



Summer Reading for rising Eighth Graders

Dear Country Day Eighth Graders:

You have one required book to read this summer. Additionally, please read three other books for a total of at least four books. The list is a place to start and includes reading choices in a variety of genres. **However, there are many, many more amazing books out there, so you may choose a book that is not on the list.**

I want you to spend some time over the summer reading for fun. All Middle School students should keep a notebook to record the following summer journal entries. You may bullet these entries; you need not write paragraphs or use essay format unless you prefer to do so.

- The date you started the book and the date you finished
- The name of the author, the title, and the genre
- Major theme, and/or Essential Questions
- Reflections: what surprised you? What did you like? Which character was your favorite? What did you think of the ending?
- Do you recommend this book to others? Why? Why not?

Eighth Grade Required Reading:

Ernest Gaines

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MISS JANE PITTMAN

This is a beautifully written story that spans one hundred years in the life of an African-American woman from the Civil War through the Civil Rights Movement.

Happy Summer Reading

Suggested titles include:

Adams, Douglas

THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Hilarious assessment of life, the universe, and everything. Sequels include **So Long and Thanks for All the Fish**, and **The Restaurant at the End of the Universe**. If you have a really bizarre sense of humor, these books are for you.

Albom, Mitch

THE FIVE PEOPLE YOU MEET IN HEAVEN

A wounded war veteran who is killed in a tragic accident soon discovers that heaven isn't merely a destination but a place where five people help the deceased understand the significance and value of their life on earth.

Alcott, Louisa May

A LONG, FATAL LOVE CHASE

Raised on an isolated island off the coast of England by an unloving grandfather, Rosamond swears she'd sell her soul to Satan for a year of freedom. One of Alcott's best Gothic mysteries.

Alvarez, Julia

HOW THE GARCIA GIRLS LOST THEIR ACCENTS

The lives of the four Garcia sisters from the Dominican Republic and their parents, blending

family history and expectations with realities of their adopted US culture.

Anonymous
GO ASK ALICE

True diary of a fifteen year old girl's descent into drug addiction.

Armstrong, Lance
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE BIKE

The story of Armstrong's growing up and struggle to beat cancer. Great memoir (A Mr. U pick)
Sequel: **Every Second Counts**— winning the Tour de France bike race five times (!) arguably the most grueling athletic event in the world.

Auel, Jean
THE CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR

Fantasy and science fiction, this first novel in Auel's Earth Children series introduces us to Ayla.
Other titles in the series: **The Mammoth Hunters, Valley of Horses, The Plains of Passage, The Shelters of Stone.**

Austen, Jane
NORTHANGER ABBEY

Story of a young woman who goes in search of a real Gothic adventure (frightened heroines in scary castles, ghosts hiding in attics, evildoers lurking about). Jane Austen makes "fun" of a popular genre of her time in an easy introduction to a delightful British writer.

Banks, Russell
RULE OF THE BONE

Story of a young man's journey to find his roots and himself.

Bellaire, John

THE FACE IN THE FROST

Fantasy classic about wizards and adventure

Blackwood, Gary L.
THE SHAKESPEARE STEALER, THE SHAKESPEARE SCRIBE (sequel)

Story of a young orphan boy named Widge who is hired to "steal" Shakespeare's play **Hamlet**.
Fun novels to read before we read Shakespeare's **Romeo and Juliet**.

Bradbury Ray
THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES

A collection of stories from a master of science fiction. Also recommended **Fahrenheit 451**, a futuristic tale of book-burning.

Bradley, Marion Zimmer
THE MISTS OF AVALON

The mythical legend of King Arthur retold through the lives of the women who wielded power in Camelot.

Brashares, Ann
THE SECOND SUMMER OF THE SISTERHOOD

Sequel to **The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants**

Bronte, Charlotte
JANE EYRE

Beautiful, haunting story of a nineteenth century governess who falls in love with a strange, haunted man.

Card, Orson Scott

ENDER'S GAME

The fate of the world is in genius Ender Wiggin's hands. A favorite and very intense sci fi choice.

**Cather, Willa
MY ANTONIA**

A young man recalls a pioneer woman he admired years before; hardships of life on a Nebraska prairie.

**Christie, Agatha
DEATH ON THE NILE, MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS, SLEEPING MURDER,
MURDER IN THE VICARAGE**

Christie's classic tales of murder and mayhem are great "who dunits."

**Cisneros, Sandra
WOMAN HOLLERING CREEK AND OTHER STORIES**

A vibrant story collection reaching across both sides of the Mexican border.

**Cisneros, Sandra
HOUSE ON MANGO STREET**

This is a beautifully written story told in vignettes. We have read it in class in the past, but the AHS reads in ninth grade, so I have taken it off our class reading list.

**Clair, Maxine
RATTLEBONE**

Eleven beautifully written stories of love, school, friendships and loss set in the fictional town of Rattlebone, Kansas, in the 1950s, and focusing around the young heroine Irene Wilson. *Winner of the Chicago Tribune Heartland Award*

**Cliff, Michelle
ABENG**

Moving story of a young island girl faced with the dilemmas of a double heritage.

**Conrad, Pam
PRAIRIE SONGS**

The drama of life on the prairie and its disturbing effect on two newcomers from the East. Interesting portrayal of different women and their abilities to cope with harsh realities of life.

**Cooper, James Fenimore
THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS**

Last book in a trilogy about the French-Indian War and an amazing frontier scout named Natty Bumppo.

**Cormier, Robert
THE CHOCOLATE WAR**

Struggle of a boy who stands up for what he believes. First published in 1974. Controversial ever since. Realistic Fiction.

**Cormier, Robert
I AM THE CHEESE**

Dark tale of a boy lost in the world of his own reality.

**Crichton, Michael
THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY**

Masterminding the daring theft of a fortune in gold. Also by this author: **Jurassic Park, The Andromeda Strain**

Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee
THE MISTRESS OF SPICES

Born in India, Tilo learns the healing power of spices and opens a shop in California reading the hearts and minds of her customers.

Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee
SISTER OF MY HEART

Story of two girl cousins born on the same day and the tragedy that unites them.

Doyle, Arthur Conan
THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

Sherlock Holmes and his companion, Watson, solve unsolvable mysteries in nineteenth century England.

Doyle, Arthur Conan
THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

This Sherlock Holmes murder mystery is one of the best detective stories ever written.

Dumas, Alexander
THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

This is the story of Edmund Dante who, accused of treason, escapes from prison to seek revenge on his enemies. Great thriller.

Dumas, Alexander
THE THREE MUSKETEERS

Three friends and their adventures in seventeenth century France.

DuMaurier, Daphne
REBECCA

This book is about a shy woman who marries a powerful man and must contend with the ghost of his dead wife. One of the most famous first lines in modern fiction.

Emecheta, Buchi
SECOND CLASS CITIZEN

Autobiographical novel, Adah living in Nigeria and England is unwavering in her desire for education and her determination to change her life. Emecheta, a sociologist, is also the author of **The Bride Price**, **The Slave Girl: A Novel**, and **Destination Biafra (African Writers Series)**

Frazier, Charles
COLD MOUNTAIN

This is the story of a man's walk home from America's Civil War. It is also the story of two women and their survival, companionship and strength as they forge a life together in a harsh war torn landscape.

Friend, Natasha
PERFECT

Although PERFECT is about a girl struggling with bulimia, it's so much more than a "problem novel." It also explores the intersections between family history and personal problems, as well as the differences between outward appearances and the complex emotions that lie beneath the surface.

Gaines, Ernest J.
A LESSON BEFORE DYING

This novel is the moving story of a teacher's conversations and journey to help prepare a young man who has been sentenced to death.

Garner, Eleanor

ELEANOR'S STORY

Unusual perspective of a young American living in Hitler's Germany during WWII. New historical fiction recommended by Judy Bulow, Tattered Cover Book Store

Gibbons, Kaye
ELLEN FOSTER

A neglected, abused, eleven year old in the South takes matters into her own hands and finds herself a place to belong.

Goldberg, Myla
BEE SEASON

Eliza Naumann has no reason to believe she's anything but ordinary. Her father Saul, a university professor, dotes on her talented elder brother Aaron. Her scientist mother, Miriam, seems consumed by her career. Then Eliza amazes everyone by winning a spelling bee, and her unexpected success hurls the Naumann family dynamic into a tailspin and long-held secrets begin to emerge.

Green, John
LOOKING FOR ALASKA

Miles "Pudge" Halter is abandoning his fairly normal life. Fascinated by the last words of famous people, Pudge leaves for boarding school to seek what a dying Rabelais called the "Great Perhaps." There, he unexpectedly learns some valuable life lessons.

Greenlaw, Linda
THE HUNGRY OCEAN

Linda Greenlaw — heralded by Sebastian Junger in *THE PERFECT STORM* as "one of the best sea captains, period, on the East Coast" — tells the riveting story of her 30-day sword fishing voyage aboard one of the best-outfitted boats on the Eastern seaboard. Her true-life tale is complete with danger, humor, and characters so colorful they could have come from the pages of *MOBY DICK*.

Griffin, John
BLACK LIKE ME

Amazing account of a white man who darkens his skin to discover firsthand what it is like to be black.

Haddon, Mark
THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

Christopher John Francis Boone is a fifteen-year-old autistic savant obsessed with Sherlock Holmes. He knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow. This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for a captivating and unusual tale.

Haley, Alex

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X

Story of one of the leading Black American leaders of the twentieth century.

Halberstam, David

The Amateurs : The Story of Four Young Men and Their Quest for an Olympic Gold Medal

Traces the lives and rowing careers of two oarsmen. The dedication, competition and camaraderie of the athletes who represented the U.S. in single-scul racing events in the 1984 Olympics.

Hearn, Liam

ACROSS THE NIGHTINGALE FLOOR: TALES OF THE OTORI

Set in feudal Japan, young Takeo returns home to find his village in flames as he is thrust into a

world of warlords and feuding clans.

Herbert, Frank

DUNE

A blend of adventure and mysticism, environmentalism and politics, Dune — set on the desert planet Arrakis — is the story of a mysterious man known as Maud'dib, who seeks to avenge the traitorous plot against his noble family and bring to fruition humankind's most ancient and unattainable dream.

Hersey, John

HIROSHIMA

Story of survivors who witnessed the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, by American during WW II.

Hesse, Karen

OUT OF THE DUST

In a series of poem/journal entries, fifteen-year-old Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the bleak, harsh, dust bowl years of the Depression.

Hinton, S.E.

THE OUTSIDERS

Classic tale of teenage friendship, loyalty and courage. Susan Hinton once said, "I wrote **The Outsiders** because it was the kind of story I really wanted to read." Similar stories in the same genre are **Tex, That Was Then, This Is Now** and **Rumble Fish**. **I highly recommend these for anyone who may consider him/herself a "reluctant" reader.**

Hinton, S.E. TAMING THE STAR RUNNER

Story of a boy who doesn't fit in and a wild horse.

Hoffman, Alice

GREEN ANGEL

Story of a young woman who loses her family and her struggle to find herself.

Holt, Kimberly Willis

WHEN ZACHARY BEAVER CAME TO TOWN

643-pound Zachary Beaver, the fattest boy in the world, comes to town and changes the lives of everyone in Antler, Texas, in the summer of 1971 --- especially that of 13-year-old Toby Wilson, whose life up until now had appeared rather ordinary.

Hull, Jonathan

DISTANCE FROM NORMANDY

Sixteen-year-old Andrew is a scared and angry high school sophomore who has just been expelled from school and is heading down a path of self-destruction. His grandfather, a WWII vet and recent widower, agrees to spend time with him — and together they embark on an unforgettable journey to Normandy .

Irving, John

A PRAYER FOR OWEN MEANEY

The beautiful, original and amazing story of two prep school friends growing up in New England.

Jackson, Shirley

WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED IN THE CASTLE

This is the story of two sisters who live alone after the mysterious deaths of all the other people in their family.

Junger, Sebastian

THE PERFECT STORM

Amazing true story (for the most part) of the meteorological phenomenon that caused the deadliest storm in history.

Keyes, Daniel

FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON

The classic story of a mentally disabled man whose experimental quest for intelligence mirrors that of Algernon, an extraordinary lab mouse. In poignant diary entries, Charlie tells how a brain operation increases his IQ and changes his life. As the experimental procedure takes effect, Charlie's intelligence expands and seems to be a scientific breakthrough — until Algernon begins a sudden deterioration. Will the same happen to Charlie?

Kincaid, Jamaica

LUCY

Lucy, a teenager from the West Indies, comes to America to work for an American family. From the author of **Annie John**, another compelling story of a girl's youth on the island of Antigua.

King, Stephen

THE EYES OF THE DRAGON

Classic dragons and magical fantasy - a favorite Stephen King book.

Kingsolver, Barbara

THE BEAN TREES

This is the story of Taylor Green, a spirited woman who grew up in rural Kentucky with a simple plan: to get away and escape a dull and predictable fate. Early Kingsolver and a great place to start getting to know one of America's most popular authors.

Knowles, John

A SEPARATE PEACE

Classic story of two boys who become friends at a New England boarding school at the outset of WWII.

Krakauer, Jon

INTO THIN AIR

True story of a deadly mission to climb Mt. Everest.

Lansing, Alfred

ENDURANCE

The true story of Earnest Shackleton and his attempt to claim the first overland crossing of Antarctica.

LeGuin, Ursula K

A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA

Book One in this fantasy trilogy. Fantasy world similar to Lewis's Narnia or Tolkien's Middle Earth.

Lowry, Lois

GATHERING BLUE

Companion piece to **THE GIVER** about another, more savage futuristic world.

Mackler, Carolyn

THE EARTH, MY BUTT, AND OTHER BIG ROUND THINGS

Don't let the whimsical title fool you — although Carolyn Mackler's novel about 15-year-old Virginia Shreves is lighthearted and humorous, at its core is a serious message about self-confidence and self-acceptance.

Magorian, Michelle

GOOD NIGHT, MR. TOM

Beautiful story of an old man who adopts an abused child in WWII England. One of my favorite novels but recommended for mature readers.

Martel, Yann

LIFE OF PI

Amazing book about a young man whose father is a zookeeper and an adventure that changes his life. *Winner of the Man Booker Prize.*

Mazer, Harry

THE LAST MISSION

A fifteen year old boy dreams of flying missions during WWII and finds himself a POW in a camp behind enemy lines.

McCourt Frank

ANGELA'S ASHES

Sad, poignant memoir of a man growing up in an impoverished Irish family.

McBride, James

THE COLOR OF WATER

Memoir of a black boy growing up with his white Jewish mother.

McCullough, David

1776

Two-time Pulitzer Prize winner David McCullough unfolds the dramatic story of those who marched with General George Washington in the year of the Declaration of Independence -- when the entire American cause was riding on their success.

Mitchell, Margaret

GONE WITH THE WIND

The story of the indomitable, spirited Scarlett O'Hara set in the Civil War South.

Monk Kidd, Sue

THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES

Beautifully written story of an unloved young girl who follows the clues of a "Black Madonna" that lead her to a new life. Set in the 1960's.

Muir, John

MY FIRST SUMMER IN THE SIERRA

The diary of one of Muir's first treks into the wilderness.

Murphy, Jim

AN AMERICAN PLAGUE

Story of the 1793 Yellow Fever Plague, new historical fiction (Recommended by Judy Bulow, Tattered Cover Book Store)

Myers, Walter Dean

MONSTER

Steve Harmon is black. He's in jail, maybe forever. He's on trial for murder. And he's sixteen years old. A Harlem drugstore owner was shot and killed in his store, and the word is that Steve served as the lookout. Was he involved, or was he simply in the wrong place at the wrong time?

Nafisi, Azar

READING LOLITA IN TEHRAN

Every Thursday morning for two years in the Islamic Republic of Iran, a bold and inspired teacher named Azar Nafisi secretly gathered seven of her most committed female students to read forbidden Western classics by Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Henry James, and Vladimir Nabokov. Nafisi's story is an exploration of resilience in the face of tyranny and a

celebration of the liberating power of literature.

Nolan, Han

DANCING ON THE EDGE

Story of a young girl's search to find herself after living with family lies all her life. Depressing but ultimately valuable story about a child's need to be loved. *1997 National Book Award for Young People's Lit.*

Poe, Edgar Allan

FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER AND OTHER STORIES

Excellent tales of terror and the bizarre by the American master of horror and inventor of the detective story.

Potok, Chiam

THE CHOSEN

The story of two Jewish boys and their friendship growing up in the 1940's in New York.

Ryan, Pam Munoz

ESPERANZA RISING

A tragedy forces Esperanza and her mother to flee their Mexican ranch for California during the Great Depression. They settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers, and Esperanza isn't ready for the hard labor, financial struggles, or lack of acceptance she faces. When their new life is threatened, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances — Mama's life and her own depend on it.

Rhys, Jean

WIDE SARGASSO SEA

Twentieth century novel about the "wild woman" in the attic. Prequel of sorts to **Jane Eyre**.

Schlissel, Lillian

WOMEN'S DIARIES OF THE WESTWARD JOURNEY (nonfiction)

Poignantly written diaries of nineteenth century women who journeyed overland with their families 1841-1867. Primary sources, photographs.

Shaara, Michael

THE KILLER ANGELS

Historical fiction retelling the Battle of Gettysburg. Very intense.

Smith, Dodie

I CAPTURED THE CASTLE

Seventeen-year-old Cassandra Mortmain is a would- be writer living in a crumbling English castle, with her very odd and down on their luck family.

Tolkien, J.R.R. THE LORD OF THE RINGS

This trilogy, **The Fellowship of the Ring**, **The Two Towers**, and **The Return of the King** comprises some of the best fantasy ever written. I highly recommend the entire series including the precursor, **The Hobbit**.

Twain, Mark

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

Twain's classic fantasy about a young New Englander transported in time back to the days of Camelot.

Twain, Mark

THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

Two boys, one rich, one poor, switch places. Amazing results. (A Mr. Suitor pick)

Waldman, Stuart

WE ASKED FOR NOTHING

New historical fiction about a conquistador who becomes a member of an indigenous South American tribe. Recommended by Judy Bulow, Tattered Cover Book Store.

White, Ryan

RYAN WHITE: MY OWN STORY

Story of a teenager who battled AIDS and the discrimination surrounding the disease.

Zindel, Paul

THE PIGMAN

Disturbing story of alienated teenagers and the old man they befriend. This is an unusual book, but I really like it.