

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

June 2025

Dear Middle School Parent(s) and Guardian(s),

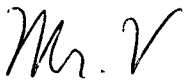
It is hard to believe, but the summer months are upon us, and while fun in the sun is on our minds, learning, especially the art and practice of reading, must not take a vacation.

Learning does not end each June; rather, by continuing to engage their minds, students will arrive back to school in September feeling accomplished and in a better position to begin their next academic year. Summer reading is critical to academic growth by helping students sustain their learning while school is out. Educators and parents agree summer reading matters. According to a Scholastic *Teacher & Principal School Report*, 96% of educators agree that providing year-round access to books at home is important to enhancing student achievement. Summer reading also assists students to avoid the dangerous “summer slump” or “summer slide” by keeping their minds awake and alert.

This year, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is requiring two texts for our rising 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade students. Students will be asked to read and write critically about the novels. This is extremely important for the middle school team as a means of assessing the individual needs of every student upon their return to school in the fall. Specifically, the writing component will inform us where the “trouble spots” might be hiding, thus informing our English instruction in those first weeks of school. Additionally, having required reading allows for more structured discussions during those first few important weeks of school. One of the required texts has been coordinated as our “*One Book, One Middle School*” again this summer with the title *Fever: 1793*. This amazing award-winning novel explores the Yellow Fever epidemic in Philadelphia and how, through the eyes of one girl, she and her family copes yet thrives in the face of amazing adversity. Upon the student’s return to school, each teacher will incorporate this book into their instruction whether in the Social Studies, Science, Math, or English Classroom! We may even have an assembly to discuss the novel as a middle school. *Fever: 1793* is a fast-paced and exciting read that will be liked by all.

Working with Ms. Tommaselli, my ELA colleague, we both diligently reviewed and planned a meaningful summer reading experience. Please review all the information provided and should you have any questions whatsoever, do not hesitate to reach out to me. I check my email frequently over the summer months, so please stay in touch at lovollono@stasonline.net. Students may always communicate directly via their Summer Reading Google Classroom to ask a question or send a message. Have a great summer!

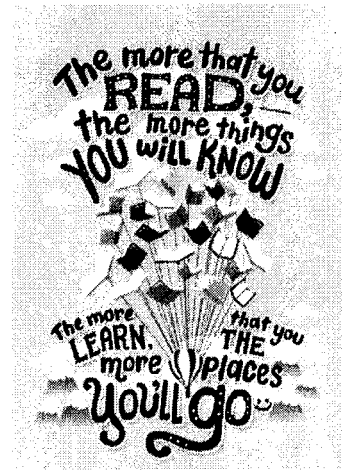
St. Thomas Aquinas: Pray for Us.



Mr. Louis S. Vollono, Jr. MS Eng.

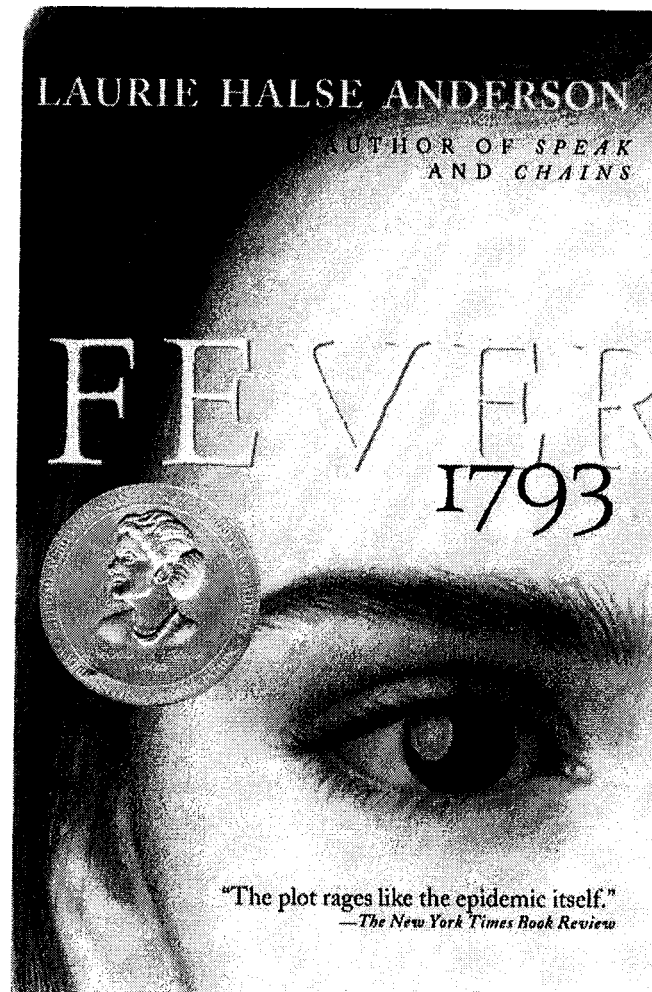
Summer Reading Coordinator

Grade 7 and 8 ELA Lead Instructor



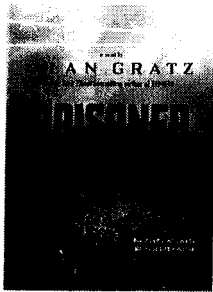
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School

"One Book, One Middle School"



"It had been a good day... all things considered. I had managed rather well on my own. I opened Grandfather's Bible. This is what it would be like when I had my own shop, or when I traveled abroad. I would always read before sleeping. One day, I'd be so rich I would have a library full of novel to choose from. But I would always end the evening with a Bible passage..."

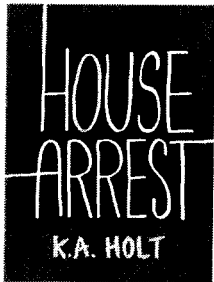
Title:	<i>Fever: 1793</i>
Author:	Laurie Halse Anderson
Publisher:	Simon and Schuster
ISBN-13:	978-0689848919 - paperback, \$8.99
Genre:	Historical Fiction
Lexile:	580L



Rising Grade 8 Required Text

Title: *Prisoner B-3087*
Author: Alan Gratz
Publisher: Scholastic Press
ISBN-13: 978-0545459013 - Hardbound, \$17.99 (paperback is acceptable)
Genre: Historical Fiction, World War II
Lexile: 760L

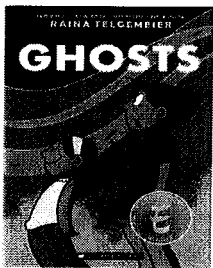
Summary: 10 concentration camps. 10 different places where you are starved, tortured, and worked mercilessly. It's something no one could imagine surviving. But it is what Yanek Gruener has to face. As a Jewish boy in 1930s Poland, Yanek is at the mercy of the Nazis who have taken over. Everything he has, and everyone he loves, have been snatched brutally from him. And then Yanek himself is taken prisoner -- his arm tattooed with the words PRISONER B-3087. He is forced from one nightmarish concentration camp to another, as World War II rages all around him. He encounters evil he could have never imagined, but also sees surprising glimpses of hope amid the horror. He just barely escapes death, only to confront it again seconds later. Can Yanek make it through the terror without losing his hope, his will -- and, most of all, his sense of who he really is inside?



Rising Grade 7 Required Text

Title: *House Arrest*
Author: K.A. Holt
Publisher: Chronicle Books
ISBN-13: 978-1452156484 - \$7.99 Paperback
Genre: Middle Grade, Novel in Verse
Lexile: 610L

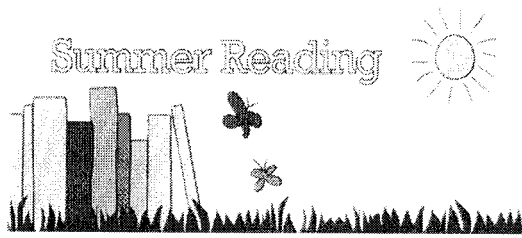
Summary: This young adult novel-in-verse tells the moving story of one boy's hard-won path to redemption. Timothy is a good kid who did a bad thing. Now he's under house arrest for a whole year. He has to check in weekly with a probation officer and a therapist, keep a journal, and stay out of trouble. But when he must take drastic measures to help his struggling family, staying out of trouble proves more difficult than Timothy ever thought it would be. Touching, funny, and always original, *House Arrest* is an ideal addition to any young adult book collection. This humorous novel-in-verse will delight reluctant readers and provide teens with motivation when it's needed most.



Rising Grade 6 Required Text

Title: *Ghosts*
Author: Raina Telgemeier
Publisher: Graphix
ISBN-13: 978-0545540629 - \$10.99 Paperback
Genre: Graphic Novel, Fantasy
Lexile: GN300L

Summary: Catrina and her family are moving to the coast of Northern California because her little sister, Maya, is sick. Cat isn't happy about leaving her friends for Bahía de la Luna, but Maya has cystic fibrosis and will benefit from the cool, salty air that blows in from the sea. As the girls explore their new home, a neighbor lets them in on a secret: There are ghosts in Bahía de la Luna. Maya is determined to meet one, but Cat wants nothing to do with them. As the time of year when ghosts reunite with their loved ones approaches, Cat must figure out how to put aside her fears for her sister's sake -- and her own.



Summer Reading 2025: A Quick Guide

1- Each student entering Grades 6-8 are required to join their respective Google Classrooms where students and teachers keep in touch and view assignments and important announcements. Here are those codes:

Rising 6th Graders:	kmt7m4n6
Rising 7th Graders:	qpjhenxd
Rising 8th Graders:	gn6tplhr

2- The books can be bought through your local independent bookstore or Amazon. Please check your local libraries, too, as there may be bulk sets available to borrow from. However, each student is required to have their own copy of the novel in the school on the first instructional day.

- 3- Grade 6 will read *Ghosts*, *Fever: 1793* and one age-appropriate book of their choice.
Grade 7 will read *House Arrest*, *Fever: 1793* and one age-appropriate book of their choice.
Grade 8 will read *Prisoner B-3087*, *Fever: 1793* and one age-appropriate book of their choice.

In total, each student will be required to read three books

4- Use audio books! Many students struggle to just sit and focus while reading. Therefore, put the book in your lap and listen away. Never just listen to the book and fail to follow along. You will miss out on important details, will not be able to annotate or jot down important notes, or even fall asleep!

5- Reading “plans” and assignments will be posted in Google Classroom in early July. **An early study strategy and suggestion:** Get a notebook for each novel and take notes on each chapter while you read! It will help you later. Even if it is just a few bullet points of important events regarding the characters, plot, setting, etc.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out and contact Mr. Lou Vollono. at lovollono@stasonline.net.