North Gwinnett Middle School
8th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Instructions: Pick between Option #1, Option #2, Option #3, Option #4, Option #5, OR Option #6. Read both the nonfiction AND fiction selection for that particular option. Use these two selections to complete the 8th Grade Summer Reading Assignment sheet.

OPTION #1:
Nonfiction: *Drowned City* by Brown, Don
On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina’s monstrous winds and surging water overwhelmed the protective levees around low-lying New Orleans, Louisiana. Eighty percent of the city flooded, in some places under twenty feet of water. Property damages across the Gulf Coast topped $100 billion. One thousand eight hundred and thirty-three people lost their lives. The tale of this historic storm and the drowning of an American city is one of selflessness, heroism, and courage—and also of incompetence, racism, and criminality.

Fiction: *Orleans* by Smith, Sherri L.
First came the storms. Then came the Fever. And the Wall. After a string of devastating hurricanes and a severe outbreak of Delta Fever, the Gulf Coast has been quarantined. Years later, residents of the Outer States are under the assumption that life in the Delta is all but extinct... but in reality, a new primitive society has been born.

OPTION #2:
Nonfiction: *No Summit out of Sight* by Romero, Jordan
On May 22, 2010, at the age of thirteen, American teenager Jordan Romero became the youngest person to climb to the summit of Mount Everest. At fifteen, he became the youngest person to reach the summits of the tallest mountains on each of the seven continents. In this energizing memoir for young adults, Jordan, now seventeen, recounts his experience, which started as a spark of an idea at the age of nine and, many years of training and hard work later, turned into a dream come true.

Fiction: *Peak* by Smith, Roland
After fourteen-year-old Peak Marcello is arrested for scaling a New York City skyscraper, he’s left with two choices: wither away in Juvenile Detention or go live with his long-lost father, who runs a climbing company in Thailand. But Peak quickly learns that his father’s renewed interest in him has strings attached. Big strings. As owner of Peak Expeditions, he wants his son to be the youngest person to reach the Everest summit—and his motives are selfish at best. Even so, for a climbing addict like Peak, tackling Everest is the challenge of a lifetime. But it’s also one that could cost him his life.

OPTION #3:
Nonfiction: *Pure Grit: How WWII Nurses in the Pacific Survived Combat and Prison Camp* by Farrell, Mary
In the early 1940s, young women enlisted for peacetime duty as U.S. Army nurses. But when the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 blasted the United States into World War II, 101 American Army and Navy nurses serving in the Philippines were suddenly treating wounded and dying soldiers while bombs exploded all around them. Later, when most of them were captured by the Japanese as prisoners of war, they suffered disease and near-starvation for three years. Pure Grit is a story of sisterhood and suffering, of tragedy and betrayal, of death and life. The women cared for one another, maintained discipline, and honored their vocation to nurse anyone in need—all 101 coming home alive.

Fiction: *Torn* by Massey, David
Afghanistan. In the heat and dust, young British army medic Elinor Nielson watches an Afghan girl walk into a hail of bullets. But when she runs to help, Ellie finds her gone. Who is she? And what’s happened to her? What Ellie discovers makes her question everything she believes in, even her feelings for the American lieutenant who takes her side.

OPTION #4:
Nonfiction: *Witches: The Absolutely True Tale of Disaster in Salem* by Schanzer, Rosalyn
In the little colonial town of Salem Village, Massachusetts, two girls began to twitch, mumble, and contort their bodies into strange shapes. The doctor tried every remedy, but nothing cured the young Puritans. He grimly announced the dire diagnosis: the girls were bewitched! And then the accusations began. The riveting, true story of the victims, accused witches, crooked officials, and mass hysteria that turned a mysterious illness affecting two children into a witch hunt that took over a dozen people’s lives and ruined hundreds more.

Fiction: *Conversion* by Howe, Katherine
It’s senior year at St. Joan’s Academy, and school is a pressure cooker. College applications, the battle for valedictorian, deciphering boys’ texts: Colleen Rowley and her friends are expected to keep it together. Until they can’t. First it’s the school’s queen bee, Clara Rutherford, who suddenly falls into uncontrollable tics in the middle of class. Her mystery illness spreads to her closest clique of friends, then more students and symptoms follow: seizures, hair loss, violent coughing fits. Pollution? Stress? Or are the girls faking? Only Colleen—who’s been reading *The Crucible* for extra credit—comes to realize what nobody else has: Danvers was once Salem Village, where another group of girls suffered from a similarly bizarre epidemic three centuries ago...
OPTION #5:

Nonfiction: Because They Marched: The People's Campaign for Voting Rights That Changed America by Freedman, Russell

For the 50th anniversary of the 1965 march for voting right from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, Newberry Medalist Russell Freedman has written a riveting account of this pivotal event in the history of civil rights. Illustrated with more than forty photographs, this is an essential chronicle of events every American should know."

Fiction: A Tugging String: A Novel About Growing Up During the Civil Rights Era by Greenberg, David

Duvy Greenberg is an ordinary twelve-year-old trying to fit in. He knows that his father, Jack, is a civil rights lawyer, but Duvy lives worlds away from Dorothy Milton, a black woman struggling to become a registered voter in Selma, Alabama. When Dorothy reaches out to Martin Luther King Jr. for help, she sets in motion a series of events that—with Jack Greenberg’s help—will open Duvy’s eyes to the reality of racial inequality and forever change the course of history. Blending facts, speeches, memories, and conjecture, this novel portrays the emotions and events surrounding the Selma-Montgomery Voting Rights March.

OPTION #6:

Holocaust-Themed Books: Choose ONE nonfiction and ONE fiction option from the lists below.

Nonfiction: The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club by Hoose, Phillip M.

At the outset of World War II, Denmark did not resist German occupation. Deeply ashamed of his nation’s leaders, fifteen-year-old Knud Pedersen resolved with his brother and a handful of schoolmates to take action against the Nazis if the adults would not. Naming their secret club after the fiery British leader, the young patriots in the Churchill Club committed countless acts of sabotage, infuriating the Germans, who eventually had the boys tracked down and arrested. But their efforts were not in vain: the boys’ exploits and eventual imprisonment helped spark a full-blown Danish resistance. Interweaving his own narrative with the recollections of Knud himself, here is Phil Hoose’s inspiring story of these young war heroes.

Nonfiction: In My Hands: Memories of a Holocaust Rescuer by Opdyke, Irene Gut

Irene Gut was just 17 in 1939, when the Germans and Russians devoured her native Poland. Just a girl, really. But a girl who saw evil and chose to defy it. This book recounts her experiences, as a young Polish girl, as she hid and saved Jews during the Holocaust. “No matter how many Holocaust stories one has read, this one is a must, for its impact is so powerful.”—School Library Journal, Starred

Nonfiction: The Boy on the Wooden Box by Leyson, Leon

Even in the darkest of times—especially in the darkest of times—there is room for strength and bravery. A remarkable memoir from Leon Leyson, one of the youngest children to survive the Holocaust on Oskar Schindler’s list. Leon Leyson (born Leib Lezjgon) was only ten years old when the Nazis invaded Poland and his family was forced to relocate to the Krakow ghetto. With incredible luck, perseverance, and grit, Leyson was able to survive the sadism of the Nazis. Ultimately, it was the generosity and cunning of one man, a man named Oskar Schindler, who saved Leon Leyson’s life, and the lives of his mother, his father, and two of his four siblings, by adding their names to his list of workers in his factory—this list that became world renowned: Schindler’s List.

Nonfiction: Courage & Defiance: Stories of Spies, Saboteurs, and Survivors in WWll Denmark by Hopkinson, Deborah

When the Nazis invaded Denmark on Tuesday, April 9, 1940, the people of this tiny country to the north of Germany awoke to a devastating surprise. The government of Denmark surrendered quietly, and the Danes were ordered to go about their daily lives as if nothing had changed. But everything had changed. Deborah Hopkinson traces the stories of the heroic young men and women who would not stand by as their country was occupied by a dangerous enemy. Rather, they fought back.

Fiction: The Boy Who Dared by Bartoletti, Susan

When 16-year-old Helmut Hubner listens to the BBC news on an illegal short-wave radio, he quickly discovers Germany is lying to the people. But when he tries to expose the truth with leaflets, he’s tried for treason. Sentenced to death and waiting in a jail cell, Helmut’s story emerges in a series of flashbacks that show his growth from a naive child caught up in the patriotism of the times, to a sensitive and mature young man who thinks for himself.

Fiction: The Berlin Boxing Club by Sharenow, Robert

Karl Stern has never thought of himself as a Jew. But the bullies at his school in Nazi-era Berlin, don’t care that Karl has never been in a synagogue or that his family doesn’t practice religion. Demoralized by attacks on a heritage he doesn’t accept as his own, Karl longs to prove his worth. So when Max Schmeling, champion boxer and German national hero, makes a deal with Karl’s father to give Karl boxing lessons, a skilled cartoonist, Karl has never had an interest in boxing, but now it seems like the perfect chance to reinvent himself. But when Nazi violence against Jews escalates, Karl must take on a new role: protector of his family. And as Max’s fame forces him to associate with Hitler and other Nazi elites, Karl begins to wonder where his hero’s sympathies truly lie. Can Karl balance his dream of boxing greatness with his obligation to keep his family out of harm’s way?

Fiction: Salt to the Sea by Sepetys, Ruta

Winter, 1945. Four teenagers. Four secrets. Each one born of a different homeland; each one hunted, and haunted, by tragedy, lies...and war. As thousands of desperate refugees flock to the coast in the midst of a Soviet advance, four paths converge, vying for passage aboard the Wilhelm Gustloff, a ship that promotes safety and freedom. Yet not all promises can be kept.

Fiction: Between Shades of Gray by Sepetys, Ruta

Lina is just like any other fifteen-year-old Lithuanian girl in 1941. She paints, she draws, she gets crushes on boys. Until one night when Soviet officers barge into her home, tearing her family from the comfortable life they’ve known. Separated from her father, forced onto a crowded and dirty train car, Lina, her mother, and her young brother slowly make their way north, crossing the Arctic Circle, to a work camp in the coldest reaches of Siberia. Here they are forced, under Stalin’s orders, to dig for beets and fight for their lives under the cruelest of conditions. Lina finds solace in her art, meticulously--and at great risk--documenting events by drawing, hoping these messages will make their way to her father’s prison camp to let him know they are still alive.