

## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade - Suggested Summer Reading List**

### **An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793** by Jim Murphy

Provides an account of the yellow fever epidemic that swept through Philadelphia in 1793, discussing the chaos that erupted when people began evacuating in droves, leaving the city without government, goods, or services, and examining efforts by physicians, the Free African Society, and others to cure and care for the sick.

### **Absolutely Normal Chaos** by Sharon Creech

Thirteen-year-old Mary Lou grows up considerably during the summer while learning about romance, homesickness, death, and her cousin's search for his biological father.

### **Artificial Intelligence** by Phillip Margulies

History of and the quest for artificial intelligence. Discusses the definition of artificial intelligence, the development of "thinking" machines, and what computers may be able to do in the future.

### **Beyond Jupiter: the Story of Planetary Astronomer Heidi Hammel** by Alfred Bortz

Presents a look at the life and career of planetary astronomer Heidi Hammel, providing information on her childhood, her education, and her work using the world's most powerful telescopes to study the planets.

### **Christy** by Catherine Marshall

In 1912, nineteen-year-old Christy Huddleston leaves her comfortable home to teach in a one-room schoolhouse in an isolated area of the Great Smokies.

### **The Cold War Pigeon Patrols and Other Animal Spies** by Danielle Denega

How animals are used for espionage in a setting that deals with war.

### **Computer Game Developer** by Mary Firestone

Presents the history of computer game design, and describes the various types of computer games, the tools of a game designer, and how to become a computer game designer.

### **Crash** by Jerry Spinelli

Seventh-grader John "Crash" Coogan has always been comfortable with his tough, aggressive behavior, until his relationship with an unusual Quaker boy and his grandfather's stroke make him consider the meaning of friendship and the importance of family.

**Criminal Profiling** by Barbara J. Davis

Examines the techniques used by law enforcement to create and apply criminal profiles in investigations of violent crime, exploring the origins of profiling, methods, motive, modus operandi, and signature, and discusses real cases.

**Do U Read Me? Famous Cases Solved by Handwriting Analysis!** by Diane Webber

The science of forensics in the world of crime and criminal investigations.

**Downriver** by Will Hobbs

Jessie and the other rebellious teenage members of a wilderness survival school team abandon their adult leader and try to run the dangerous white water of the Grand Canyon.

**Edgar Allan Poe: A Biography** by Milton Meltzer

Examines the troubled life of the nineteenth-century writer whose poetry and short stories broke new ground in American literature.

**The Fellowship of the Ring** by J.R.R. Tolkien

Frodo the hobbit and a band of warriors from the different kingdoms set out to destroy the Ring of Power before the evil Sauron grasps control.

**Fields of Fury: The American Civil War** by James M. McPherson

Richly illustrated with photographs, paintings, and maps, this book examines the causes, events and effects of the American Civil War.

**The Fighting Ground** by Avi

Thirteen-year-old Jonathan goes off to fight in the Revolutionary War and discovers the real war is being fought within himself.

**Flipped** by Wendelin Van Draanen

In alternating chapters, two teenagers describe how their feelings about themselves, each other, and how their families have changed over the years.

**The Ebola Virus** by Kris Hirschmann

Provides information about the Ebola virus, explaining what it is and its causes, and discussing its symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and outbreaks.

**Gathering Blue** by Lois Lowry

A sequel to **The Giver**. 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. See **Messenger** on this list, the third title in this science fiction trilogy.

**A Gathering of Days** by Joan Blos

The journal of a 14-year-old girl, kept the last year she lived on the family farm, records daily events in her small New Hampshire town, her father's remarriage, and the death of her best friend.

**Girl from Yamhill** by Beverly Cleary

Follows the popular children's author from her childhood years in Oregon through high school and into young adulthood, highlighting her family life and her growing interest in writing.

**The Girls** by Amy Goldman Koss

Each of the girls in a middle-school clique reveals the strong, manipulative hold one of the group exerts on the others, causing hurt and self-doubt among the girls.

**The Greatest: Muhammad Ali** by Walter Dean Myers

An illustrated biography of boxing great Muhammad Ali that addresses his politics, his fight against Parkinson's disease, and boxing's dangers.

**Guts** by Gary Paulsen

The author relates incidents in his life and how they inspired parts of his books about the character, Brian Robeson.

**Hattie Big Sky** by Kirby Larson

Sixteen-year-old Hattie Brooks inherits her uncle's homesteading claim in Montana in 1917 and encounters some unexpected problems related to the war in Europe

**Helen Keller: Rebellious Spirit** by Laurie Lawlor.

An illustrated biography of Helen Keller, sharing aspects of her personality and sometimes radical beliefs, and discussing her relationship with her teacher Annie Sullivan and other important people in her life and work.

**The Hero of Ticonderoga** by Gail Gauthier

When Therese is chosen to do the coveted oral report on Ethan Allen, she learns a great deal about the Vermont hero and also discovers what pleasure she gets from writing and presenting the report.

**Hoops** by Walter Dean Myers

A teenage basketball player from Harlem is befriended by a former professional player who, after being forced to quit because of a point shaving scandal, hopes to prevent other young athletes from repeating his mistake.

**Knots on My Yo Yo String** by Jerry Spinelli

This Italian-American Newbery Medalist presents a humorous account of his childhood and youth in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

**Left for Dead: A Young Man's Search for Justice for the USS Indianapolis**

by Pete Nelson

Recalls the sinking of the USS Indianapolis at the end of World War II, the navy cover-up and unfair court martial of the ship's captain, and how a young boy helped the survivors set the record straight fifty-five years later.

**Lyddie** by Katherine Paterson

Impoverished Vermont farm girl Lyddie Worthen is determined to gain her independence by becoming a factory worker in Lowell, Massachusetts, in the 1840s.

**Memories of Summer** by Ruth White

In 1955, thirteen-year-old Lyric finds her whole life changing when her family moves from the hills of Virginia to a town in Michigan and her older sister, Summer begins descending into mental illness.

**Messenger** by Lois Lowry

In the third title of Lowry's science fiction trilogy that includes **The Giver** and **Gathering Blue**, teenage Matty lives with his caregiver in the Village, a place that initially seemed a refuge. However, the Village people are changing, and many have voted to build a wall to keep the newcomers out.

**Miracle on 49<sup>th</sup> Street** by Mike Lupica

After her mother's death, twelve-year-old Molly learns that her father is a basketball star for the Boston Celtics.

**Phoenix Rising** by Karen Hesse

Thirteen-year-old Nyle learns about relationships and death when fifteen-year-old Ezra, who was exposed to radiation leaked from a nearby nuclear plant, comes to stay at her grandmother's Vermont farmhouse.

**Pillow of Clouds** by Marc Talbert

Angry at being forced to decide which of his divorcing parents will get custody of him, Chester is further burdened with guilty feelings about the parent he is leaving behind.

**Rules of the Road** by Joan Bauer

Sixteen-year-old Jenna gets a job driving the elderly owner of a chain of successful shoe stores from Chicago to Texas to confront the son who is trying to force her to retire, and along the way Jenna hones her talents as a saleswoman and finds the strength to face her alcoholic father.

**The Silent Storm** by Sherry Garland

Thirteen-year-old Alyssa has not spoken since seeing her parents die in a hurricane, and now, three years later, another storm threatens the home she shares with her grandfather on Galveston Island.

**Surviving the Applewhites** by Stephanie S. Tolan

Jake, a budding juvenile delinquent, is sent for home schooling to the arty and eccentric Applewhite family's Creative Academy, where he discovers talents and interests he never knew he had.

**Touching Spirit Bear** by Ben Mikaelson

After his anger erupts into violence, fifteen-year-old Cole, in order to avoid going to prison, agrees to participate in a sentencing alternative based on the Native American Circle Justice, and he is sent to a remote Alaskan Island where an encounter with a huge Spirit Bear changes his life.

**Ultimate Basketball: More Than 100 Years of the Sports Evolution** by John Hareas

Presents a photographic chronicle of the history of professional basketball from 1891 through 2003, with accounts of notable players, coaches, arenas, fans, and other aspects of the game, and a look at basketball on the international stage, in the Olympics, in the women's league, and the hall of fame.

**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.

**The Winter People** by Joseph Bruchac

Fourteen-year-old Saxso, a member of the Abenaki tribe in Canada, embarks on a dangerous rescue mission when his mother and two younger sisters are taken hostage during an attack by the British on their unprotected village in 1759.

**The Wish** by Gail Carson Levine

Wilma, granted her wish to be the most popular girl in school, forgets that she will graduate from eighth grade in three weeks and her popularity will vanish.

**Woodsong** by Gary Paulsen

For a rugged outdoor man and his family, life in northern Minnesota is a wild experience involving wolves, deer, and the sled dogs that make their way of life possible. Includes an account of the author's first Iditarod, a dogsled race across Alaska.

**Series**

**Alex Rider Series** by Anthony Horowitz

The novels revolve around an [orphan teenager](#), **Alex Rider**, being recruited by [MI6](#) to be sent out on various missions.

**A Series of Unfortunate Events** by Lemony Snicket

After the sudden death of their parents, the three Baudelaire children must depend on each other and their wits when it turns out that the distant relative who is appointed their guardian is determined to use any means necessary to get their fortune.

**The Redwall Series** by Brian Jaques

A popular fantasy series about a kingdom of mice that has gripped the imagination of readers. In the first title **Redwall**, the peaceful life of ancient Redwall Abbey is shattered by the arrival of the evil rat Cluny and his villainous hordes, Matthias, a young mouse, determines to find the legendary sword of Martin the Warrior which, he is convinced, will help Redwall's inhabitants destroy the enemy.

**Shadow Children Series** by Margaret Peterson Haddix

In a future where the Population Police enforce the law limiting a family to only two children, Luke Garner and other "thirds" (whose very existence is a capital crime) struggle to stay hidden and to gain the right to live.

