

# 7th Grade Language Arts Summer Reading

Choose **ONE** of these 2 books:

## ***The Labors of Hercules Beal* by Gary D. Schmidt**

From award-winning author Gary D. Schmidt, a warm and witty novel in the tradition of *The Wednesday Wars*, in which a seventh grader has to figure out how to fulfill an assignment to perform the Twelve Labors of Hercules in real life--and makes discoveries about friendship, community, and himself along the way.

Herc Beal knows who he's named after--a mythical hero--but he's no superhero. He's the smallest kid in his class. So when his homeroom teacher at his new middle school gives him the assignment of duplicating the mythical Hercules's amazing feats in real life, he's skeptical. After all, there are no Nemean Lions on Cape Cod--and not a single Hydra in sight.

Missing his parents terribly and wishing his older brother wasn't working all the time, Herc figures out how to take his first steps along the road that the great Hercules himself once walked. Soon, new friends, human and animal, are helping him. And though his mythical role model performed his twelve labors by himself, Herc begins to see that he may not have to go it alone.

## ***Iceberg* by Jennifer Neilsen**

The thrilling story of a young girl who stows away onboard the Titanic and as she explores, attempting to find answers to her many questions about the ship, suddenly finds herself caught up in the desperate struggle to survive after it strikes an iceberg.

Hazel Rothbury is traveling all alone from her home in England aboard the celebrated ship Titanic. Following the untimely death of her father, Hazel's mother is sending her to the US to work in a factory, so that she might send money back home to help her family make ends meet.

But Hazel harbors a secret dream: She wants to be a journalist, and she just knows that if she can write and sell a story about the Titanic's maiden voyage, she could earn enough money to support her family and not have to go to a sweatshop. When Hazel discovers that mother didn't send her with enough money for a ticket, she decides she must stow away onboard the storied ship.

With the help of a porter named Charlie and a sweet first-class passenger named Sylvia, Hazel explores the opulent ship in secret, but a haunting mystery quickly finds her. The danger only intensifies when calamity strikes, and readers will be caught up in the terror and suspense alongside Hazel as she fights to save her friends and herself.

**After reading your chosen book, write a 5 paragraph essay in MLA format.**

### ***The Labors of Hercules Beal:***

Which of the "labors" in the novel, both literal and symbolic, do you think Hercules learns the most from?

### ***Iceberg:***

What personality traits make Hazel a great detective and future journalist?

***Check your email from me, subject "Summer Reading," for extra help.***