

Part Two: Character Study



Throughout sixth grade, we will be working to answer the question: “What makes good literature?” While there are many ways to answer this question, one necessary part of any good book is a cast of great characters.

You may love them or loathe them, laugh with them or cry with them, but the characters are the ones who really tell us the story and take us inside the action. Good authors have the ability to make characters feel like real people with real thoughts and emotions. Can you think of any characters like this from books you’ve read?

Part two of your summer reading assignment has to do with getting to know characters. For part two, you will read one book of your choice from the list on the next page. All of the books have been selected because they have an important theme in common – they are all about different kids’ experiences during their summer vacations! While you read, your task is to get to know the characters and to observe how they grow or change during their summer.

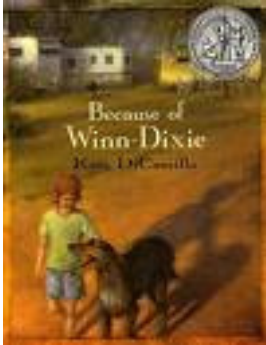
Directions for Character Study:

1. Choose and read one of the books from the “Character Study” list on the next page (I suggest you wait until August to read this book so that it is still fresh in your head for our discussions. ☺)
2. As you read, take notes (in whatever way works for you) on the characters and how they change throughout the book. Be sure to include the page number of any examples you note.
3. Be ready to share and discuss the book and your notes on the characters when school begins in September!

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Character Study Book Choices

Choose one of the following books to read this summer and take notes about the characters:



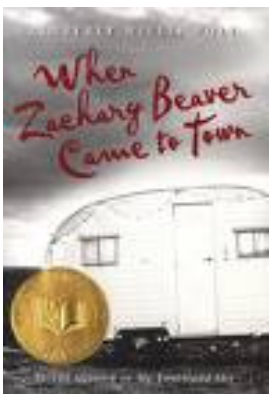
Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

The summer 10-year-old Opal and her father, the preacher, move to Naomi, Florida, Opal goes into the Winn-Dixie supermarket and comes out with a dog. Dirty and scruffy but immediately loveable, Winn-Dixie becomes Opal's first friend in Naomi. Opal and her new pal spend all summer collecting stories about the residents of her new hometown and shaking things up along the way.



A Long Way from Chicago by Richard Peck

When Joey and his sister Mary Alice travel from their home in Chicago to their Grandmother's small town, they don't expect the crazy adventures they encounter there. This book tells the story of not one, but many summers spent with Grandma Dowdel spanning the years from 1929-1942. In eight hilarious episodes, the kids tag along as their Grandmother plots outlandish schemes to even the score with various colorful members of her community.



When Zachary Beaver Came to Town by Kimberly Willis Holt

Nothing much ever happens in Toby's small Texas town. Nothing much, that is, until the summer Zachary Beaver, billed as the fattest boy in the world, arrives in Antler. Toby is enthralled with the stories of all the people and places Zachary knows, and he wants to know more about the boy behind the billing. Toby is in for a summer that will change his perspective about himself, his friends, and small-town living.