

## Suggested Reading List for Going into 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Fiction

Adams, Douglas

*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

A classic of comic writing, this tongue-in-cheek spoof of science fiction novels is also an irreverent look at life on earth.

Anderson, Laurie

*Fever 1793*

Meticulous research provides a wealth of vivid detail that brings all the energy and sophistication of post-colonial Philadelphia to life. Matilda Cook works hard to make the coffeehouse run by her grandfather and overly strict mother a success. The servant girl becomes sick first and then the mother, leaving Mattie to struggle on in the midst of a frightening yellow fever epidemic.

Asimov, Isaac

*Fantastic Voyage*

The future of the world hangs in the balance as four men and one woman undertake a dangerous mission to save the life of a professor who holds the secret to an important scientific breakthrough. The carefully selected team is reduced to microscopic size, so that they can travel in a miniaturized atomic submarine through the arteries of the dying man to his brain, where a blood clot has formed.

Bodett, Tom

*Norman Tuttle on the Last Frontier*

Norman Tuttle at thirteen is suddenly overgrown, clumsy, and always running afoul of his dad despite his best intentions to do the right thing. Through fifteen humorous and poignant stories, Norman gains a little wisdom and salvages his self-esteem as he experiences a first date, faces up to a bully, falls in love, and finds himself marooned in icy waters.

Card, Orson Scott

*Ender's Game*

Could Ender Wiggin be the genius earth needs to defend itself from the next alien invasion? This novel is a winner of both the Hugo and Nebula awards presented for excellence in science fiction.

Christie, Agatha

*Murder on the Orient Express*

Traveling from Istanbul to Paris on the Orient Express in the midst of a blizzard, the vacationing detective Hercule Poirot is faced with the unexpected task of finding out who on board the train has just committed a murder.

Crichton, Michael

*The Great Train Robbery*

In this departure from his usual science fiction, the author accomplishes several things. He vividly recreates Victorian London and meticulously recounts the most daring robbery of that period. He gets inside the mind of his central character Edward Peirce, a wealthy master criminal who is as much at home in London's underworld as he is in its most wealthy and sophisticated settings. His suspenseful narrative conveys the fallout and the sense of shock resulting from the crime.

Daly, Maureen

*Seventeenth Summer*

Written by the author in 1942 when she was in college, this is in many ways the first young adult novel ever published. With the passage of time it has unintentionally become a work of historical fiction. What saves it from being simply a period piece is the ease with which it captures a first love. During high school in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, Angie, who concentrated on her schoolwork, kept her eye on college, and never dated, is sought out by one of the most popular boys.

duMaurier, Daphne

*Rebecca*

The narrator is an unworldly young woman who marries a recently widowed aristocrat named Maxim de Winter. When the couple move to his estate, her sunny disposition is overwhelmed by memories of the first wife that have been carefully preserved by the forbidding housekeeper. This masterpiece of suspense leaves many questions hauntingly unanswered.

Elliott, Laura M.

*Under a War Torn Sky*

Henry Forester is a nineteen-year-old American flyer with the RAF during WWII. After being

shot down behind enemy lines he begins a harrowing journey to freedom that takes him across France and back with the help of ordinary citizens and the French resistance. The story is based on the experiences of the author's father.

Fast, Howard

*April Morning*

The American Revolution leaps to life in this unforgettable account of the Battle of Lexington. It is also the story of a father and son who are at odds. The father's unreasonably high expectations, and quickness to criticize, undermine the confidence of a sixteen-year-old anxious to please and in a hurry to grow up. Maturity comes unexpectedly when the father is one of the first to fall in battle. Required reading

Hinton, Nigel

*Time Bomb*

Feeling betrayed by the grown-ups in their lives, four teenage boys form a close bond that leads them to build a secret place on seemingly abandoned property and to befriend a misfit. Their alienation becomes more frightening when they discover an unexploded bomb from World War II in their hideaway.

Hinton, Sue

*The Outsiders*

Written by the author in 1967, when she was only sixteen, this classic picture of a high school split by two factions, the socs and the greasers, reads as if the ink was barely dry. Required reading

Hoffman, Mary

*The Falconer's Knot*

Four unexplained murders in a remote Italian friary implicate two men. Silvano, a handsome young noble already stands accused of the murder of a sheep farmer based on his courtly attentions to the deceased's pretty, but unsuitable, young wife. The other, known once as Comenico, is now called Father Anselmo. He is the Colour Master in charge of grinding the powders used in frescoes. The events of this historical thriller unfold through the watchful eyes of a young novice who has been confined to the neighboring convent against her will. The intricate plot and fine characterization make this book impossible to put down.

Kadohata, Cynthia

*Kira-Kira*

This book is the winner of the 2004 Newbery Award. Katie, the middle daughter in a Japanese-American family, tells the story of their struggles to build a better life. She idolizes her older sister, Lynn, whose academic and social success she feels she can never hope to match. Lynn seems to have every gift but the one everyone takes for granted until it is not there.

Kidd, Su Monk

*The Secret Life of Bees*

Maybe the last straw was being forced to kneel on the rough grits on the floor. Lily Owen knows that she cannot live with her father T. Ray anymore. The housekeeper Rosaleen, the only person who provides her with any mothering, is not safe in their town anymore. Lily plans their escape and together they head toward a town Lily knows only from a picture found among her mother's possessions.

Larson, Kirby

*Hattie Big Sky*

Unexpectedly, Hattie Brooks, an orphan, inherits a small homestead claim in Montana that gives her an opportunity to escape the claustrophobic environment of her aunt's household. Rejecting the social expectations for young ladies living in 1918, Hattie sets out on her own from Iowa to work the claim and make it her own.

Leavitt, Martine

*Keturah and Lord Death*

In this gripping fantasy, Keturah weaves a spellbinding story that seems all too real. Requested to tell a story, she describes how she becomes lost in the woods for several days and bargains with Death when he comes for her. If given a chance to return home for a day she promises to return with a love story that can defeat death.

London, Jack

*White Fang*

Part wolf and part dog, the small puppy born in a cave is the only one of his litter to live. Seemingly marked as being different from the beginning by his appearance, strength, and intelligence, White Fang struggles to survive in a brutal world. Forced to fight other dogs by his cruel owner, he is saved only the interference of a young man who believes in him.

Magorian, Michele

*Goodnight, Mr. Tom*

A child is sent from London to the countryside to escape the bombings of WWII. Due to his mother's wish that he live as close as possible to a church, he ends up living with a church

caretaker who has a reputation for being gruff and reclusive. The man's heart is so touched by the child's difficulties that he tries to create an environment in which the young boy will heal. His hope for success is threatened by an unreasonable demand for the child's return.

Mass, Wendy

*A Mango-Shaped Space*

Mia Winchell sees the world differently. In an embarrassing moment at school, she realizes that no one else sees colors for numbers and letters. She keeps her unusual ability secret for a long time, but now that her schoolwork is more complex, Mia is forced to seek help for her increasing confusion.

Mikaelsen, Ben

*Touching Spirit Bear*

Always in and out of scrapes, Cole has finally reached the end of his chances to escape punishment when he physically attacks a classmate. His parole officer offers him an alternative to jail by arranging for his rehabilitation under the Native American system of Circle Justice. Is Cole ready to face his problems during a year of isolation on an Alaskan island?

Myers, Walter Dean

*The Glory Field*

Myers chronicles 250 years of African-American history through six members of the Lewis family, each drawn from a different generation. The saga begins in 1752 with Muhammad Bilal who is forcibly brought from Sierra Leone to the American colonies to work on a plantation in South Carolina. The family moves to Chicago in the 1930s and then Harlem in the 1990s where the story ends with Malcolm Lewis, a young musician who is getting ready to travel back to the Carolinas for a family reunion. This gripping tale has been described as a Roots (Alex Haley) for teens and as an absolute must read.

Owen, James A.

*Here, There Be Dragons*

Mystery, fantasy, and action adventure combine in this edge of your seat tale of three young Oxford scholars, based on J.R. R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams, who become caretakers of a magical atlas. Every fantastical creature in myth and legend is engaged in an epic battle over the "Imaginarium Geographica." Either they are desperately fighting to save it from the Winter King, or they are a part of his evil plans to alter the very nature of life.

Slade, Arthur

*Megiddo's Shadow*

When Edward, who is sixteen, learns that his older, revered brother Hector has been killed in World War I, he defies his father, leaves their Canadian cattle ranch, and enlists to avenge his brother's death. He is sent to England, where he trains in the mounted cavalry with a horse that he alone has managed to tame and tries to come to terms with the reality of war.

Smith, Alexander McCall

*The #1 Ladies Detective Agency*

When her father dies, Precious Remotswa decides to sell her inheritance of goats and land so that she can set up a detective agency. She applies a highly refined talent for common sense to each case and becomes an almost instant success in her homeland, Botswana. Move over Sherlock Holmes.

Weeks, Sarah

*So Be It: A Novel*

Heidi's last name is It because her mother, who is developmentally disabled refers to herself as So Be It. Mother and daughter are unofficially cared for by their kindly next door neighbor, Bernadette. As Heidi's mother experiences ever more debilitating headaches, Heidi acts on the few clues she has to their identity, to track down her mother's past.

Wolff, Virginia Euwer

*Make Lemonade*

LaVaughn at fourteen knows that she will go to college. It is what she and her mother both want. LaVaughn hopes that her mother will let her earn a little extra money for tuition by taking a job babysitting the children of a single mother. LaVaughn knows that if her mother fully understood the responsibilities that she is shouldering, the shaky permission she has won might be withdrawn.

**Nonfiction**

Adler, David

*George Washington: An Illustrated Biography*

Everyone knows the story of George Washington and the cherry tree. Unlike this tale, which was invented by an early biographer, Adler's engaging narrative presents a thorough and accurate account of what is known to be true about the first president. With its straightforward approach, large print, wealth of illustrations, pleasing format, and the lively picture it paints of the times, this biography offers much to like and enjoy.

- Blumenthal, Karen *Six Days in October*  
 Tickertape data runs across the bottom of the pages. The chapter heading October 1929: Black Thursday is written on a totally black two-page spread. The variety and number of primary source documents illustrating the text is impressive. There are cartoons, telegrams, balance sheets, graphs, photographs, and newspaper articles of the day. The narrative covers the stock market crash in a lively journalistic way.
- Bober, Natalie *Abigail Adams*  
 Using anecdote to great effect and drawing extensively on letters, this biography breathes life into a woman who was every bit as much a visionary patriot as her husband. This is also a detailed picture of the arduous and challenging life faced by 18th century women. Abigail Adams is depicted as a passionate, intelligent woman who was more than an equal partner in her marriage.
- Bober, Natalie *Thomas Jefferson: Draftsman to a Nation*  
 The author has a gift for using meticulous research to dispel apparent contradictions in Jefferson's life. Her very appealing and insightful biography for an advanced reader makes this founding father, his family, and friends knowable and brings dim history to life.
- Burleigh, Robert *Toulouse Lautrec: The Moulin Rouge and the City of Light*  
 Lautrec created an image of Paris life that lives on today. In this brief biography, the author vividly evokes the man, his work, and the city he loved. This book is a perfect hors d'oeuvre for WES students participating in the French exchange program.
- Caputo, Philip *10,000 Days of Thunder*  
 The author is a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and a lieutenant in the Vietnam War. His experience brings an immediacy to his writing, and a deeper understanding to his explanations of the context, the politics, and the times.
- Dash, Joan *A Dangerous Engine*  
 This lively biography, with its witty illustrations, is perfectly suited in style and appearance to its subject. With great clarity the author puts the moveable parts of Franklin together. His many faceted personality, unstoppable imaginative powers, and extraordinary achievements become apparent as Dash charts Franklin's path from printer to scientist to diplomat.
- Freedman, Russell *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*  
 Branded as a traitor to his class by wealthy entitled Americans, revered as a symbol of hope and social justice by the masses, FDR is one of the most intriguing and controversial of presidents. Wonderfully illustrated with photos from the National Archives, Bettmann Archive, and Library of Congress, this engaging biography is written with a reporter's flair for vividly capturing the flavor of each moment.
- Golabek, Mona *The Children of Willesden Lane*  
 The author writes movingly about the experiences of her mother who escaped from Nazi Germany on a Kindertransport to England. Her parents had only one ticket for their three children. They made an impossible choice by giving the ticket to the child who had a special gift that they hoped would sustain her. They also hoped that this gift would find nourishment and perhaps public recognition. She fulfilled their every wish.
- Kraft, Betsy Harvey *Theodore, Roosevelt: Champion of the American Spirit*  
 An English diplomat who was a friend of T.R. said, "You have to remember, the president is about six." (Kraft, p. ix) Working from this premise the author captures the whirlwind that was the twenty-sixth president. Wonderful anecdotes and well told historical narrative bring Roosevelt's outsized enthusiasm, boundless energy, and crusading spirit to life. This biography is as dynamic as its subject.
- Murphy, Jim *An American Plague*  
 This historical narrative about the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia is perfect to read along with Laurie Anderson's novel *Fever: 1793*. At the time, Philadelphia was the capital of the United States and its largest city. Murphy's detailed history captures the panic caused by unexplained death, the efforts of many to fight the disease, and the conditions that lead to the epidemic.
- Myers, Walter Dean *The Greatest: Muhammad Ali*  
 This biography describes the boxing career of Muhammad Ali and sets it against the political and

social scene of the 1960s and 1970s. The author captures Ali's struggles with discrimination, the Vietnam War, and Parkinson's disease.

Nelson, Peter

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

At the end of WWII the USS Indianapolis was carrying the atomic bomb for the Enola Gay. The ship was torpedoed and sank. Many questions were unanswered about the incident. A student named Scott Hunter, who was working on a project for his school history fair, decided to reasearch this event because the sailors were attacked by sharks when they left the ship. He got caught up in his research and tried to exonerate the ship's captain who had been unfairly court-martialed.

Partridge, Elizabeth

*This Land Was Made for You and Me*

This biography of Woody Guthrie is equally a saga of the Great Depression and the war years at home. The photographs and other documents illustrating the biography are well placed and thoughtfully chosen Primary source materials have clearly been put to good use. The narrative never lags and is crammed full of anecdote and interesting detail. There is a honesty to the text that mirrors the author's sense of the man.

Philbrick, Nathaniel

*Revenge of the Whale: The True Story of the Whaleship Essex*

The whaleship Essex out of Nantucket was rammed by an eighty-two foot long sperm whale--twice--and immediately sank in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The crew managed to get themselves into three small, open whaling boats in an amazingly short time. Also they were able to quickly rescue somehardtack, fresh water, and navigational tools. Afraid of nearby, unexplored islands, they attempted a 3000 mile trip back to South America. Few survived. Accounts of this incident spread and inspired Herman Melville's Moby Dick.

Singh, Simon

*The Code Book*

Secret codes bring to mind danger, spies, critical information, and intellectual challenge. Here are all the famous code breakers, the challenging codes they cracked, and those moments in history that hung on the success or failure of encryption. Singh also provides suggestions on how to go about trying to crack codes, admitting that an educated guess can be essential.