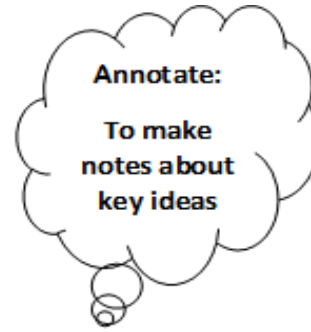


Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 7th grade ELA teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

## Summer Reading Assignment for Incoming Seventh Graders

SUMMER  
READING



***\*\*Read each passage and annotate using the blank lines provided. The annotations should be one or two sentence summaries of what you read in that portion of the text. Then, answer the reading comprehension questions that follow each passage.***

*Touching Spirit Bear* excerpt

*Cole Matthews is an angry teenager with a talent for getting into trouble. This time, however, he's facing jail time for brutally beating up a fellow classmate, Peter Driscoll. When Cole's parole officer, Garvey, offers him an alternative to prison in a Native American program called Circle Justice, Cole jumps at the opportunity—even though he's skeptical of just about anything and anyone. As part of his rehabilitation, Cole is sent by a Tlingit elder to a remote island in the Alaskan wilderness to think about his mistakes and discover his place in the order of things. Winner of the Nautilus Book Award, *Touching Spirit Bear* is Bolivian-American children's author Ben Mikaelson's gripping tale about how Cole faces his demons and learns to heal.*

1 The heavy load of supplies caused the skiff to wallow through the waves. Cole examined the boxes filled with canned foods, clothes, bedroll, ax, cooking gear, heavy rain gear, rubber boots, and even school work he was supposed to complete. He chuckled. Fat chance he'd ever do any schoolwork.

2 Several weeks earlier, Edwin, the Tlingit elder from Drake, had built a sparse one-room wood shelter for Cole on the island. He described the interior as bare except for a small wood stove and a bed—a good place for a soul to think and heal.

3 Cole resented the cabin and all this gear. When his father had agreed to pay all the expenses of banishment, it was just another one of his buyouts. Cole had news for him. This was just a sorry game. He twisted harder at the handcuffs and winced at the pain. He wasn't afraid of pain. He wasn't afraid of anyone or anything. He was only playing along until he could escape. He glanced back at Garvey. The whole Circle Justice thing had been such a joke. Back in Minneapolis, he had been forced to plead guilty and ask the Circle for help changing his life.

**Annotations:**

---

---

---

4 Asking for help was a simple con job, but he hadn't liked the idea of pleading guilty. "That's like hanging myself," he had complained to Garvey.

5 "You can withdraw your guilty plea and go through standard justice any time you want," Garvey said. "But once you go to trial, it's too late for Circle Justice." When Cole hesitated, Garvey added, "I thought you liked being in control, Champ."

6 Cole didn't trust anyone, but what choice did he have? "Okay," he answered reluctantly. "But if you're lying, you'll be sorry."

7 Garvey feigned surprise. "Let me get this straight, Champ. You figure if I'm scared of you, you can trust me?" He smiled thinly. "You sure have a lot to learn about trust."

8 "Quit calling me Champ," Cole mumbled. "That's not my name." Then grudgingly he held his tongue. Nobody was going to make him lose his cool. This was a game he planned to win. "So," he asked, "how soon do I start this Circle Justice stuff?"

9 "You can apply, but that doesn't mean you're automatically accepted. First the Circle committee will visit with you. They'll talk to Peter Driscall and his family, your parents, and others to decide if you're serious about wanting change. It might take weeks." Garvey hesitated. "Remember something else. You're wasting everybody's time if you don't truly want to change."

**Annotations:**

---

---

---

---

---

10 Cole nodded obediently, like a little puppy that would follow every rule and jump through any hoop. When he reached the island, that would all come to a screeching stop. Then he would prove to the whole world he was nobody's fool.

11 Cole heard the motor slow and realized that Edwin was guiding the skiff toward a protected bay on the large island ahead. The distant green-black forests were shrouded in gray mist. Cole spotted the tiny shelter that had been built for him near the trees, above the shoreline. Black tar paper covered the small wooden structure. Cole spit again at the waves. If these fossils really thought he was going to live in that shack for a whole year, they were nuts.

12 As the skiff scraped the rocks, Garvey jumped out and pulled the boat ashore. Still handcuffed, Cole crawled awkwardly over the bow onto the slippery rocks. Edwin began immediately to unload the supplies.

13 "Why don't you take my handcuffs off and let me help?" Cole asked.

14 Garvey and Edwin ignored his question. One at a time they carried the heavy cardboard boxes up to the shelter and stacked them inside the door. When they finished, Edwin motioned for Cole to follow him up to the mossy bench of ground above the tide line. Cole moseyed along slowly, not catching up to Edwin until they reached the trees.

15 Edwin turned to Cole. “Nobody’s going to baby-sit you here. If you eat you’ll live. If not, you’ll die. This land can provide for you or kill you.” He pointed into the forest. “Winters are long. Cut plenty of wood or you’ll freeze. Keep things dry, because wet kills.”

16 “I’m not afraid of dying,” Cole boasted.

**Annotations:**

---

---

---

---

17 Edwin smiled slightly. “If death stares you straight in the face, believe me, son, you’ll get scared.” He pointed to a tall plant with snake-like branches. “This island is covered with Devil’s Club. Don’t grab it or hundreds of tiny thistles will infect your hands and make them swell up like sausages.” Edwin motioned toward the head of the bay, a quarter mile away. “The stream over there is where you get fresh water.”

18 “Why didn’t you put my camp closer to the stream?”

19 “Other animals come here for water, too,” Edwin said. “How would you feel if a bear made its den beside the stream?”

20 Cole shrugged. “I’d kill it.”

21 The potbellied elder nodded with a knowing smile. “Animals feel the same way. Don’t forget that.” He turned to Cole and placed a hand on his shoulder. Cole tried to pull away, but Edwin gripped him like a clamp. “You aren’t the only creature here. You’re part of a much bigger circle. Learn your place or you’ll have a rough time.”

22 “What is there to learn?”

23 “Patience, gentleness, strength, honesty,” Edwin said. He looked up into the trees. “Animals can teach us more about ourselves than any teacher.” He stared away toward the south. “Off the coast of British Columbia, there is a special black bear called the Spirit Bear. It’s pure white and has pride, dignity, and honor. More than most people.”

24 “If I saw a Spirit Bear, I’d kill it,” Cole said.

25 Edwin tightened his grip as if in warning. “Whatever you do to the animals, you do to yourself. Remember that.”

26 “You’re crazy, old man,” Cole said, twisting free of Edwin’s grip. Edwin continued speaking calmly as if nothing had happened. “Don’t eat anything unless you know what it is. Plants, berries, and mushrooms can kill you. There’s a book in with the supplies to study if you want to learn what is safe to eat. I suggest you read every word. Life is up to you now. I don’t know how it was for you in the big city, but up here you live and die by your actions. We’ll be out to check on you in a couple of days. After that, Garvey will head home and I’ll drop off supplies every few weeks. Any questions?”

27 Cole smirked. He didn't plan on eating any shrubs or berries. "Why did you bring me out so far?" he asked mockingly. "Were you afraid I'd escape?"

28 Edwin looked out across the bay and drew in a deep breath. "Years ago, I was brought here myself when my spirit got lost. This is a good place to find yourself."

29 "This place sucks!" Cole mumbled.

30 Edwin pulled out a key and turned Cole roughly around to remove his handcuffs. "Anger keeps you lost," he said, as he started back toward the shelter. "You can find yourself here, but only if you search."

31 Rubbing at the raw skin on his wrists, Cole followed.

**Annotations:**

---

---

---

---

***\*Using this text, answer the following questions.***

1. Which of the following **best** explains why Cole must live in the Alaskan wilderness for a year?
  - a. Cole's father is moving there and Cole has to come along.
  - b. The Circle Justice is forcing him to stay there because he cannot get along with the other kids.
  - c. The Circle Justice hopes to change Cole's character by requiring him to learn survival skills.
  - d. Cole wants to see a Spirit Bear more than anything else, and Spirit Bears are only seen in the Alaskan wilderness.
2. Paragraph 3 (starts with "Cole resented...") MAINLY shows that  
\_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Cole is insincere in going through Circle Justice's efforts to change his life.
  - b. Cole is nervous about staying in the cabin on his own for a whole year.
  - c. Cole blames Garvey for getting him into this mess.
  - d. Cole is grateful toward his father for paying the expenses to help him change his life.
3. When Edwin mentions the Spirit Bear to Cole, it **mainly** adds to the development of the story by...
  - a. introducing the spiritual teacher who led Edwin to become very wise
  - b. introducing a legend that might become important to Cole later in the story
  - c. developing Edwin's character as one of extreme superstition
  - d. introducing conflict as the Spirit Bear could become a rival while Cole is living in the wild

4. What is **most closely** the meaning of withdraw as it is used in paragraph 5 of the text?

“You can withdraw your guilty plea and go through standard justice any time you want,” Garvey said. “But once you go to trial, it’s too late for Circle Justice.” When Cole hesitated, Garvey added, “I thought you liked being in control, Champ.”

- a. verb | to leave or come back from a place
- b. verb | to say that a statement is untrue or unjustified
- c. verb | to take money out of an account
- d. verb | to take something given or used back

5. Which of these inferences about Edwin is **best** supported by the text?

- a. Edwin has spent a lot of time outdoors interacting with nature.
- b. Edwin has no faith that Cole will ever change.
- c. Edwin doubts that spending time with nature can change a person’s character.
- d. Edwin is very superstitious about the Spirit Bear.

6. Which of the following lines **best** support the correct answer to Question 5?

- a. “Edwin smiled slightly. ‘If death stares you straight in the face, believe me, son, you’ll get scared.’”
- b. “Edwin turned to Cole. ‘Nobody’s going to baby-sit you here. If you eat you’ll live. If not, you’ll die. This land can provide for you or kill you.’”
- c. “Several weeks earlier, Edwin, the Tlingit elder from Drake, had built a sparse one-room wood shelter for Cole on the island.”
- d. “‘Patience, gentleness, strength, honesty,’ Edwin said. He looked up into the trees. ‘Animals can teach us more about ourselves than any teacher.’”

7. Which of the following inferences about Cole is **best** supported by the text?

- a. Cole is a quick learner and eager to test his survival skills on the island.
- b. Cole doesn’t think he will have to stay on the island for the whole year because he is used to his dad bailing him out.
- c. Cole is resentful toward his father, Garvey, and Edwin, but goes along with Circle Justice’s requirements quietly because he knows there are worse options.
- d. Cole feels very sorry for beating up Peter Driscal.

## ***I Never Had It Made: An Autobiography of Jackie Robinson***

*In 1947, Jackie Robinson (1919–1972), a talented baseball player and man of great character, made history as the first African American baseball player to “break the color line” and play in modern Major League Baseball. In this excerpt from his autobiography, Robinson reflects back on his experience and its impact on American society.*

1 I guess if I could choose one of the most important moments in my life, I would go back to 1947, in the Yankee Stadium in New York City. It was the opening day of the world series and I was for the first time playing in the series as a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers team. It was a history-making day. It would be the first time that a black man would be allowed to participate in a world series. I had become the first black player in the major leagues. I was proud of that and yet I was uneasy.

2 I was proud to be in the hurricane eye of a significant breakthrough and to be used to prove that a sport can't be called national if blacks are barred from it. Branch Rickey, the president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, had rudely awakened America. He was a man with high ideals, and he was also a shrewd businessman. Mr. Rickey had shocked some of his fellow baseball tycoons and angered others by deciding to smash the unwritten law that kept blacks out of the big leagues. He had chosen me as the person to lead the way.

3 It hadn't been easy. Some of my own teammates refused to accept me because I was black. I had been forced to live with snubs and rebuffs and rejections. Within the club, Mr. Rickey had put down rebellion by letting my teammates know that anyone who didn't want to accept me could leave. But the problems within the Dodgers club had been minor compared to the opposition outside. It hadn't been that easy to fight the resentment expressed by players on other teams, by the team owners, or by bigoted fans screaming "n-----." The hate mail piled up. There were threats against me and my family and even out-and-out attempts at physical harm to me.

### **Annotations:**

---

---

---

---

---

4 Some things counterbalanced this ugliness. Black people supported me with total loyalty. They supported me morally: they came to sit in a hostile audience in unprecedented numbers to make the turnstiles hum as they never had before at ballparks all over the nation. Money is America's God, and business people can dig black power if it coincides with green power, so these fans were important to the success of Mr. Rickey's "Noble Experiment."

5 Some of the Dodgers who swore they would never play with a black man had a change of mind, when they realized I was a good ballplayer who could be in there earning a few thousand more dollars in world series money. After the initial resistance to me had been crushed, my teammates started to give me tips in how to improve my game. They hadn't changed because they liked me any better; they had changed because I could help fill their wallets.

6 My fellow Dodgers were not decent out of self-interest alone. There were heartwarming experiences with some teammates; there was Southern-born Pee Wee Reese, who turned into a staunch friend. And there were others.

**Annotations:**

---

---

---

---

---

7 Mr. Rickey stands out as the man who inspired me the most. He will always have my admiration and respect. Critics had said, “Don’t you know that your precious Mr. Rickey didn’t bring you up out of the black leagues because he loved you? Are you stupid enough not to understand that the Brooklyn club profited hugely because of what your Mr. Rickey did?”

8 Yes, I know that. But I also know what a big gamble he took. A bond developed between us that lasted long after I had left the game. In a way I feel I was the son he had lost and he was the father I had lost.

9 In a very real sense, black people helped make the experiment succeed. Many who came to the ball park had not been baseball fans before I began to play in the big leagues. Suppressed and repressed for so many years, they needed a victorious black man as a symbol. It would help them believe in themselves. But black support of the first black man in the majors was a complicated matter. The breakthrough created as much danger as it did hope. It was one thing for me out there on the playing field to be able to keep my cool in the face of insults. But it was another for all those black people sitting in the stands to keep from overreacting when they sensed a racial slur or an unjust decision. ...I learned from Rachel, who had spent hours in the stands, that clergymen and laymen had held meetings in the black community to spread the word. We all knew about the help of the black press. Mr. Rickey and I owed them a great deal.

10 Children from all races came to the stands. The very young seemed to have no hangup at all about my being black. They just wanted me to be good, to deliver, to win. The inspiration of their innocence is amazing. I don’t think I’ll ever forget the small, shrill voice of a tiny white kid who, in the midst of a racially tense atmosphere during an early game in a Dixie town, cried out, “Attaboy, Jackie.” It broke the tension and it made me feel I had to succeed.

11 The black and the young were my cheering squads. But also, there were people—neither black nor young—people of all races and faiths and in all parts of the country, people who couldn’t care less about my race.

12 Rachel was even more important to my success. I know that every successful man is supposed to say that without his wife he could never have accomplished success. It is gospel in my case. Rachel shared those difficult years that led to this moment and helped me through all the days thereafter. She has been strong, loving, gentle, and brave, never afraid to either criticize or comfort me.

## Annotations:

---

---

---

---

---

**\*Using this text, answer the following questions.**

1. Which of the following inferences about the author is **best** supported by the first paragraph of the excerpt?
  - a. The author regrets becoming a baseball player.
  - b. The author is aware of his importance as a cultural figure.
  - c. The author thinks his life was much better when he was younger.
  - d. The author feels that black players should form their own league.

2. What do the following lines from paragraph 4 **mainly** reveal about the narrator's views?

*Black people supported me with total loyalty. They supported me morally: they came to sit in a hostile audience in unprecedented numbers to make the turnstiles hum as they never had before at ballparks all over the nation. Money is America's God, and business people can dig black power if it coincides with green power, so these fans were important to the success of Mr. Rickey's "Noble Experiment."*

- a. He doesn't believe that most black people actually liked the sport of baseball.
  - b. He realizes that he was only able to keep playing because he made money for the team owners.
  - c. He doesn't think that Mr. Rickey was a very honest person.
  - d. He believes that most Americans are corrupt.
3. Which of the following **best** explains the author's feelings about Mr. Rickey's intentions?
  - a. He wonders if he'll ever know Mr. Rickey's true intentions.
  - b. He thinks that Mr. Rickey wanted him to play because he was dedicated to advancing the cause of civil rights.
  - c. He believes that Mr. Rickey wanted to sell the Brooklyn Dodgers to someone else.
  - d. He thinks Mr. Rickey was very brave, even if he was motivated by self-interest.
4. What is **most likely** the author's purpose in writing this excerpt?
  - a. To share the events and people in his life that inspired him
  - b. To bring attention to ongoing discrimination in professional baseball
  - c. To make the case that more African American athletes should play baseball, instead of other sports
  - d. To make the reader wonder what will happen next in this story



5. Which of the following **best** identifies the author's feelings about why his teammates ultimately accepted him?
- a. He thinks they only accepted him because he made the team more likely to win.
  - b. He thinks some of them cared about him, and eventually saw him as a friend.
  - c. Both A and B
  - d. Neither A nor B
6. Which passage from the text **best** supports the answer to Question 5?
- a. "My fellow Dodgers were not decent out of self-interest alone."
  - b. "Mr. Rickey stands out as the man who inspired me the most."
  - c. "I had been forced to live with snubs and rebuffs and rejections."
  - d. "Some of my own teammates refused to accept me because I was black."
7. With which of the following statements about racism would the author **most likely** agree?
- a. There is no possible solution to America's racial divide.
  - b. The country's racial problems are caused by the divide between the rich and poor.
  - c. Young people are generally less prejudiced than their parents and grandparents.
  - d. America in the late 1940s wasn't ready for racial integration in professional baseball.
8. Which passage from the text **best** supports the answer to Question 7?
- a. "The very young seemed to have no hangup at all about my being black. They just wanted me to be good, to deliver, to win."
  - b. "I know that every successful man is supposed to say that without his wife he could never have accomplished success. It is gospel in my case."
  - c. "His peers and fellow baseball moguls exerted all kinds of influence to get him to change his mind. Some of the press condemned him as a fool and a demagogue. But he didn't give in."
  - d. "After the initial resistance to me had been crushed, my teammates started to give me tips in how to improve my game."

### Grammar and some Parts of Speech

A **noun** names a person, place, thing, or idea. There are singular nouns, plural nouns, possessive nouns, compound nouns, proper nouns, common nouns, etc. There are also PRONOUNS, which are nouns, BUT they are their own part of speech. There are soooooo many nouns, we could NEVER name them all. Here are some: book, train, Publix, raft, alligator, Australia, Sally, happiness, ceiling, dirt, tree, bottle, pizza, lake, tower, school

\*In the sentences below, underline or circle the nouns.

1. Sara will need a new winter coat this year.
2. Terrell is a major in the army.
3. Finding time to study is a major problem for Thomas.
4. At one time, dinosaurs were rulers of the earth.
5. Many of these animals walked on two legs and used their hands to hold things.
6. Mary was taken on a long ride on a train to the country.
7. Many questions, however, still have no answers.
8. In 1785, Thomas Pool presented the first circus in the United States

A **pronoun** is a word that takes the place of a noun. You use them ALL OF THE TIME! They are sometimes called “people words”. Here are a few: you, me, us, he, she, we, I ....and there are more. The word “it” is a pronoun. If a book falls on the ground you could say, “It is on the ground.” *IT* is referring to the book that fell.

**Here are some pronouns:**

**Singular pronouns** are simply pronouns that refer to singular nouns.

EXAMPLES: I, you, he, she, and it; me, him, and her; and my, mine, his, her, hers, and its.

**Plural pronouns** are simply pronouns that refer to plural nouns.

EXAMPLES: we, you, and they; us and them; and our, ours, their, and theirs

*\*In the sentences below, circle the PRONOUNS.*

1. Jack and I joined the race, but he really didn't want to.
2. They will be here in 15 minutes.
3. Did you see that boulder move?
4. No, I didn't. Maybe it just wobbled a little.
5. Don't tell me that! You can see the track it made.

*\*In the sentences below, fill in the blanks with a pronoun that works. There might be more than one option.*

6. Mom told Mark and \_\_\_\_\_ to clean our rooms.
7. Why is \_\_\_\_\_ so loud?
8. “ \_\_\_\_\_ makes me so mad!” Sara yelled.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ went with \_\_\_\_\_ to the mall.

10. “\_\_\_\_\_ broke when \_\_\_\_\_ hit the ground,” \_\_\_\_\_ said.

**Adjectives** are describing words. Specifically, they describe nouns. (So, if a person is running quickly, quickly describes the VERB running, so quickly is NOT an adjective.) Examples of adjectives: blue, tall, funny, smooth, nice, tired, new, three... the list goes on and on.

**Adjectives answer these questions:**    What kind?    Which one or ones?    How many or how much?

Examples in sentences: The young, fuzzy puppy drank two bowls of cool water after his long walk. It may help to locate the nouns first, then ask yourself which words describe the nouns.

*\*In each sentence below, underline or circle the ADJECTIVES.*

1. The red, new boat slipped easily into the cool, clear water.
2. Where are those noisy birds going on this hot summer day?
3. This stormy weather makes me want to sleep all day.
4. Sam felt anxious about the upcoming test.
5. The wings themselves were finer than the finest rice paper, and yet they were strong.
6. The three blind mice quietly scurried through the dark house.
7. The young child was cold but willing to participate in the snowy outdoor games.
8. Tom quickly cleaned the messy glass doors.
9. I threw my yummy lunch into a brown paper bag before catching the bus.
10. Benny bought a new, red leather jacket before the Christmas show last night.

***Let's see what you know about PUNCTUATION.***

*\*The sentences below are poorly written and missing all punctuation. Rewrite each one on the line provided.*

1. huey duey and luey are 3 young ducks

---

---

2. were are you going ask Robert

---

---

3. edward running late as usual pulled up to the house ran in grabbed his lunch and left again

---

---

---

4. twins brenda and Barbara graduated hi school last week and they are both starting fsu in august

---

---

5. tokyo the largest city in japan is visited by tourists all year long yet most people have never been their

---

---

---

**Looking to do some additional reading over the summer? Why not get a jump start on one of the DMS Reading Challenges? See below for information.**

1. **Sunshine State Young Reader Award (SSYA) Challenge:** Read just 3 of the 14 awesome SSYRA books and ace the Canvas quiz by February 27<sup>th</sup> for a cool ice cream party after spring break!
2. **Kicking off the Year Strong Challenge:** Read any 2 grade level books, complete the book review (form attached) and snag a special incentive. Let's get reading! 😊



The graphic features a stylized sun with orange rays and a blue arc below it. The text "SSYRA 2025-2026" is in bold orange, and "Reading Challenge" is in large orange letters. Below this is a grid of 14 book covers arranged in three rows: the first row has 5 books, the second and third rows each have 4 books. The last book in the grid is a black cover with the text "Read More" and an open book icon. Below the grid, blue text provides details about the challenge.

**SSYRA 2025-2026**

# Reading Challenge



The grid of book covers includes: *Brick Dust and Bones* by M.R. Fournet; *Confessions of a Class Clown* by Ariadne Costner; *Control Freaks* by J.E. Thomas; *Curl Friends* by Share Miller; *The Fire, The Water, and Maudie McGinn* by Sally J. Pla; *The Firefly Summer* by Morgan Matson; *The First State of Being* by Erin Entrada Kelly; *Fowl Play* by Kristin O'Donnell Tubb; *Heroes* by Alan Gratz; *Play the Game* by Amar Shah; *The Lost Year* by Katherine Marsh; *Mip-Air* by Michel Q. Williams; *Shinji Takahashi and the Mark of the Coat* by Julie Kagawa; *Sky Riders* by Steven L. Korman; and a "Read More" button with an open book icon.

Under the "Media-Deerlake" in Canvas, you will find quizzes on all 14 books. Your score must be a 4 out of 5 on the quiz for each book you read in order for it to count. Deadline is February 27th to attend the ice cream party!