

# Summer Reading List Eighth Grade



You will read two books this summer in preparation for our work together next year. As with all of the work you do for this class, your summer reading assignments and notes must be your own. You should not use another student’s work or visit on-line sites for interpretations or explanations of the books you read. Your thinking matters most.

If you are unable to buy a personal copy of a text, you may take notes on paper or use sticky notes in a borrowed text. However, you must have a copy of the books to use during the first four to six weeks of school. While an e-book will work for your choice book, please have a physical copy of *Watership Down* by Richard Adams (preferred ISBN 978-0-7432-7770-9).

### Class Text:

Everyone will read ***Watership Down* by Richard Adams** (preferred ISBN 978-0-7432-7770-9), an epic adventure complete with anthropomorphism, much like *Animal Farm*. As you read, annotate your text. In addition, mark passages or sentences that interest you. You will want to flag them as you will return to them after completing the novel.

**Summer Assignment for *Watership Down*, due on the first day of class (Please bring a paper copy of the assignment with you.):** Look back at the passages or sentences that you marked. Select three to five that you think are critical for understanding the text. Each passage should come from a different part of the book. Write about each of the excerpts you have chosen in **one** of the following ways:

1. Analyze a word and/or image from the quotation. Explain how the word’s denotation and connotation reveal or reinforce the meaning of the passage, or explain how the image’s sensory details reveal or reinforce the point the quotation illustrates.
2. Explain how the information in the passage relates to a significant action, character, or idea in the text. In other words, point out an important connection that you made to another portion of the text while reading or rereading this section.
3. Discuss the symbolism of an object or an allusion (literary or historical) in the passage.
4. Identify and explain the significance of a notice and note fiction signpost (incongruity, epiphany, tough question, mentor archetype, motif, flashback).
5. Analyze Adams’ use of figurative language in a specific passage in the text.

Be certain to include the passage and page number in your typed response.

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### Choice Text:

Take the time to select a book you will enjoy from the attached list. Talk with your parents and friends. Read the descriptions on the attached list, and preview the opening pages of the books that interest you. You will complete several assignments on the text you choose from this list during the opening weeks of school. Because you will read the book in the summer and complete assignments when school begins, you will want to do the things good readers do to remember what they have read. Some of the strategies you might choose include the following:

-  Write a short summary at the end of each chapter to help you find information for assignments when school starts.
-  Write brief, personal responses to important events in the text.
-  Identify significant passages in the book.
-  Annotate the text for character traits and development. You might also annotate for the notice and note fiction signposts.

Please note that these are suggestions to help you be successful. These are not required assignments. You may choose other strategies that work better for you.

Donnelly, Jennifer. ***A Northern Light***.

Mattie Gokey has a word for everything. She collects words, stores them up as a way of fending off the hard truths of her life, the truths that she can't write down in stories. The fresh pain of her mother's death. The burden of raising her sisters while her father struggles over his brokeback farm. The mad welter of feelings Mattie has for handsome but dull Royal Loomis, who says he wants to marry her. And the secret dreams that keep her going—visions of finishing high school, going to college in New York City, becoming a writer. Yet when the drowned body of a young woman turns up at the hotel where Mattie works, all her words are useless. But in the dead woman's letters, Mattie again finds her voice. . . Set in 1906 and based on a true event, this coming-of-age novel effortlessly weaves romance, history, and a murder mystery into something moving and wholly original.

From *BarnesandNoble.com*

Herbert, Frank. ***Dune***.

This Hugo and Nebula Award winner tells the sweeping tale of a desert planet called Arrakis, the focus of an intricate power struggle in a byzantine interstellar empire. Arrakis is the sole source of Melange, the "spice of spices." Melange is necessary for interstellar travel and grants psychic powers and longevity, so whoever controls it wields great influence. The troubles begin when stewardship of Arrakis is transferred by the Emperor from the Harkonnen Noble House to House Atreides. The Harkonnens don't want to give up their privilege, though, and through sabotage and treachery they cast young Duke Paul Atreides out into the planet's harsh environment to die. There he falls in with the Fremen, a tribe of desert dwellers who become the basis of the army with which he will reclaim what's rightfully his. Paul Atreides, though, is far more than just a usurped duke. He might be the end product of a very long-term genetic experiment designed to breed a super human; he might be a messiah. His struggle is at the center of a nexus of powerful people and events, and the repercussions will be felt throughout the Imperium.

Brooks Peck, *Amazon.com Review*

Kidd, Sue. ***The Secret Life of Bees***.

It's 1964, the year of the Civil Rights Act, in Sylvan, S.C. Fourteen-year-old Lily is on the lam with motherly servant Rosaleen, fleeing both Lily's abusive father T. Ray and the police who battered Rosaleen for defending her new right to vote. Lily is also fleeing memories, particularly her jumbled recollection of how, as a frightened four-year-old, she accidentally shot and killed her mother during a fight with T. Ray. Among her mother's possessions, Lily finds a picture of a black Virgin Mary with "Tiburon, S.C." on the back so, blindly, she and Rosaleen head there. It turns out that the town is headquarters of Black Madonna Honey, produced by three middle-aged black sisters, August, June and May Boatwright. The "Calendar sisters" take in the fugitives, putting Lily to work in the honey house, where for the first time in years she's happy. But August, clearly the queen bee of the Boatwrights, keeps asking Lily searching questions. Faced with so ideally maternal a figure as August, most girls would babble uncontrollably. But Lily is a budding writer, desperate to connect yet fiercely protective of her secret interior life.

From *Publishers Weekly*

Knowles, John. ***A Separate Peace***.

Gene was a lonely, introverted intellectual. Phineas was a handsome, taunting, daredevil athlete. What happened between them at school one summer during the early years of World War II is the subject of *A Separate Peace*, one of the most starkly moving parables ever written of the dark forces that brood over the tortured world of adolescence.

From *School Library Journal*

Potok, Chaim. ***The Chosen***.

The Jewish enclaves of Brooklyn, NY, form the backdrop for this classic novel that begins just before D-Day and traces the unlikely friendship of two Jewish teens as they watch World War II draw to a close and the new state of Israel emerge. The story revolves around the evolving, and sometimes painful, relationships between these boys and their fathers, and the conflicts the young men must face as they come of age.

From *School Library Journal*

Zusak, Markus. ***The Book Thief***.

Set in a tense and dangerous historical era, the novel is about the power of words to both destroy and comfort. Liesel Meminger learns to read and is transformed into the "book thief," stealing books before they can be burned by the Nazis or confiscated from personal libraries. When her family decides to hide a Jew in the basement, Liesel holds out hope to him in the form of her two most precious commodities: words and stories.

Adapted from *BarnesandNoble.com*

**Note: Plagiarism**

You are required to read each assigned work carefully, thoughtfully, and entirely. Plagiarism, whether from commercially prepared notes, the Internet, or another student's work, falls under the heading of cheating and will result in a zero on the assignment and notification of parents. The work assigned for this class should be your honest and diligent response to the texts.



If you have any questions regarding your assignment during the summer, you may e-mail me at [ctyroff@keystoneschool.org](mailto:ctyroff@keystoneschool.org). I look forward to discussing these books with you when school begins in August. In the meantime, have a good summer and happy reading!

—Mrs. Tyroff