Summer Reading List For Rising 8th Graders

All School Required Read: The common book that everyone reads will be our jumping off point as we begin in August. The use of a common read gives us a shared experience upon which we can build as we start the year.

**** All Read (required): *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*, by Malala Yousafzai ****

"When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize. I Am Malala is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons. I Am Malala will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world." -- Publisher's description.

Assessment: There will be a writing response to prompts during the first weeks of school. You will be asked to reflect on your reading experience in the form of an open book in-class writing assignment. Sample prompts:

a. Describe the central conflict in the novel and how the protagonist deals with the conflict.

b. How does point of view contribute to the overall meaning of the novel?

Note that these are just examples of assessment prompts. There will be other ways we will use this summer reading to introduce activities.

Please note that titles with an asterisk (*) before them may contain subject matter or language that some may find offensive. You may want to read them with or before your child reads them or avoid them altogether.

Choose any four from the following annotated list: These should be books you have not read before.

**And Then There Were None** by Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie's most famous and acclaimed novel! Ten strangers are gathered together on an isolated island by a mysterious host. They share the darkest secrets of their pasts, and then, one by one, they die.

**Animal Farm** by George Orwell

This is Orwell's brilliant 1946 satire, chronicling a revolution staged by the animals on Mr. Jones's farm.

**Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine, 1845-1850** by Susan Campbell Bartoletti

In 1845, a disaster struck Ireland. Overnight, a mysterious blight attacked the potato crops, turning the potatoes black and destroying the only real food of nearly six million people. **(2002 Sibert Informational Book Award Winner)**

**Breath** by Donna Napoli

Elaborates on the tale of "The Pied Piper," told from the point of view of a boy who is too ill to keep up when a piper spirits away the healthy children of a plague-ridden town after being cheated out of full payment for ridding Hamelin of rats.
**Call of the Wild** by Jack London

Buck is a dog born to luxury, but he is betrayed and sold as a sled dog in the harsh and frozen Yukon. Buck is stronger than any man knew, and he escapes captivity and rises above his enemies to become the leader of a wolf pack. This action-packed novel tells the remarkable story of one of the most feared and admired dogs in the north.

**Endurance** by Alfred Lansing

Ernest Shackleton defined heroism in 1915 when his ship, the Endurance, was trapped in ice and then destroyed on its way to Antarctica. This tense week-by-week, month-by-month reconstruction charts the incredible journey undertaken by his crew of 27 men through 850 miles of the southern Atlantic's heaviest seas.

**Gathering Blue** by Lois Lowry

Lame and suddenly orphaned, Kira is mysteriously removed from her squalid village to live in the palatial Council Edifice, where she is expected to use her gifts as a weaver to do the bidding of the all-powerful Guardians.

**Godless** by Pete Hautman

When sixteen-year-old Jason Bock and his friends create their own religion to worship the town's water tower, what started out as a joke begins to take on a power of its own. **(2004 National Book Award, Young People’s Literature Winner; ALA Best Book for Young Adults)**

**Hattie Big Sky** by Kirby Larson

In 1917, Hattie Brooks was a 16-year-old orphan who had spent most of her young life passed from one relative to another. But a letter arrives from an uncle she never knew she had, and everything changes as she leaves for eastern Montana to prove her uncle's land claim. **(2007 Newbery Honor Book)**

**The Grass Harp** by Truman Capote

Set on the outskirts of a small Southern town, **The Grass Harp** tells the story of three endearing misfits—an orphaned boy and two whimsical old ladies—who one day take up residence in a tree house. As they pass sweet yet hazardous hours in a china tree, **The Grass Harp** manages to convey all the pleasures and responsibilities of freedom. But most of all it teaches us about the sacredness of love, "that love is a chain of love, as nature is a chain of life."

**The Hiding Place** by Corrie Ten Boom and John Scherrill

Corrie ten Boom was a leader in the Dutch Underground during WWII. With the aid of her family, she hid scores of Jews from the Nazi invaders. She was arrested along with every member of her family, spending the remaining war years in concentration camps.

**Homesick: My Own Story** by Jean Fritz
The author's fictionalized version, though all the events are true, of her childhood in China in the 1920's. Jean Fritz was born in China and lived there until 1927, when she was twelve. Young Jean had spent her entire life in China, but her parents' memories of home and letters from relatives in Pennsylvania made her feel that she was American—and homesick for a place she'd never seen!

**The Hound of the Baskervilles** by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Could the sudden death of Sir Charles Baskerville have been caused by the gigantic ghostly hound which is said to have haunted his family for generations? Arch-rationalist Sherlock Holmes characteristically dismisses the theory as nonsense. Claiming to be immersed in another case, he sends Watson to Devon to protect the Baskerville heir and to observe the suspects at close hand.

**The House of the Scorpion** by Nancy Farmer

In a future where humans despise clones, Matt enjoys special status as the young clone of El Patrón, the 142-year-old leader of a corrupt drug empire nestled between Mexico and the United States. *(2002 National Book Award, Young People’s Literature Winner; 2003 Newbery Award Honor Book)*

**Journey to the Center of the Earth** by Jules Verne

When Axel deciphers an old parchment that describes a secret passage through a volcano to the center of the earth, nothing will stop his eccentric Uncle Lidenbrock from setting out at once. So, with silent Hans the guide, the two men embark on a perilous, astonishing, terrifying journey through the subterranean world - the most incredible voyage ever.

**Kon-Tiki** by Thor Heyerdahl

Kon-Tiki is the record of an astonishing adventure — a journey of 4,300 nautical miles across the Pacific Ocean by raft. Intrigued by Polynesian folklore, biologist Thor Heyerdahl suspected that the South Sea Islands had been settled by an ancient race from thousands of miles to the east, led by a mythical hero, Kon-Tiki. He decided to prove his theory by duplicating the legendary voyage.

**The Light in the Forest** by Conrad Richter

Though reared as a Lenni Lenape Indian, fifteen-year-old True Son, once called John Camera Butler, was ordered back to the white man. It was impossible for True Son to believe that his people were white and not Indian. He had learned to hate the white man. And now he learned to hate his new father, his new house, his new family. He hated the name John Butler. Where did he belong now—and where could he go?

**Lost Horizon** by James Hilton

In this still timely tale foreigners lost in Tibetan mountains find their dreams and then lose them in the harsh glare of reality. It takes place before World War II and is a metaphor for our lost innocence and the end of paradise.

**Messenger** by Lois Lowry
In this novel that unites characters from The Giver and Gathering Blue, Matty, a young member of a utopian community that values honesty, conceals an emerging healing power that he cannot explain or understand.

**Member of the Wedding** by Carson McCullers

This is Columbus native Carson McCullers's achingly real novel about Frankie Addams, a bored twelve-year-old madly jealous of her brother's impending marriage.

**The Old Man and the Sea** by Ernest Hemingway

The last novel Ernest Hemingway saw published, The Old Man and the Sea has proved itself to be one of the enduring works of American fiction. It is the story of an old Cuban fisherman and his supreme ordeal: a relentless, agonizing battle with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream.

**The River Between Us** by Richard Peck

The year is 1861. Civil war is imminent and Tilly Pruitt's brother, Noah, is eager to go and fight on the side of the North. With her father long gone, Tilly, her sister, and their mother struggle to make ends meet and hold the dwindling Pruitt family together. (2003 National Book Award, Young People's Literature Finalist)

**Secrets of a Civil War Submarine** by Sally Walker

When the Union blockade of all ports in the South stopped supplies from reaching the Confederate Army, Horace L. Hunley decided to create a submarine that would be able to sneak up on enemy ships and blow them up. After many years of trial and error, the H. L. Hunley actually succeeded in sinking the USS Housatonic in February of 1864. But the submarine never returned to port, and her crew perished in the Charleston Harbor. This is a finely crafted account of the Hunley from its inception to the modern archaeological quest to exhume her from the water. (2006 Sibert Informational Book Award Winner)

**Skellig** by David Almond

Ten-year-old Michael was looking forward to moving into a new house. But now his baby sister is ill, his parents are frantic, and Doctor Death has come to call. Michael feels helpless. Then he steps into the crumbling garage.

**Troy** by Adele Geras

The siege of Troy has lasted almost ten years. Inside the walled city, food is scarce and death is common. From the heights of Mount Olympus, the Gods keep watch. But Aphrodite, Goddess of Love, is bored with the endless, dreary war. Aided by Eros's bow, the goddess sends two sisters down a bloody path to an awful truth: in the fury of war, love strikes the deadliest blows.

**Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes** by Chris Crutcher
Sarah Byrnes and Eric have been friends for years. When they were children, his fat and her terrible scars made them both outcasts. Later, although swimming slimmed Eric, she stayed his closest friend. Now Sarah Byrnes -- the smartest, toughest person Eric has ever known -- sits silent in a hospital. Eric must uncover the terrible secret she's hiding, before its dark currents pull them both under.

*Running Loose* by Chris Crutcher

He's got a starting spot on the football team, good friends, and a smart, beautiful girlfriend who loves him as much as he loves her. Early in the fall, he sees all his ideas of fair play go up in smoke; by spring, what he cares about most has been destroyed. How can Louie keep going when he's lost everything?

*Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech

After her mother leaves home suddenly, thirteen-year-old Sal and her grandparents take a car trip retracing her mother’s route. Along the way, Sal recounts the story of her friend Phoebe, whose mother also left. As Sal entertains her grandparents with Phoebe's outrageous story, her own story begins to unfold—the story of a thirteen-year-old girl whose only wish is to be reunited with her missing mother. *(1995 Newbery Award Winner)*

*Come All You Brave Soldiers* by Clinton Cox

This historical narration depicts the struggles, sacrifice, and heroism of over five thousand black men who fought for colonial independence in the American Revolution. These brave men were a crucial part of our country’s fight for freedom, though they remain, for the most part, unsung heroes.

*The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexander Dumas

The classic tale of young Edmond Dantes, falsely accused of treason and arrested on his wedding day, captures the imagination from the first page. His escape and attempts at revenge are riveting.

*Man Without A Country* by Edward Everett Hale

Tells the story of Philip Nolan, a lieutenant in the US Navy, who, at his court martial for treason, damned the US and declares that he wishes he might never hear her name again. His sentence is to have his wish fulfilled, and for 55 years he was kept at sea and away from home or any news about it.

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

Dr. Frankenstein, a brilliant scientist with an obsession, wants to play God and create a living human being all by himself. When the creature wakes up to life, he turns out to be a horrible monster.

*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* by Mark Twain

A satirical novel, published in 1889, tells the tale of a 19th century mechanic who suffers a blow to the head and wakes up in King Arthur’s Britain. He soon realizes that this is a world full of cruelty and feudalism, not just fairy tales and
knights in armor.

**I Heard the Owl Call My Name** by Margaret Craven

The story of a young missionary sent to a remote Kwakiuti Indian village, not knowing that he has less than three years to live. Mark comes to understand and love these people, and he sees how their way of life is being destroyed by the white man.

**The Pelican Brief** by John Grisham

Darby Shaw, a brilliant law student, comes up with a clever theory to explain the baffling assassinations of two Supreme Court judges in one day.

**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time** by Mark Haddon

Christopher Boone is fifteen, autistic, and a whiz at math. He gets along with animals much better than he gets along with people. However, when a neighbor’s dog is found dead, Christopher is blamed for the killing; so he sets out to find the real killer.

**Monkeytown: The Summer of the Scopes Trial** by Ronald Kidd

In Ronald Kidd's fictionalized re-creation (S & S, 2006) of the 1925 Scopes Monkey Trial, Frances Robinson, 15, filters events of that summer through the lens of friendship and loyalty in this first person account of history in the making. Originally orchestrated as a publicity stunt to bring commerce to the small town, the trial soon becomes more like a three-ring circus than an act of justice. Clarence Darrow comes to Dayton, TN, to defend local teacher, Johnny Scopes, while William Jenning Bryan leads the prosecution. Kidd brings these larger-than-life characters to fruition in this semi-factual, semi-biographical tale. Period detail, such as the innovation of Lazy Susans and the pervasiveness of Coca-Cola as a fountain drink, abounds. Ashley Albert provides a variety of Southern accents for the characters. Frances comes across as a wholesome, open-minded teen who is shaken to the core by her teacher's arrest and the events of the trial. In an afterword to the novel, Kidd provides information about the trial and the real Frances Robinson. This fast-paced novel blends history with a coming-of-age story.

**Seabiscuit: An American Legend** by Laura Hillenbrand

This story of a race horse with a truly big heart will capture your heart. He did not look like much, with his small stature, knobby knees, and crooked forelegs, but this remarkable horse became a cultural icon.

**The Perfect Storm** by Sebastian Junger

The story of a doomed ship caught in what some scientists have described as the storm of the century. This gripping story of survival is the narrative of attempting to make it in 100 foot waves.

**Siddhartha** by Herman Hesse
In the novel, Siddhartha, a young man, leaves his family for a contemplative life, then, restless, discards it for one of the flesh. He conceives a son, but bored and sickened by lust and greed, moves on again. Near despair, Siddhartha comes to a river where he hears a unique sound. This sound signals the true beginning of his life -- the beginning of suffering, rejection, peace, and, finally, wisdom.

*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

Things Fall Apart tells two intertwining stories, both centering on Okonkwo, a “strong man” of an Ibo village in Nigeria. The first, a powerful fable of the immemorial conflict between the individual and society, traces Okonkwo’s fall from grace with the tribal world. The second, as modern as the first is ancient, concerns the clash of cultures and the destruction of Okonkwo’s world with the arrival of aggressive European missionaries. These perfectly harmonized twin dramas are informed by an awareness capable of encompassing at once the life of nature, human history, and the mysterious compulsions of the soul.

*Emma* by Jane Austen

Beautiful, rich, self-assured and witty, Emma Woodhouse delights in matchmaking those around her, with no apparent care for her own romantic life. Taking young Harriet Smith under her wing, Emma sets her sights on finding a suitable match for her friend. Chided for her mistakes by old friend Mr Knightley, it is only when Harriet starts to pursue her own love interests that Emma realizes the true hidden depths of her own heart. Delightful, engaging and entertaining, Emma is arguably Austen's most well-loved social comedy.

Several synopses are based on information from the Barnes and Noble website and from Amazon.

As always, you know your child better than anyone, so if there is a book in question, choose another one or email me with questions or alternatives. Rising 8th graders have a wide variety of maturity levels, so please use your discretion.

**Reading Bowl Books for 2018-2019 (Grades 6-8)**

*The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora* by Pablo Cataya

For Arturo, summertime in Miami means playing basketball until dark, sipping mango smoothies, and keeping cool under banyan trees. And maybe a few shifts as junior lunchtime dishwasher at Abuela’s restaurant. Maybe. But this summer also includes Carmen, a poetry enthusiast who moves into Arturo’s apartment complex and turns his stomach into a deep fryer. He almost doesn’t notice the smarmy land developer who rolls into town and threatens to change it. Arturo refuses to let his family and community go down without a fight, and as he schemes with Carmen, Arturo discovers the power of poetry and protest through untold family stories and the work of José Martí.

*We Will Not Be Silent: The White Rose Student Resistance Movement that Defied Adolf Hitler* by Russell Freedman

In his signature eloquent prose, backed up by thorough research, Russell Freedman tells the story of Austrian-born Hans Scholl and his sister Sophie. They belonged to Hitler Youth as young children, but began to doubt the Nazi regime. As older students, the Scholls and a few friends formed the White Rose, a campaign of active resistance to Hitler and the Nazis. Risking imprisonment or even execution, the White Rose members distributed
leaflets urging Germans to defy the Nazi government. Their belief that freedom was worth dying for will inspire young readers to stand up for what they believe in.

**Refugee by Alan Gratz**
Three different kids.
One mission in common: ESCAPE.

Josef is a Jewish boy in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world...

Isabel is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety and freedom in America...

Mahmoud is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe...

All three young people will go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers—from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But for each of them, there is always the hope of tomorrow. And although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, surprising connections will tie their stories together in the end.

**Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March by Lowery, Leacock, and Buckley**
A 50th-anniversary tribute shares the story of the youngest person to complete the momentous Selma to Montgomery March, describing her frequent imprisonments for her participation in nonviolent demonstrations and how she felt about her involvement in historic Civil Rights events.

**Click Here to Start by Denis Markell**
What if playing video games was prepping you to solve an incredible real-world puzzle and locate a priceless treasure?
Twelve-year-old Ted Gerson has spent most of his summer playing video games. So when his great-uncle dies and bequeaths him the all so-called treasure in his overstuffed junk shop of an apartment, Ted explores it like it's another level to beat. And to his shock, he finds that eccentric Great-Uncle Ted actually has set the place up like a real-life escape-the-room game!

**Ghost by Jason Reynolds**
Ghost. Lu. Patina. Sunny. Four kids from widely different backgrounds with personalities that are explosive when they clash. However, they are also four kids chosen for an elite middle school track team—a team that could qualify them for the Junior Olympics if they can get their acts together. They all have a lot to lose, but they also have a lot to prove, not only to each other, but to themselves.

**Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team by Steve**
Sheinkin
When superstar athlete Jim Thorpe and football legend Pop Warner met in 1904 at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, they forged one of the winningest teams in American football history. Called “the team that invented football,” they took on the best opponents of their day, defeating much more privileged schools such as Harvard and the Army in a series of breathtakingly close calls, genius plays, and bone-crushing hard work.

Hoodoo by Ronald Smith
Twelve-year-old Hoodoo Hatcher was born into a family with a rich tradition of practicing folk magic: hoodoo, as most people call it. But even though his name is Hoodoo, he can't seem to cast a simple spell. Then a mysterious man called the Stranger comes to town, and Hoodoo starts dreaming of the dead rising from their graves. Even worse, he soon learns the Stranger is looking for a boy. Not just any boy. A boy named Hoodoo. The entire town is at risk from the Stranger’s black magic, and only Hoodoo can defeat him. He’ll just need to learn how to conjure first.

The Ethan I was Before by Ali Standish
Ethan had been many things. He was always ready for adventure and always willing to accept a dare, especially from his best friend, Kacey. But that was before. Before the accident that took Kacey from him. Before his family moved from Boston to the small town of Palm Knot, Georgia.

Palm Knot may be tiny, but it's the home of possibility and second chances. It's also home to Coralee, a girl with a big personality and even bigger stories. Coralee may be just the friend Ethan needs, except Ethan isn't the only one with secrets. Coralee's are catching up with her, and what she’s hiding might be putting both their lives at risk.

Karma Khullar’s Mustache by Kristin Weintge
Debut author Kristi Wientge tackles the uncomfortable—but all too relatable—subject of female body hair and self-esteem with this sweet and charming novel in the tradition of Judy Blume.