



West Boylston Middle/High School

Middle Summer Reading List 2024

Theme: Kindness and Empathy

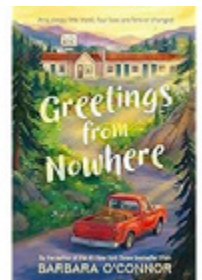
Directions: Please choose one book from the list and complete the attached reading reflection worksheet.

Return the completed paper to your ELA teacher during the first week of school.

Fiction

Greetings from Nowhere by Barbara O'Connor

Aggie isn't expecting visitors at the Sleepy Time Motel in the Great Smoky Mountains. Since her husband died, she has been all alone with her cat, Ugly, and keeping up with the bills and repairs has become next to impossible. The pool is empty, the garden is overgrown, and not a soul has come to stay in nearly three months. When she reluctantly places a For Sale ad in the newspaper, Aggie doesn't know that Kirby and his mom will need a room when their car breaks down on the way to Kirby's new reform school. Or that Loretta and her parents will arrive in her dad's plumbing company van on a trip meant to honor the memory of Loretta's birth mother. Or that Clyde Dover will answer the For Sale ad in such a hurry and move in with his daughter, Willow, looking for a brand-new life to replace the one that was fractured when Willow's mom left. Perhaps the biggest surprise of all is that Aggie and her guests find just the friends they need at the shabby motel in the middle of nowhere.



One for the Murphys by Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Carley uses humor and street smarts to keep her emotional walls high and thick. But the day she becomes a foster child and moves in with the Murphys, she's blindsided. This loving, bustling family shows Carley the stable family life she never thought existed, and she feels like an alien in their cookie-cutter-perfect household. Despite her resistance, the Murphys eventually show her what it feels like to belong--until her mother wants her back and Carley has to decide where and how to live. She's not really a Murphy, but the gifts they've given her have opened up a new future.



Out of My Mind by Sharon M. Draper

Eleven-year-old Melody is not like most people. She can't walk. She can't talk. She can't write. All because she has cerebral palsy. But she also has a photographic memory; she



can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She's the smartest kid in her whole school, but NO ONE knows it. Most people—her teachers, her doctors, her classmates—dismiss her as mentally challenged because she can't tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by her disability. And she's determined to let everyone know it...somehow.

White Bird: A Wonder Story (Graphic Novel)

In R. J. Palacio's best-selling collection of stories *Auggie & Me*, which expands on characters in *Wonder*, readers were introduced to Julian's grandmother, Grandmère. Here, Palacio makes her graphic novel debut with Grandmère's heartrending story: how she, a young Jewish girl, was hidden by a family in a Nazi-occupied French village during World War II; how the boy she and her classmates once shunned became her savior and best friend. *White Bird* was recently filmed as a major motion picture starring Gillian Anderson and Helen Mirren - release date October 2024.



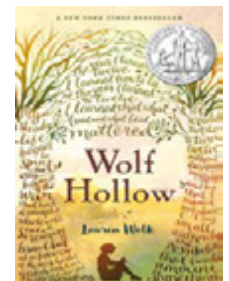
Posted by John David Anderson

In middle school, words aren't just words. They can be weapons. They can be gifts. The right words can win you friends or make you enemies. They can come back to haunt you. Sometimes they can change things forever. When cell phones are banned at Branton Middle School, Frost and his friends Deedee, Wolf, and Bench come up with a new way to communicate: leaving sticky notes for each other all around the school. It catches on, and soon all the kids in school are leaving notes—though for every kind and friendly one, there is a cutting and cruel one as well. In the middle of this, a new girl named Rose arrives at school and sits at Frost's lunch table. Rose is not like anyone else at Branton Middle School, and it's clear that the close circle of friends Frost has made for himself won't easily hold another. As the sticky-note war escalates, and the pressure to choose sides mounts, Frost soon realizes that after this year, nothing will ever be the same.



Wolf Hollow by Lauren Wolk

Despite growing up in the shadows cast by two world wars, Annabelle has lived a mostly quiet, steady life in her small Pennsylvania town. Until the day new student Betty Glengarry walks into her class. Betty quickly reveals herself to be cruel and manipulative, and though her bullying seems isolated at first, it quickly escalates. Toby, a reclusive World War I veteran, soon becomes the target of Betty's attacks. While others see Toby's strangeness, Annabelle knows



only kindness. And as tensions mount in their small community, Annabelle must find the courage to stand as a lone voice for justice.

Roll With It by Jamie Sumner

Ellie's a girl who tells it like it is. That surprises some people, who see a kid in a wheelchair and think she's going to be all sunshine and cuddles. The thing is, Ellie has big dreams: She might be eating Stouffer's for dinner, but one day she's going to be a professional baker. If she's not writing fan letters to her favorite celebrity chefs, she's practicing recipes on her well-meaning, if overworked, mother. But when Ellie and her mom move so they can help take care of her ailing grandpa, Ellie has to start all over again in a new town at a new school. Except she's not just the new kid—she's the new kid in the wheelchair who lives in the trailer park on the wrong side of town. It all feels like one challenge too many until Ellie starts to make her first-ever friends. Now she just has to convince her mom that this town might just be the best thing that ever happened to them!



Restart by Gordon Korman

Chase's memory just went out the window. Chase doesn't remember falling off the roof. He doesn't remember hitting his head. He doesn't, in fact, remember anything. He wakes up in a hospital room and suddenly has to learn his whole life all over again . . . starting with his own name. He knows he's Chase. But who is Chase? When he gets back to school, he sees that different kids have very different reactions to his return. Some kids treat him like a hero. Some kids are clearly afraid of him. One girl, in particular, is so angry with him that she pours her frozen yogurt on his head the first chance she gets. Pretty soon, it's not only a question of who Chase is--it's a question of who he was . . . and who he's going to be.



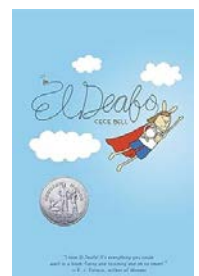
Firegirl by Tony Abbott

From the moment Jessica arrives, life is never quite the same for Tom and his seventh-grade classmates. They learn that Jessica has been in a fire and was badly burned, and will be attending St. Catherine's while receiving medical treatments. Despite her appearance and the fear she evokes in him and most of the class, Tom slowly develops a tentative friendship with Jessica that changes his life.



El Deafo by CC Bell - graphic novel

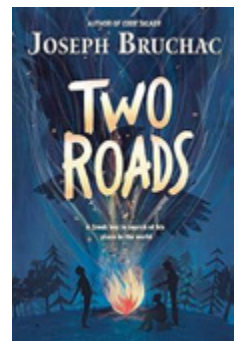
Starting at a new school is scary, especially with a giant hearing aid strapped to your chest! At her



old school, everyone in Cece's class was deaf. Here, she's different. She's sure the kids are staring at the Phonic Ear, the powerful aid that will help her hear her teacher. Too bad it also seems certain to repel potential friends. Then Cece makes a startling discovery. With the Phonic Ear, she can hear her teacher not just in the classroom, but anywhere her teacher is in the school—in the hallway . . . in the teacher's lounge . . . in the bathroom! This is power. Maybe even superpower! Cece is on her way to becoming El Deafo, Listener for All. But the funny thing about being a superhero is that it's just another way of feeling different . . . and lonely. Can Cece channel her powers into finding the thing she wants most: a true friend?

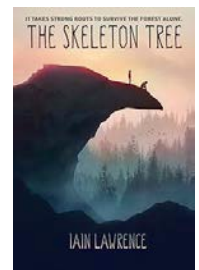
Two Roads by Joseph Bruchac

It's 1932, and twelve-year-old Cal Black and his Pop have been riding the rails for years after losing their farm in the Great Depression. Cal likes being a "knight of the road" with Pop, even if they're broke. But then Pop has to go to Washington, DC--some of his fellow veterans are marching for their government checks, and Pop wants to make sure he gets his due--and Cal can't go with him. So Pop tells Cal something he never knew before: Pop is actually a Creek Indian, which means Cal is too. And Pop has decided to send Cal to a government boarding school for Native Americans in Oklahoma called the Challagi School. At school, the other Creek boys quickly take Cal under their wings. Even in the harsh, miserable conditions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school, he begins to learn about his people's history and heritage. He learns their language and customs. And most of all, he learns how to find strength in a group of friends who have nothing beyond each other.



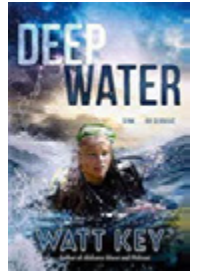
Skeleton Tree by Iain Lawrence

Less than forty-eight hours after twelve-year-old Chris sets off on a sailing trip down the Alaskan coast with his uncle, their boat sinks. The only survivors are Chris and a boy named Frank, who hates Chris immediately. Chris and Frank have no radio, no flares, no food. Suddenly, they've got to forage, fish, and scavenge the shore for supplies. Chris likes the company of a curious, friendly raven more than he likes the prickly Frank. But the boys have to get along if they want to survive. Because as the days get colder and the salmon migration ends, survival will take more than sheer force of will. Eventually, in the wilderness of Alaska, the boys discover an improbable bond—and the compassion that might truly be the path to rescue.



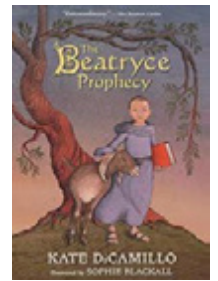
Deep Water by Watt Key

It's the most important rule of scuba diving: If you don't feel right, don't go down. So after her father falls ill, twelve-year-old Julie Sims must take over and lead two of his clients on a dive miles off the coast of Alabama while her father stays behind in the boat. When the clients, a reckless boy Julie's age and his equally foolhardy father, disregard Julie's instructions during the dive, she quickly realizes she's in over her head. And once she surfaces, things only get worse: One of the clients is in serious condition, and their dive boat has vanished—along with Julie's father, the only person who knows their whereabouts. It's only a matter of time before they die of hypothermia unless they become shark bait first. Though Julie may not like her clients, it's up to her to save them all.



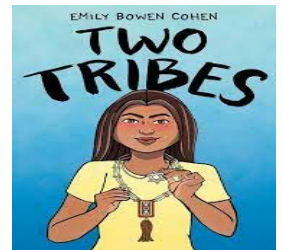
The Beatryce Prophecy by Kate DiCamillo

In a time of war, a mysterious child appears at the monastery of the Order of the Chronicles of Sorrowing. Gentle Brother Edik finds the girl, Beatryce, curled in a stall, wracked with fever, coated in dirt and blood, and holding fast to the ear of Answelica the goat. As the monk nurses Beatryce to health, he uncovers her dangerous secret, one that imperils them all—for the king of the land seeks just such a girl, and Brother Edik, who penned the prophecy himself, knows why. From two-time Newbery Medalist Kate DiCamillo and two-time Caldecott Medalist Sophie Blackall comes a fantastical meditation on fate, love, and the power of words to spell the world.



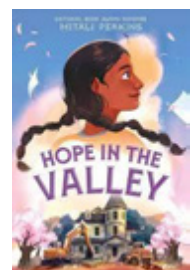
Two Tribes by Emily Bowen Cohen

Mia is still getting used to living with her mom and stepfather, and to the new role their Jewish identity plays in their home. Feeling out of place at home and at her Jewish day school, Mia finds herself thinking more and more about her Muscogee father, who lives with his new family in Oklahoma. Her mother doesn't want to talk about him, but Mia can't help but feel like she's missing a part of herself without him in her life. Soon, Mia makes a plan to use the gifts from her bat mitzvah to take a bus to Oklahoma—without telling her mom—to visit her dad and find the connection to her Muscogee side she knows is just as important as her Jewish side. This graphic novel by Muscogee-Jewish writer and artist Emily Bowen Cohen is perfect for fans of *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang.



Hope in the Valley by Mitali Perkins

Twelve-year-old Indian-American Pandita Paul doesn't like change. She's not ready to start middle school and leave the comforts of childhood behind. Most of all, Pandita doesn't want to



feel like she's leaving her mother, who died a few years ago, behind. After a falling out with her best friend, Pandita is planning to spend most of her summer break reading and writing in her favorite secret space: the abandoned but majestic mansion across the street. But then the unthinkable happens. The town announces that the old home will be bulldozed in favor of new—maybe affordable—housing. With her family on opposing sides of the issue, Pandita must find her voice—and the strength to move on—in order to give her community hope.

Yusuf Azeem is Not a Hero by Saadia Faruqi

Yusuf Azeem has spent all his life in the small town of Frey, Texas—and nearly that long waiting for the chance to participate in the regional robotics competition, which he just *knows* he can win. Only, this year is going to be more difficult than he thought. Because this year is the twentieth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, an anniversary that has everyone in his Muslim community on edge. With “Never Forget” banners everywhere and a hostile group of townspeople protesting the new mosque, Yusuf realizes that the country’s anger from two decades ago hasn’t gone away. Can he hold onto his joy—and his friendships—in the face of heartache and prejudice?



Cece Rios and the Desert of Souls by Kaela Rivera

Living in the remote town of Tierra del Sol is dangerous, especially in the criatura months, when powerful spirits roam the desert and threaten humankind. But Cecelia Rios has always believed there was more to the criaturas, much to her family’s disapproval. After all, only brujas—humans who capture and control criaturas—consort with the spirits, and brujeria is a terrible crime. When her older sister, Juana, is kidnapped by El Sombrerón, a powerful dark criatura, Cece is determined to bring Juana back. To get into Devil’s Alley, though, she’ll have to become a bruja herself—while hiding her quest from her parents, her town, and the other brujas. Thankfully, the legendary criatura Coyote has a soft spot for humans and agrees to help her on her journey. With him at her side, Cece sets out to reunite her family—and maybe even change what it means to be a bruja along the way.



Wildoak by C.C. Harrington

Maggie Stephens's stutter makes school especially hard. She will do almost anything to avoid speaking in class or calling attention to herself. So when her unsympathetic father threatens to send her away for so-called "treatment," she reluctantly agrees to her mother's intervention plan: a few weeks in the fresh air of Wildoak Forest, visiting a grandfather she hardly knows. It is there, in an extraordinary twist of fate, that she encounters an abandoned snow leopard



cub, an exotic gift to a wealthy Londoner that proved too wild to domesticate. But once the cub's presence is discovered by others, danger follows, and Maggie soon realizes that time is running out, not only for the leopard, but for herself and the forest as well. Told in alternating voices, *Wildoak* shimmers with beauty, compassion, and unforgettable storytelling as it explores the delicate interconnectedness of the human, animal, and natural worlds.

Nonfiction

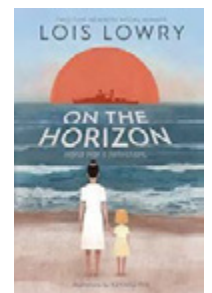
Sunshine: A Graphic Novel by Jarrett J. Krosoczka

When Jarrett J. Krosoczka was in high school, he was part of a program that sent students to be counselors at a camp for seriously ill kids and their families. Going into it, Jarrett was worried: Wouldn't it be depressing, to be around kids facing such a serious struggle? Wouldn't it be grim? But instead of the shadow of death, Jarrett found something else at Camp Sunshine: the hope and determination that gets people through the most troubled of times. Not only was he subject to some of the usual rituals that come with being a camp counselor (wilderness challenges, spooky campfire stories, an extremely stinky mascot costume), but he also got a chance to meet some extraordinary kids facing extraordinary circumstances. He learned about the captivity of illness, for sure but he also learned about the freedom a safe space can bring.



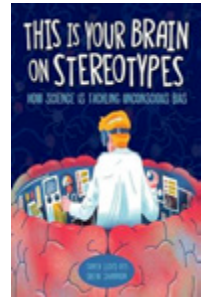
On the Horizon by Lois Lowry

From two-time Newbery medalist and living legend Lois Lowry comes a moving account of the lives lost in two of WWII's most infamous events: Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima. With evocative black-and-white illustrations by SCBWI Golden Kite Award winner Kenard Pak. Lois Lowry looks back at history through a personal lens as she draws from her own memories as a child in Hawaii and Japan, as well as from historical research, in this stunning work in verse for young readers. *On the Horizon* tells the story of people whose lives were lost or forever altered by the twin tragedies of Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima. Based on the lives of soldiers at Pearl Harbor and civilians in Hiroshima, *On the Horizon* contemplates humanity and war through verse that sings with pain, truth, and the importance of bridging cultural divides. This masterful work emphasizes empathy and understanding in search of commonality and friendship, vital lessons for students as well as citizens of today's world. Kenard Pak's stunning illustrations depict real-life people, places, and events, making for an incredibly vivid return to our collective past. In turns haunting, heartbreaking, and uplifting, *On the Horizon* will remind readers of the horrors and heroism in our past, as well as offer hope for our future.



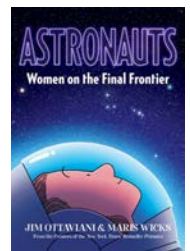
This Is Your Brain on Stereotypes: How Science Is Tackling Unconscious Bias by Tanya Lloyd Kyi

An essential overview of the science behind stereotypes: from why our brains form them to how recognizing them can help us be less biased. From the time we're babies, our brains constantly sort and label the world around us — a skill that's crucial for our survival. But, as adolescents are all too aware, there's a tremendous downside: when we do this to groups of people it can cause great harm. Here's a comprehensive introduction to the science behind stereotypes that will help young people make sense of why we classify people, and how we can change our thinking. It covers the history of identifying stereotypes, secret biases in our brains, and how stereotypes affect our sense of self. Most importantly, it covers current research into how science can help us overcome our biases, offering hope for a future where stereotypes are less prevalent and the world is more fair for everyone.



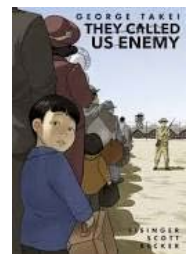
Astronauts: Women on the Final Frontier by Jim Ottaviani and Maris Wick

The U.S. may have put the first man on the moon, but it was the Soviet space program that made Valentina Tereshkova the first woman in space. It took years to catch up, but soon NASA's first female astronauts were racing past milestones of their own. The trail-blazing women of Group 9, NASA's first mixed-gender class, had the challenging task of convincing the powers that be that a woman's place is in space, but they discovered that NASA had plenty to learn about how to make space travel possible for *everyone*.



They Called Us Enemy by George Takei (graphic novel)

George Takei has captured hearts and minds worldwide with his captivating stage presence and outspoken commitment to equal rights. But long before he braved new frontiers in *Star Trek*, he woke up as a four-year-old boy to find his own birth country at war with his father's -- and their entire family forced from their home into an uncertain future. In 1942, at the order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, every person of Japanese descent on the west coast was rounded up and shipped to one of ten "relocation centers," hundreds or thousands of miles from home, where they would be held for years under armed guard. *They Called Us Enemy* is Takei's firsthand account of those years behind barbed wire, the joys and terrors of growing up under legalized racism, his mother's hard choices, his father's faith in democracy, and the way those experiences planted the seeds for his astonishing future.



Name: _____

WB Middle School Summer Reading Reflection 2024

1. What is the title of the book you read for summer reading and who is the author?

2. Why did you choose this book?

3. What was the most interesting event in the book or fact that you learned?

4. How does this book relate to the theme of kindness or empathy?

5. What did you learn from reading this book?

6. Rate your book on a scale of 1-5 (1 is the worst, 5 is the best!). Circle your rating below.

1 2 3 4 5

