

"Summer afternoon—summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language." - Henry James

We love summer vacation! A second cup of coffee on the deck in the morning, a leisurely hike in the mountains, an afternoon absorbed in a long-anticipated book, hours splashing in a pool with children— these are just a few reasons to enjoy summer. As educators, the thoughts of these days call to us during the busy times at school. Yet as much as we look forward to a well-deserved break, as soon as the last firecracker explodes on the 4th of July, our thoughts begin to turn back to school. What can we do during these lazy days to begin to prepare for the next year?

Discover a new children's author: Kathryn Applegate

The One and Only Ivan—This Newberry winning book tells the story of Ivan, a silver-backed gorilla who lives in a cage at the mall. He spends his days with his friends Stella, an aged elephant, and Bob, a stray dog. His life changes radically when Ruby, a baby elephant, joins the animals. This warm book speaks of both freedom and friendship.

Home of the Brave—This poignant novel, written in free verse, tells the story of Kek, a lost boy of the Sudan, who is taken to Minnesota. While he waits for news of his missing mother, he makes friends with a girl in foster care, an elderly woman who runs a farm, and her cow. Students easily identify with Kek as he struggles to find his place in a new place and unfamiliar situations.

Crenshaw—This thoughtful novel deals with the difficult subject of homelessness. Jackson and his family have fallen on difficult times and are faced with the prospect of living in their car. The title character, Crenshaw, is a large imaginary cat who befriends Jackson. The importance of friendships of all kinds is thoughtfully examined in this newest novel by Katherine Applegate.

Find these books and other titles by Katherine Applegate at:

https://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&page=1&rh=n%3A283155%2Cp_27%3AKatherine%20Applegate



Read a new professional book

Summer is a great time to read that professional book that you've been meaning to get to all year. Three of our favorites—

The Morning Meeting Book by Roxanne Kriete and Carol Davis Morning Meeting, a significant component of the *Responsive Classroom*, is "an engaging way to start each day, build a strong sense of community, and set children up for success academically and socially." (www.responsiveclassroom.org) Whether you already practice Morning Meeting or not, a review of the importance of this daily routine is a productive summer practice.

<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/product/morning-meeting-book/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/writenow2014/morning-meeting-ideas/>

Number Talks—Helping Children Build Mental Math and Computation Strategies K–5 by Sherry Parrish How do we help our students learn to think about their own math thinking? This book provides teachers ways to aid students in learning how to reason with numbers and express their thinking. Outlining ways to implement daily number talks, this easy to read book helps teachers encourage their students to think about math, make sense of numbers, and build a solid foundation for algebra.

<http://store.mathsolutions.com/product-info.php?Number-Talks-pid270.html>

Make Learning Personal by Barbara Bray and Kathleen McClaskey This new book is a must-read for teachers who wish to move towards more personalized learning in their classrooms. The authors provide a balance of theory and practical application.

<http://www.personalizelearning.com/p/make-learning-personal.html>

Organize something!

During the school year, many of us create piles. Piles of unused reading passages, piles of articles to read, piles of children's books, a pile of "things to do" that travels with us back and forth from school to home in our teacher bag. Summer is a great time to organize! Even if you don't go in to your classroom—a practice we heartily support—making a plan for classroom organization is time well spent.

- How will you organize the classroom? Do you want table groups or rows? How can you build in areas for small groups or individual students to work? Do you want some alternative seating opportunities—standing desks, clipboards, floor space?

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/classroom-organization-physical-environment>

Organization, continued

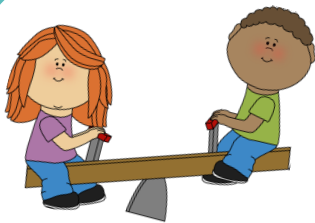
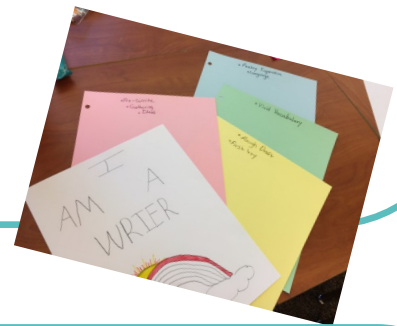
- How will you organize your classroom library? Do you want the books organized by author, title, or genre? Should the books be placed in a classroom library or scattered around the room? How will you keep track of books students borrow? What is the best way to use your school library?

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/build-and-organize-classroom-library>

- How will you help your students organize their notebooks? Will you have separate notebooks for subject areas or one large notebook with dividers? What about unfinished work? See this blog post for ideas on organizing writing notebooks and some pinned ideas on interactive math notebooks.

<http://www.writenow-rightnow.com/blog/2015/starting-the-year-well-begun-is-half-done>

<https://www.pinterest.com/writenow2014/interactive-math-notebooks/>



"Do What You Love—Love What You Do"

I just finished reading *The End of Your Life Book Club* by Will Schwabe. When the author's mother is diagnosed with cancer, they form a book club of two to pursue their favorite pastime—reading and discussing books. The story is a reminder to take the time to do what you love, no matter what that might be. We wish you an opportunity to find and enjoy balance in your life this summer.

Sixth Grade is coming!

We are excited to announce that Write Now—Right Now will be available for 6th grade in August, 2016!! Let us know if we can be of service to you in any way!

Additional ideas and activities can be found in the *Write Now - Right Now Writing Program*.

Visit: www.writenow-rightnow.com for more information and lesson samples.