

Pipkin, Gloria. "Promoting Real Summer Reading." *Notes Plus* 15.4 (March 1997): 4-5.

Of course we want our students to read over the summer, but I've yet to be convinced that the typical summer reading assignment does much to extend love of reading or increase literary competence. There may be a handful of students who can't wait to tackle our scintillating assignments on their summer vacation, but for the most part, summer reading assignments are regarded as a plague and a pox, even by avid readers, who much prefer choosing their own books. Why don't we devote some time during the last couple of weeks of school to promoting real summer reading? Not mandating or requiring or assigning but encouraging it. Here are a few ways I've tried and some others I'd like to try:

- preparing and distributing student-written brochures on summer reading. My students did one on "Beach Books," which they defined as "books you can read with one eye while the other is peeled for promenading pulchritude" (either masculine or feminine).
- doing summer reading promos and reviews on morning announcements
- lending books from class libraries over the summer
- having a book fair at the end of the school year
- putting together a summer reading order form with the help of a local bookstore, and having books delivered the last week of school
- starting a summer reading program at the school
- giving books as prizes/rewards at end-of-school ceremonies
- making giant promotional posters for good books and posting them all over the school
- putting summer reading suggestions on the school's Web site
- arranging a book swap on the last day of school
- presenting book talks in all classes
- distributing annotated, specialized reading lists—e.g., nonfiction, science fiction, WW II, etc., based on surveys of students' interests
- publishing teachers' own personal recommendations for summer reading
- compiling a list of good audio books for car trips and other travel

I'm confident we could extend this list almost indefinitely, as well as come up with some great ideas for sharing summer discoveries when school is back in session. Students will be eternally grateful for a change from the status quo, and they might even read more, with greater understanding and satisfaction.

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