

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*.

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

Prairie Lotus

Linda Sue Park

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.

We Dream of Space

Erin Entrada Kelly

Siblings Cash, Fitch, and Bird exist in their own orbits, circling a tense and unpredictable household, with little in common except an enthusiastic science teacher named Ms. Salonga. As the 1986 launch of the Space Shuttle *Challenger* approaches, Ms. Salonga gives her students a project—they are separated into spacecraft crews and must create and complete a mission. When the fated day finally arrives, it changes all of their lives and brings them together in unexpected ways.

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.

Samantha Suggests: My Dear Hamilton

Dray and Kamoie

This amazing story takes you through Eliza Schuyler's life before and after she met Alexander Hamilton and shows it from her side of the story. With twists and turns and some romance in between this novel certainly shows how Eliza's life really had a significant value to it. Plus if you like historical fiction this book is definitely for you!

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 Teni Arole



*Rochambeau & Memorial
Middle Schools*
Entering Grades 7 & 8
2021

Summer Literacy Suggestions

Dear Students Entering Seventh & Eighth Grades:

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, 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

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

Poisoned Water

Candy Cooper and Marc Aronson

In serious financial difficulties, Flint Michigan decided to change the source of its drinking water from one of the Great Lakes to its own river—a river with a long history of pollution. And thus began a chain of events that threatened the health and lives of some of the poorest people the US.

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.

Snapdragon—a 2022 Nutmeg Nominee

Kat Leyh

When outcast Snapdragon befriends rumored town "witch" Jacks, she learns about her own powers and inner strength. From this story of magical realism, we discover that those that are unfairly judged hole their own magical stories and oftentimes we find connections, love and family in the most unusual places.

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

Before the Ever After

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

Jacqueline Woodson

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—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

All Fall Down— *an Embassy Row series*

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.***

Ally Carter

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 someone 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

Charlie Thorne and the Last Equation—a 2022 *Nutmeg Nominee* **Stuart Gibbs**

Albert Einstein created a code that could help—or destroy—the world. Decades later, an enemy organization is searching for this code, and the CIA needs the help of a genius to find and solve its mystery...Enter Charlie Thorne...

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.***

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

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.***

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

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

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

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

Pet—a 2022 *Nutmeg Nominee*

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?

Akwaeke Emezi

Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky—a 2022 *Nutmeg Nominee* **Kwame Mbalia**

7th grader Tristan is struggling with the death of his best friend, whose journal of stories has become Tristan's prize possession. One night, a creature steals it from him. In a struggle to reclaim it, Tristan punches a hole in the MidPass. This puts him face to face with battling African gods and legends. Can he outwit Anansi the spider to seal the hole and get home?

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?

Genesis Begins Again—a 2022 Nutmeg Nominee

Alicia Williams

13 year-old Genesis has a lot of things she'd like to fix in her life. Most of all, Genesis believes that if she can just change the color of her skin, everything would be better. When her own family believes her dark skin puts her at a disadvantage, how can Genesis possibly learn to love herself?

Good Enough—a 2022 Nutmeg Nominee

Jen Petro-Ray

Riley is sick. She has been put in a treatment center for kids who suffer from eating disorders. Faced with a roommate who breaks the rules and an estranged family who doesn't fully understand her sickness, Riley has to work to be able to see herself as more than just a number on a scale.

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 Gephart

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 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*

The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise—a 2022 Nutmeg Nominee 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.

Sanctuary

Paola Mendoza and Abby Sher

In a future America where implanted chips have theoretically eliminated undocumented aliens, *Vali is*, she has been identified, and now she is on the run to reach family across the country in the sanctuary state of California.

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.