers

Steve Sheinkin

The plan: grab Lincoln's body from its Springfield tomb, stash it in the sand dunes near Lake Michigan, and demand, as a ransom, the release of Ben Boyd --and \$200,000 in cash. Follow the story of the conspirators, the Secret Service agents on their trail, and the undercover agent moving back and forth between the two groups.

The Night Diary—a 2021 Nutmeg Nominee

Veera Hiranandani

Nisha was ripped away from all she had ever known during India's 1947 Partition. Nisha, and her family have just days to leave their home. In a series of diary entries she describes her difficult journey to a new India. Nisha searches to find her identity after leaving everything behind.

A Place to Belong

Cynthia Kadohata

World War II has ended and 12-year-old Hanako, her five-year old brother Akira, and their American-born parents have spent the past four years imprisoned in a series of internment camps. Hana's parents accept an offer from the U.S. government to renounce their American citizenship and expatriate to Japan. Their plan is to live with Hanako's father's parents, poor tenant farmers

Under a Painted Sky

Stacey Lee

All Samantha wanted was to move back to New York and pursue her music, which was difficult enough being a Chinese girl in Missouri, 1849. Then her fate takes a turn for the worse after a tragic accident leaves her with nothing and she breaks the law in self-defense. With help from Annamae, a runaway slave she met at the scene of her crime, the two flee town for the unknown frontier. But life on the Oregon Trail is unsafe for two girls. They disguise themselves as Sammy and Andy, two boys heading for the California gold rush.

Student Recommendations!

Sophie Suggests: The Sun is Also a Star

Nicola Yoon

This is a story about love at first sight...but it isn't cringy or stereotypical like a lot of romance is. It is about the powerful emotions you get from someone special.

Abbie Suggests: The Honest Truth

Dan Gemeinhart

You have GOT to read *The Honest Truth!* It will bring you on a fantastic journey with ups and downs, highs and lows, but most of all Mark's story. Survival and heartwarming love flooded the book, so what are you waiting for?! Get reading!

Kyler Suggests: Swing

Kwame Alexander

Want to know what to read next? The answer is the in-verse book, *Swing!* This book tells the story of two best friends just attempting to survive the whirlwind of romance, baseball, and a hint of mystery. I Highly recommend it!

Cover Art by Maya Mastroianni



Rochambeau & Memorial

Middle Schools

Entering Grades 7 & 8

2020

Summer Literacy Suggestions

Dear Students Entering Seventh & Eighth Grades:

Welcome to Rochambeau & Memorial Middle Schools' 2020 Summer Literacy Program! One of our exciting school goals is to support you in continuing your journey toward becoming lifelong readers and writers. Reading and writing enrich life in so many ways. They help you create ideas, imagine possibilities, challenge positions, learn information, and connect to a variety of people and places. Of course they both are a lot of fun, too! This summer, your goal is to read **at least three books** and to try writing down some of your ideas. The following pages have some great suggestions, but your selections and ideas can come from anywhere. You don't need to read books from this list; feel free to search the websites, browse bookshelves or the library and find your own choices. In the fall, we will be asking you to do two things:

1. Share a list of the books you most enjoyed reading and a sample of your summer writing.
2. Participate in a Summer Literacy activity in your English/ELA class. This may be in the form of a discussion or book review.

Ultimately we hope that you find moments in your day to read and write this summer, that you discuss your thoughts, ideas and books with family members and friends and create an important place in your life for reading and writing.

Sincerely,
Rochambeau & Memorial's
Staff of Readers and Writers

On the web

Borrow an audio book or eBook:

Audible Stories: Free for Kids, stories.audible.com/start-listen

National Emergency Library, archive.org offers a huge selection of downloadable eBooks for loan.

Idea Starters:

American Library Association, <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/bookawards/booklists/members>

Young adult book lists ranging from Quick Picks for the Reluctant Young Reader to Popular Paperbacks.

Guysread.com Web-based literacy program for boys. Books guys want to read.

Nerdy Book Club nerdybookclub.wordpress.com

Newbery Medal Winners, 1922-present, ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberymedal

Nutmeg Book Award, nutmegaward.org Nutmeg nominees & past winners.

Sharing Our Notebooks, sharingournotebooks.amylv.com/p/summer-notebooking-try-it.html

Discovery: the Real Stuff

Bubonic Panic: When Plague Invaded America

Gail Jarrow

In 1900, a man in San Francisco's Chinatown is infected with bubonic plague, but the government won't quarantine because they don't want to limit growth of the state. Jarrow tracks the outbreak and response.

Bugged: How Insects Have Changed History

Sarah Albee

There are about ten quintillion insects in the world—and some of them have affected human history in tremendous ways! For as long as humans have been on earth, we've co-existed with insects . . . for better or for worse. This book is told with fun and informative graphics.

Courage Has No Color

Tanya Lee Stone

The True Story of the Triple Nickels: America's First Black Paratroopers.

Girl Code: Going Viral and Getting it Done

Andrea Gonzales

The story of two teenage tech phenoms who met at Girls Who Code summer camp, teamed up to create a viral video game, and ended up becoming world famous. The book also includes bonus content to help you start coding!

We Will Not Be Silent

Russell Freedman

The story of the White Rose Student Resistance Movement that defied Hitler. Hans and Sophie belonged to the Hitler youth, but later, with a few friends, formed the White Rose, a campaign of active resistance to Hitler and the Nazis.

Reading in Fun Formats

Awkward—a 2019 Nutmeg Winner

Svetlana Chmakova

A graphic novel. How to Survive Middle School: #1 Don't get noticed by the mean kids. #2

Seek out groups with similar interests and join them. On her first day at her new school, Penelope-Peppi-Torres reminds herself of these basics. But before she knows it, she's already broken the first rule, and the mean kids start calling her names...now what does she do? **Also Brave, Crush**

Guts

Raina Telgemeier

Raina has a terrible upset stomach. At school, she's dealing with the usual highs and lows: friends, not-friends. It soon becomes clear that Raina's tummy trouble isn't going away... and it coincides with her worries about food, school, and changing friendships. What's going on?

How They Croaked: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous

Georgia Bragg

Over the course of history men and women have lived and died. In fact, getting sick and dying can be a big, ugly mess—especially before the modern medical care that we all enjoy today. **Also How They Choked: Failures, Flops & Flaws of the Awfully Famous**

Olympians—a series

George O'Conner

A graphic novel series based on mythology. The gods interfere in the lives of the humans and the demi-gods as we watch the story unfold. **Odysseus: Escaping Poseidon's Curse; Perseus: The Hunt for Medusa's Head; The Trojan Horse: The fall of Troy; Hercules: The Twelve Labors; Apollo: The Brilliant One; Ares: Bringer of War.**

Pumpkin Heads

Rainbow Rowell

A tender and hilarious story, told in a graphic novel, about two irresistible teens discovering what it means to leave behind a place—and a person—with no regrets.

Spill Zone

Scott Westerfield

A graphic novel. Three years ago an event destroyed a small city, forever changing reality within its borders. Uncanny manifestations and lethal dangers now await anyone who enters the Spill Zone. The Spill claimed Addison's parents and scarred her little sister, Lexa, who hasn't spoken since. Addison provides for her sister by photographing the Zone's twisted attractions on illicit midnight rides. Art collectors pay top dollar for these bizarre images, but getting close enough for the perfect shot can mean death—or worse...

Inspired by True Life Experiences

The 57 Bus

Dashka Slater

One teenager in a skirt. One teenager with a lighter. One moment that changes both their lives forever. What happens next, as the victim, the perpetrator and the community struggle to come to terms with their sadness and shock, is a story of recovery, reconciliation, forgiveness and, above all, hope.

Bitter Side of Sweet—a 2019 Nutmeg Nominee

Tara Sullivan

Fifteen-year-old Amadou counts the things that matter. For two years what has mattered are the number of cacao pods he and his younger brother, Seydou, can chop down in a day. The higher the number the safer they are. The higher the number, the closer they are to paying off their debt and returning home. Maybe. The problem is Amadou doesn't know how much he and Seydou owe, and the bosses won't tell him.

Bound by Ice

Sandra & Rich Wallace

G. W. De Long and the crew of the USS Jeannette departed San Francisco in the summer of 1879, hoping to find a route to the North Pole. However, in mid-September the ship became locked in ice north of Siberia and drifted for nearly two years before it was crushed by ice and sank. De Long and his men escaped the ship and began a treacherous journey in extreme polar conditions in an attempt to reach civilization.

Ten Days a Madwoman

Deborah Noyes

The Daring Life and Turbulent Times of the Original "Girl" Reporter, Nellie Bly. Tells all of her daring and era challenging exploits, including her coverage of a NY asylum and the injustice there.

Exciting Sports Authors

The Final Four—2015 *Nutmeg Nominee*

It's the semifinal game of March Madness—as the teams race to find victory, the stories of how each player arrived there are revealed.

Paul Volponi

Throwing Strikes: The Quest for the Perfect Knuckleball

R.A. Dickey

An inspiring true story about one of the most respected pitchers in the game—R.A. is proof that with hard work and devotion, anyone can overcome whatever life throws at him.

John Feinstein

Triple Threat—a series: *The Walk On*

The Sports Beat Series: *Last Shot: Mystery at the Final Four, Vanishing Act: Mystery at the US Open, Cover-Up: Mystery at the Super Bowl, Change-Up: Mystery at the World Series, The Rivalry: Mystery at the Army-Navy Game.*

Tim Green

Football Genius Series: *Football Genius, Football Hero, Football Champ, The Big Time, Deep Zone and Perfect Season.*

Baseball Great Series: *Baseball Great, Best of the Best, Pinch Hit and Rivals.*

Other Novels: *Unstoppable, Pinch Hit, Force Out, New Kid, Lost Boy, and Left Out.*

Dan Gutman

The Baseball Card Adventures—a series: *Babe & Me, Honus & Me, Jackie & Me, Shoeless Joe & Me, Mickey & Me, Ted & Me, Willie & Me, Satch & Me, Roberto & Me, Ray & Me, Abner & Me, Jim & Me.*

Million Dollar series: *Million Dollar Catch, Million Dollar Kick, Million Dollar Putt, Million Dollar Shot, Million Dollar Strike, Million Dollar Goal.*

Other Books: *Casey Back at Bat, Gymnastics: the Trials, the Triumph, the Truth* (nonfiction).

Mike Lupica

Game Changers Series: *Game Changers, Play Makers, and Heavy Hitters.*

Comeback Kid Series: *Two-Minute Drill, Hot Hand, Safe at Home, Long Shot and Shoot Out.*

Other Novels: *Travel Team, Summer Ball* (sequel). *True Legend, Hero, Underdogs, Million-Dollar Throw, Batboy, Miracle on 49th Street, The Big Field, QB1, Fast Break, and Last Man Out.*

Mystery

FunJungle: Belly Up— a series

12 year-old Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt Fitzroy has murder on his hands and trouble on his tail. He believes that Henry, the hippopotamus at the brand-new FunJungle, has been murdered. The zoo's top brass claim the hippo went belly up the natural way, but Teddy and his feisty friend have other ideas. The deeper Teddy and Summer dig, the more danger they're in! ***Poached, Big Game, & Panda-Monium.***

Stuart Gibbs

Count All Her Bones—a series

Six months ago, Griffin Sawyer meant to steal a car, but he never meant to steal the girl asleep in the backseat. Panicked, he took her home. His father, Roy, decided to hold Cheyenne for ransom. Griffin helped her escape, and now Roy is awaiting trial. As they prepare to testify, Griffin and Cheyenne reconnect and make plans to meet. But the plan goes wrong...**Also *Girl Stolen***

April Henry

The Lie Tree

In the 1870's, Faith dreams of being a scientist. Her father's reputation is in ruins, and after some-one murders him, she discovers his secret—a tree that bears fruit only when she whispers a lie to it. The fruit of the tree, when eaten delivers hidden truth. A dark, suspenseful mystery.

Frances Hardinge

Serafina and the Black Cloak

In 1899, 12 year-old Serafina lives with her father in the basement of the Vanderbilts' estate. When children begin disappearing, she and Braeden Vanderbilt decide to solve the mystery, and in the process Serafina discovers secrets of her past. **Also ...*Twisted Shaft* and ...*Splintered Heart.***

Robert Beatty

Authors of Adventure

The Blackthorne Key

In the 1600s, England, Christopher Rowe, the apprentice to a Master Apothecary, tries to solve the murder of his master with the help of his loyal best friend. Codes, ciphers, chemistry and humor add to the mystery.

Kevin Sands

Lockwood & Co.: The Screaming Staircase—a series

The British Isles have become plagued by ghostly Visitors and three teens have formed a company to help rid them from the country—for a fee. **Also *The Whispering Skull, The Hollow Boy, Creeping Shadow, & The Empty Grave.***

Jonathan Stroud

Loot: How to Steal a Fortune—a 2019 *Nutmeg Nominee*

In his dying words, the notorious cat burglar tells his son to, "Find jewels." But March learns that his father isn't talking about hidden loot. He's talking about Jules, the twin sister March never knew he had. Together they are led to hunt for a famous stolen fortune. **Also *Sting.***

Jude Watson

Mickey Bolitar, Book Three: Found

It's been eight months since Mickey Bolitar witnessed the shocking, tragic death of his father. It's now been 8 months of lies, dark secrets, and unanswered questions. While he desperately wants answers, Mickey's sophomore year of high school brings on a whole new set of troubles. Action-packed series. Also, **Mickey Bolitar Book One, *Shelter*, and Book Two, *Seconds Away.***

Harlan Coben

Stone Rider

Fifteen-year-old Adam Stone inherited his biomechanical bike from his brother, who inherited it from his father. His family has escaped working in the mines by riding the race circuit, providing entertainment for the Watchers. The Blackwater Trail will be his first race, and unlike most of the other racers who ride with fellow gang members, Adam plans to do it alone.

David Hofmeyr

Taste of Monsters

1888 London, when Evelyn is disfigured from her work at the match factory, she gets hired as a maid for Joseph, the “Elephant Man”, while Jack the Ripper roams the streets. Ghosts of the victims appear and Evelyn and Joseph must find a way to help them move on. Creepy historical fiction.

Matthew Kirby

Fantasy

Five Kingdoms Series Book One, Sky Raiders

Written by the author of the Fablehaven & Beyonders series!

Cole was just trying to have a fun time with his friends on Halloween. But when a spooky haunted house turns out to be a portal to something much creepier, Cole finds himself on an adventure on a whole different level. Also, ***Rogue Night, Crystal Keepers, & Death Weavers.***

Brandon Mull

The Girl from Everywhere

16-year-old Nix has sailed across the globe and through centuries aboard her time-traveling father's ship as he tries to stop her mother's death. Nix worries how this might change her own birth.

Heidi Heilig

Heartless

Ever wonder how the Queen of Hearts of *Alice in Wonderland* became so heartless? Here is the story that tells all. Catherine just wanted to be a baker, but she falls in love with a jester and heart-break follows.

Marissa Meyer

Magisterium: The Iron Trial—a 2017 *Nutmeg & series*

Despite his father's warnings to stay away, Callum and his friends are heading deep into the magical world where twisted, sinister adventures and enemies await them. **Also *The Copper Gauntlet, The Bronze Key, & The Silver Mask.***

Black & Clare

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children--a series

A haunting and out-of-the-ordinary read--Jacob finds children--alive and well--who locals say were all killed decades ago. Enjoy: ***Hollow City & Library of Lost Souls.***

Ransom Riggs

Labyrinth Lost—a 2019 *Nutmeg Nominee*

Alex is a bruja, the most powerful witch in a generation...and she hates magic. At her Deathday celebration, Alex performs a spell to rid herself of her power. But it backfires. Her whole family vanishes into thin air, leaving her alone with Nova, a brujo boy she's not sure she can trust, but who may be Alex's only chance at saving her family.

Zoraida Cordoba

Great Middle School Stories of Growing Up

Click'd—a 2020 Nutmeg Nominee

Tamara Ireland Stone
Allie's new app CLICK'D turns out to be a huge hit and watching her app go viral is amazing! But when she discovers a glitch that threatens to expose everyone's secrets, she has to figure out how to make things right. Can Allie fix her app and win back her friends in time?

The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora—a 2021 Nutmeg Nominee **Pablo Cartaya**

Summer vacation life in Miami is simple for thirteen year old Arturo: play ball, relax with Grandma's delicious cooking, and work a few shifts washing dishes at his family's restaurant. When a slick new developer comes to town, everything gets complicated quickly. Now all he has to do is save the restaurant, unite the town, and win the girl. There's no way he can fail...

Ghost—a 2019 Nutmeg Winner

Jason Reynolds
Castle Crenshaw, a.k.a. Ghost, has been running ever since he and his mom escaped from his father's violent anger. After Ghost inadvertently earns a spot on an elite track team, his mother agrees to let him join, but only if he can stay out of trouble...IF he can... **Also Patina, Sunny, Lu.**

I am Princess X—a 2018 Nutmeg Nominee

Cherie Priest
Best friends Libby and May invented Princess X when they were in elementary school. May is now 16 and Libby has supposedly been dead for years. But now May is seeing stickers with drawings of Princess X all over Seattle. Could Libby still be alive?

Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World—2021 Nutmeg Nominee **Ashley Herring Blake**

Twelve year-old Ivy keeps her deepest secret in her notebook...which gets lost in the chaos when her home is leveled by a tornado. As her family is picking up the pieces, she's trying to put her identity together. When Ivy meets a peculiar girl, she feels a connection, but she's afraid of her feelings. Ivy has to figure out who she is and face the world after destruction.

Lily and Dunkin—a 2019 Nutmeg Nominee

Donna Geppart
Lily was born in a boy's body and wants to come out. Dunkin's just moved and struggles with the loss of his dad. The two meet and everything changes. Thoughtful and sensitive.

Look Both Ways

Jason Reynolds
Ten tales (one per block) about what happens after the dismissal bell rings, and brilliantly weaves them into one wickedly funny, piercingly poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life.

New Kid—a 2021 Nutmeg Nominee

Jerry Craft
7th grader Jordan Banks really wants to attend Art School, but his parents have other plans for him: going to a prestigious private school, where he faces being one of the only students of color. Can the new kid find his place in his new school culture while staying true to himself?
A Graphic Novel

The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise

Dan Gemeinhart
Coyote hasn't been home in all that time, but when she learns that the park in her old neighborhood is being demolished—the very same park where she, her mom, and her sisters buried a treasured memory box—she devises an elaborate plan to get her dad to drive 3,600 miles back to Washington state in four days...without him realizing it.

The Stars Beneath Our Feet—a 2021 Nutmeg Nominee

David B. Moore
It's been a year since Lolly's older brother was shot on 125th Street. In Harlem, your friends can provide protection but they can also get you killed. Lolly has always found an escape in designing fantasy Lego worlds. But now the real world is calling. Will the streets that claimed his brother claim Lolly too?

What to Say Next

Julie Buxbaum
When an unlikely friendship is sparked between relatively popular Kit Lowell and socially isolated David Drucker, everyone is surprised, most of all Kit and David. Kit appreciates David's blunt honesty—in fact, she finds it bizarrely refreshing. David welcomes Kit's attention and her inquisitive nature. When she asks for his help figuring out the how and why of her dad's tragic car accident, David is all in. But neither of them can predict what they'll find.

Science Fiction—Will life look like this in the future?

The Accelerati Trilogy

Shusterman & Elfman
Fans of intrigue, action, humor, and nonstop surprises are guaranteed a read unlike any other. A story of teenagers versus mad scientists. **Tesla's Attic, Edison's Alley & Hawking's Hallway.**

Atlantia

Ally Condie
For as long as she can remember, Rio has dreamed of the sand and sky Above—of life beyond her underwater city of Atlantia. But in a single moment, all Rio's hopes for the future are shattered when her twin sister, Bay, makes an unexpected choice, stranding Rio Below. Alone, ripped away from the last person who knew Rio's true self—and the powerful siren voice she has long silenced—she has nothing left to lose.

The Fifth Wave—a trilogy

Rick Yancey
Cassie is one of the very few people left alive on Earth. Aliens sent waves of destructive forces to eradicate humans, and Cassie must now fight back. A compelling story full of violent twists and turns, along with nonstop action. **Also The Infinite Sea & The Last Star.**

Genius, The Game

Leopoldo Gout
The Game: Get ready for Zero Hour as 200 geniuses from around the world go head to head in a competition hand-devised by India's youngest CEO and visionary. The stakes are higher than you can imagine. Like life & death. Welcome to the revolution—Get ready to run. **Also Genius The Con.**

Lunar Chronicles—a 2016 Nutmeg Nominee

Marissa Meyer
In this futuristic retelling of Cinderella, Cinder is both a gifted mechanic and a cyborg, living on a plague-ravaged Earth that is threatened by a ruthless lunar queen. She becomes involved with a prince and must uncover secrets about her past in order to protect the fate of the world. **Cinder, Scarlet, Cress, Winter and companion novels: Fairest & Stars Above.**

Nyxia—a 2021 Nutmeg Nominee

Scott Reintgen
In a not-too-distant future where corporations control space exploration, a group of ten teenagers compete for coveted jobs on a newly discovered planet. Emmett Atwater has everything to gain and nothing to lose—except his life. This book is 'Hunger Games' meets 'Ready Player One,' in space.

The Six—a 2019 Nutmeg Nominee

Mark Alpert
Adam's muscular dystrophy has stolen his mobility, his friends, and in less than a year it will take his life. Virtual reality games are Adam's only escape from his wheelchair. In his alternate world, he can defeat anyone. Running, jumping, scoring touchdowns: Adam is always the hero. Then an artificial intelligence program hacks into Adam's game. Created by Adam's computer-genius father, Sigma has gone rogue, threatening to kill Adam—and the entire human race. **Also The Siege & The Silence.**

Sea of Ink and Gold—a series

Traci Chee
Sefia knows what it means to survive. After her father is brutally murdered, she flees into the wilderness with her aunt Nin, who teaches her to hunt, track, and steal. But when Nin is kidnapped, leaving Sefia completely alone, none of her survival skills can help her discover where Nin's been taken, or if she's even alive. Sefia sets out to rescue her aunt and find out what really happened the day her father was killed—and punish the people responsible. **The Reader & The Speaker.**

War Cross

Marie Lu
Emika Chen is a bounty hunter living in a futuristic New York City. She has a juvenile record and spent time in the foster care system after her father died. She is struggling to pay her bills, and is banking on getting enough from the next bounty to settle up with her landlord. In the midst of her troubles, Emika gets involved in Warcross, a virtual reality video game played by nearly everyone. Players put on virtual reality glasses and can play others, build their own worlds, and keep memories there. When Emika tries stealing a valuable item in the opening ceremony, she glitches into the game and finds immediate fame.

Sample Notebook Entrees

Summer Camp Talent Show

"Come on. Don't be nervous. We signed up for the talent show because we have talent!" Sarah laughed. But inside, I definitely didn't feel like I had talent.

"Okay, Jill. This is simple. Just one note after the other. Super easy. Just 34 notes. 34 long dreadful notes." They were spinning through my head like a windmill in a tornado. I wasn't sure if I was excited or I if just wanted to run away. It was too late.

"And next up we have Jill and Sarah playing the flute!" The announcer boomed.

I heard screams and cheers. Then clapping. I heard it, but I couldn't see it. The lights burned into my pupils.

"Ready?" Sarah asked.

"More than ever," I said sarcastically.

"One, two, three," she whispered.

Note after note, the sound of the flute duet we were playing pulled me into a trance. I forgot about the 400 people watching. I forgot about everything but the music. I smiled.

"Yes," I whispered to myself. "I did it"

Observing Nature

I saw a family of birds today. They didn't see me watching. The dad perched at the edge of the nest, poking at the baby birds. The momma bird was in the grass. They called back and forth to each other. Dad poked some more. Then one of those babies climbed up to the edge of the nest and called out to his mom. He leaned and stretched and then, WOW! He jumped and soared to the grass below to stand next to his mom. WOW! Such beauty in nature!

Practicing the Piano

Like anything you want to be good at, playing piano takes practice - a lot of practice. There just isn't any way around this. One thing that is super important to practice is scales. Ideally, you've got a metronome next to the piano that is easily set to different tempos. Set the tempo to a speed at which you can comfortably practice scales with both hands at least two octaves; then see-- are you able to do it? If you're playing jazz, it is important to the set the metronome to beats two and four-- not one and three. Practicing with the beats set to offbeats will increase your "feel" for swing, a common jazz style.

Keep Thinking & Writing

...All Summer Long!

If I waited
for perfection,
I would never write
A WORD.

-Margaret Atwood

Sometimes it is hard to get started with writing!

If you feel stuck, or want great ideas for starting points, check out these possibilities from the website *Sharing Our Notebooks*.

Some of these might sound great to you, while others might not. Pick and choose the ones that inspire you to get writing!

Take 15 minutes at the end of each day to jot down answers to these 3 questions: What surprised you today? What moved or touched you? What inspired you?

Go to a public place and write about what you see. Don't worry about what people are thinking, just observe and record.

You're stuck in traffic at a long red light or in a construction zone. Look around you. Who else is on the road? Observe the license plates. Often, they tell us a lot about the person inside the car. Try deciphering the code on the plate, and then write a brief character sketch about the person in the car. Who are they? Where are they going? What are they hiding? What are they famous for? What makes them unique, important, or unusual?

Begin with the day's weather! Go out in the weather and write about it. Poems, short phrases, longer paragraphs...what can you do with your words (and maybe illustrations, too!) to bring to life all the wonders the weather has to offer?

Stick things into your notebook: tickets, receipts, restaurant bills, pictures cut from a brochure, any of the little paper things around you when you go out in public.

Tape one of these down onto a page, and write a few notes about what you were doing, who was with you, what you were thinking about, why you were there.

So often we are asked, especially in school, to write about what we "love"-- a favorite place, a beloved pet, etc. Sometimes, thinking about things we don't love--or, better yet, things we wished we loved, but don't--provides just as much, if not more, fodder for writing. So, what do you have to say about those things you don't love? Or some things you wish you loved?

Pay attention to the words that others say. Listen to interesting phrases, and gather them into your own notebook. You might sit in a public place and listen for interesting snips of stranger-conversation or you might copy down words spoken by those you know. Keep these in your own notebook-- they may come in handy for future projects.

Sometimes all we have to do is walk about and ideas for writing will find us. Try taking a walk about your home or your backyard. Explore your world, and write what you notice. You never know what will turn up to write about!

Do you have a collection of any sort? Objects from nature like shells, or other kinds of objects like Pokemon cards?

Choose an object and write its story.

Where were you? Who were you with? What were you doing? What were you feeling?

For more ideas, visit the website:

<http://www.sharingournotebooks.amylv.com/p/summer-notebooking-try-it.html>

With special thanks to Ann, Greg, Stacey, Gretta, Shawna, Melanie, Kiesha, Elizabeth and Gretchen for their suggestions.