

History With a Dash of Fiction

Full of Beans

The New Dealers arrive in Key West in the middle of the Great Depression and plan to turn it into a tourist destination. Beans just wants to make a dime or two and his plans keep going awry. **Also** *Turtle in Paradise*.

Jennifer Holm

Gold Seer Trilogy: Walk on Earth a Stranger—a series

Leah has an extraordinary talent to sense when gold is near. When her parents are robbed and murdered, she disguises herself as a boy and leaves the only home she's ever known to join a wagon train for a new gold rush in California. Can she keep her identity a secret and survive this new adventure? **Also** *Like a River Glorious & Into the Bright Unknown*.

Rae Carson

Iron Thunder

Thirteen-year-old Tom Carroll finds work at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on a secret project that may benefit the Northern armies during the Civil War. Pursued by spies from the South, he ends up in the middle of a sea battle. Will he find the courage to survive?

Avi

The Night Diary—a 2021 Nutmeg Nominee

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.

Veera Hiranandani

Nine, Ten: A September 11 Story—a 2019 Nutmeg Nominee

Two days before 9-11, four kids in different parts of the country are going about their lives. Sergio, who lives in Brooklyn, is struggling to come to terms with the absentee father he hates and the grandmother he loves. Will's father is gone, too, killed in a car accident that has left the family reeling. Naheed has never before felt uncomfortable about being Muslim, but at her new school she's getting funny looks because of the head scarf she wears. Aimee is starting a new school in a new city and missing her mom, who has to fly to New York on business. These four don't know one another, but their lives are about to intersect in ways they never could have imagined.

Nora Baskin

Prairie Lotus

Hanna and her father plan to open a dry goods/dress shop in a small town in Dakota Territory in the mid 1800s. Hanna endures more than her share of prejudice, as her late mother was Chinese, a race few if any of her new neighbors had encountered.

Linda Sue Park

Student Recommendations!

Olivia Suggests: Pieces of Why

Twelve-year-old Tia lives with her mom in New Orleans. She loves to sing in the Rainbow Choir with her best friend, Keisha. Tia has a big dream, to change the world with her voice! But that is right before a "fatal car-jacking rocks the community, and reignites gossip about her incarcerated father." Tia is most curious to find out what really sent her father to prison years ago. She starts to ask questions about him to the town...Hard questions...Questions everyone is too afraid to ask, even her mother.

K.L. Going

Jason recommends: The Ranger's Apprentice

This series is about a world back when castles, kings and knights existed. The kingdom's 'police' if you will, were an elite force called the Rangers. Each one is assigned to one of the 50 fiefs of Araluen; they are trained to shoot faster than the eye can blink and camouflage themselves anywhere. Will, a scrawny orphan, is hoping for an induction into the Battleschool, but instead is apprenticed to the mysterious legend Halt of the Redmont Fief. This series is about his journey to become a full-fledged Ranger. **Titles include: *The Ruins of Gorlan, The Burning Bridge, The Icebound Land* and MORE!**

John Flanagan



Rochambeau & Memorial Middle Schools

Entering Grade 6
2021

Summer Literacy Suggestions

Cover art by Emma Sander

June 2021

Dear Students Entering Sixth Grade:

Welcome to Rochambeau & Memorial Middle Schools' 2021 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 or browse 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

Internet Archive offers a huge selection of downloadable eBooks for loan, archive.org

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

Bleed, Blister, Puke and Purge

Marin Younker

The Dirty Secrets Behind Early American Medicine exposes the extraordinary practices and major players of American medical history, from the colonial era to the late 1800s.

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.

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!

The Great White Shark Scientist

Sy Montgomery

Scientists in the Field Series: Is Cape Cod a breeding ground for great white sharks? A daring expedition travels into the realm of great whites to show readers that in order to save the planet and its creatures, we must embrace our humanity and face our greatest fears.

The New Way Things Work

David Macaulay

How do things work? This illustrated, humorous, easy-to-understand book richly shows how everything from a toilet to a fire extinguisher works.

Science Fiction

The Accelerati Trilogy: Tesla's Attic

Shusterman & Elfman

A story of teenagers versus mad scientists: action-packed adventure. **Also *Edison's Alley & Hawking's Highway*.**

Don't Turn Around—a 2015 Nutmeg Nominee & series

Michelle Gagnon

When computer genius, Noa, wakes up in a warehouse with an IV in her arm and no memory of how she got there, she starts to wish that she had someone on her side...**Also *Don't Look Now & Don't Let Go*.**

Sal and Gabi Break the Universe—a series

Carlos Hernandez

What would you do if you had the power to reach through time and space and retrieve anything you want, including your mother, who is no longer living (in this universe, anyway)? ...**Also *Sal and Gabi Fix the Universe*.**

Insignia—a 2015 Nutmeg Nominee & series

S.J. Kincaid

An elite military academy recruits Tom Raines to train to become a soldier in outer space, and he can't believe his good fortune. As his training begins, though, Tom finds he might have to sacrifice more than he'd thought in order to succeed. **Also *Vortex & Catalyst*.**

The Missing—a series

Margaret Haddix

Jonah and his friend Chip begin receiving ominous messages declaring that they are among "the missing" and that someone is coming to find them. Frightened, yet intrigued, the boys begin a search for their real identities. **Enjoy the series: *Found, Sent, Sabotaged, Torn, and Caught*.**

The Wild Robot

Peter Brown

Robot Roz lands on a remote island after the container ship she was being transported on sinks. Otters accidentally power her up and she begins to become part of the local animal world.

Zodiac Legacy: Convergence—a series

Stan Lee

Two teens try and harness the power of the Chinese zodiac in hopes of ruling the world.

2022 Nutmeg Nominees

The Benefits of Being an Octopus

Ann Braden

7th grader Zoey wishes she had eight arms to assist with all of her responsibilities. When she reluctantly joins the debate club, she learns that speaking up for herself and the people she loves creates a power she never knew she had.

Emmy in the Key of Code

Aimee Lucido

Emmy, 12, already feels out of place having been born to highly musical parents, while she struggles with stage fright. When Emmy connects with computer class and starts to learn coding she thinks she is finally finding her place in the world—but is it really as easy as do-re-mi?

Marcus Vega Doesn't Speak Spanish

Pablo Cartaya

8th grader Marcus Vega is having a hard time. After being suspended, he and his family take a trip to Puerto Rico to try and rebuild. Marcus meets some interesting people during this time and along the way he learns the true meaning of family.

Pet

Akwaeke Emezi

Jam was always told that monsters are no more. After she accidentally brings a creature to life from a painting, she learns that everything is not as it seems. She must keep her wits about her to see the difference between lies and reality. Will Jam be able to find the monster and stand up for herself?

Planet Earth is Blue

Nicole Pantelakos

Nova thinks deeply about many things, especially outer space, but only her sister Bridget knows. Nova is on the autism spectrum, living with a new foster family, and Bridget has disappeared. She promised to be back in time for the 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger launch, so Nova counts down the days until the Shuttle launches so she can be with Bridget again.

Sports—Mike Lupica and MORE!

Becoming Ali

James Patterson & Kwame Alexander

Cassius Clay was a kid that struggled like any other. After a thief stole his bike, he began training as a boxer at age 12. Before long he won his first Golden Gloves and transformed into Muhammad Ali.

Before the Ever After

Jacqueline Woodson

ZJ's dad was a football player. Now, the family is changing as the man becomes more and more forgetful. Novel told in verse.

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*.

Backfield Boys: A Football Mystery in Black and White

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*.

Baseball Genius Series: (with Derek Jeter) *Baseball Genius*, *Double Play*, and *Grand Slam*.

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

Dan Gutman

The Baseball Card Adventures 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*.

Travel Team, Summer Ball (sequel).

Home Team Series: *The Only Game*, *The Extra Yard*.

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

Mystery

All Fall Down—an Embassy Row series

Ally Carter

Someone killed Grace's mother; now she wants to keep him from striking again. Grace lives with her grandfather, a US Ambassador, and gets other embassy kids to help. **Also** *How They Run* and *Take the Key and Lock Her Up*.

Mo & Dale Mysteries—a series & 2016 Nutmeg

Sheila Turnage

Mo LoBeau is no typical sixth grader. She and her best friend Dale open the Desperado Detective Agency in their tiny town of Tupelo Landing, in hopes of solving some of the mysteries and injustices that find their way there. Clever, fun, and fast-paced novels. **See** *Three Times Lucky*, *The Ghosts of Tupelo Landing*, & *The Odds of Getting Even*.

The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel

Sheela Chari

A group of sixth graders investigate the disappearance of their friend and classmate, which may be tied to an enigmatic announcement from their headmaster. Weave through podcasts, email, and prose to uncover the story.

Who Done It?

Jon Scieszka

An anthology of alibis—80 YA authors, and suspects in the murder of Herman Mildew, share their alibis...but they are all liars and have something to hide...

Authors of Adventure

The Blackthorne Key

Kevin Sands

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.

The Copernicus Legacy—a series

Tony Abbott

A thrilling adventure packed with puzzles, intrigue, and action. Fans of Rick Riordan will love this exciting series that takes the reader all over the globe in a race to find pieces of a mysterious hidden past—before it's too late. **Also** *The Serpent's Curse* & *The Golden Vendetta*.

Dawn of the Spies

Andrew Lane

A Crusoe Adventure. Rescued from a deserted Caribbean island, 17-year-old Robinson Crusoe and his female friend, Friday, find themselves in late 1600s London, a bustling city that proves as treacherous for them to navigate as the remote island they just left behind.

Nameless City

Faith Hicks

Continually under invasion, the natives of the City don't let themselves get caught up in the unending wars. To them, their home is the Nameless City, and those who try to invade and name it are forever outsiders.

Under the Egg—a 2018 Nutmeg Nominee

Laura Marx Fitzgerald

Grandpa Jack's dying words were "look under the egg." Now Theo and her quirky friends are chasing clue to clue across New York City, trying to uncover the riddle Grandpa Jack left behind.

Fantasy

Brotherband Chronicles: The Outcasts—a series

John A. Flanagan

A companion to the *Ranger's Apprentice* series. Full of seafaring adventures and epic battles. **Also** *The Invaders*, *The Hunters*, *Slaves of Socorro*, *Scorpion Mountain* & *Ghostfaces*.

Five Kingdoms: Sky Raiders—a series

Brandon Mull

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*.

Labyrinth Lost—a 2019 Nutmeg Nominee

Zoraida Cordoba

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.

Lockwood & Co.: The Screaming Staircase—a series

Jonathan Stroud

The British Isles have become plagued with 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*.

Magisterium: The Iron Trial—a 2017 Nutmeg & series

Black & Clare

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*, and *The Silver Mask*.

Serafina and the Black Cloak

Robert Beatty

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*.

When You Trap a Tiger

Tae Keller

Years ago, Lily's grandmother took something from the tigers. Now they want it back, in exchange for Halmoni's health. Based on Korean fairytales and folklore.

Great Middle School Stories of Growing Up

14 Hollow Road

Jenn Bishop

Maddie is excited to go to the school dance, where she's hoping to spend time with her crush, Avery. Instead, her best friend Kiersten's new BFF Gabby dances with Avery. Meanwhile, a tornado levels Maddie's and Avery's homes while they are at the dance, and the two must take shelter at a neighbor's house for the rest of the summer, where much drama follows...

The Best Man

Richard Peck

Archer Magill has three grown-up role models: his grandpa, his dad, and his Uncle Paul. These are the three people he wants to be like. Then he finds a fourth—Mr. McLeod, a teacher; the first male teacher in his school. But middle school and puberty start to change things as he is introduced to a gay teacher and gay marriage.

Ms. Bixby's Last Day

John Anderson

A sixth grade class finds out that their wonderful teacher has cancer. Three boys decide to let her know what she means to them. Told with heart and humor.

Counting By 7s—2016 Nutmeg Winner

Holly Goldberg Sloan

An intensely moving middle grade novel about being an outsider, coping with loss, and discovering the true meaning of family.

Fuzzy Mud—a 2019 Nutmeg Nominee

Louis Sachar

From the **author of *Holes***. Marshall and Tamaya take a shortcut through the woods and encounter a mysterious, bubbling puddle, which could put them in more danger than the bully they were trying to avoid.

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.

Kinda Like Brothers—a 2018 Nutmeg Nominee

Coe Booth

Jarrett doesn't trust Kevon. But he's got to share a room with him anyway. It was one thing when Jarrett's mom took care of foster babies who needed help. But this time it's different...

The Last Day of Summer

Lamar Giles

As the summer winds down and the first day of school looms, the boys are craving just a little bit more time for fun, even as they bicker over what kind of fun they want to have. That is, until a mysterious man appears with a camera that literally freezes time. Now, with the help of some very strange people and even stranger creatures, Otto and Sheed will have to put aside their differences to save their town—and each other—before time stops for good. .

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.

OCDaniel—a 2019 Nutmeg Nominee

Wesley King

Daniel has some strange habits, like flipping light switches, avoiding certain numbers, and more. He doesn't know exactly what's going on, but he tries very hard to make sure no one notices—until someone does. Soon Daniel is caught up in a friendship and then a mystery that will change his life.

The Stars Beneath Our Feet—2021 Nutmeg Nominee David Barclay Moore

It's been a year since Lolly's older brother was shot. 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?

Reading in Fun Formats

Addie on the Inside

James Howe

As seventh grade progresses, Addie's not so sure anymore about who she is. It seems her tough exterior is just a little too tough and that doesn't help her deal with the turmoil she feels on the inside as she faces the pains of growing up. Told in elegant, accessible verse.

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***.

The Marvels

Brian Selznick

From the author of *Wonderstruck* & *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*: Two stories that connect—one told in pencil drawings, one with words. A history of the Marvels, a theater family connects into that of a boy and his uncle who live in a strange house and discover the power of story.

New Kid 2021 Nutmeg Winner

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*

Olympians—a series

George O'Conner

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.***

The Tapper Twins go to War—a 2018 Nutmeg Nominee & series Geoff Rodkey

What's wrong with a little pranking among siblings? Things couldn't possibly escalate, could they? **Also *The Tapper Twins Tear Up New York, ...Run for President, & ...Go Viral.***

Inspired by True Life Experiences

Amina's Voice

Hena Khan

Amina, a Pakistani-American Muslim girl, is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except now that she's in middle school Soojin is suddenly hanging out with one of the "cool" girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more "American." Does Amina need to start changing too? Or hiding who she is to fit in?

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.

Box: Henry Brown Mails Himself to Freedom Carole Boston Weatherford

The true story of Henry Brown, an enslaved man who courageously found his way to freedom in a box.

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 if I 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 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>

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