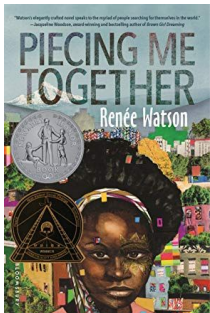




Summer Reading for Students Entering Grade 8

All book summaries and cover photos are from [Goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com).

Required Grade 8 Summer Reading: *Piecing Me Together* by Renée Watson



Jade believes she must get out of her neighborhood if she's ever going to succeed. Her mother says she has to take every opportunity. She has. She accepted a scholarship to a mostly-white private school and even Saturday morning test prep opportunities. But some opportunities feel more demeaning than helpful. Like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for "at-risk" girls. Except really, it's for black girls. From "bad" neighborhoods.

But Jade doesn't need support. And just because her mentor is black doesn't mean she understands Jade. And maybe there are some things Jade could show these successful women about the real world and finding ways to make a real difference. Friendships, race, privilege, identity—this compelling and thoughtful story explores the issues young women face.

Student Choice Books

All students must select and read **at least one** of the texts below.

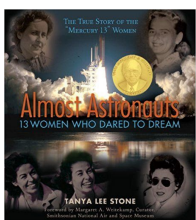
Wonder by R.J. Palacio



I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse. August (Auggie) Pullman was born with a facial deformity that prevented him from going to a mainstream school—until now. He's about to start 5th grade at Beecher Prep, and if you've ever been the new kid then you know how hard that can be. The thing is Auggie's just an ordinary kid, with an extraordinary face. But can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, despite appearances?

R. J. Palacio has written a spare, warm, uplifting story that will have readers laughing one minute and wiping away tears the next. With wonderfully realistic family interactions (flawed, but loving), lively school scenes, and short chapters, *Wonder* is accessible to readers of all levels.

Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream by Tanya Lee Stone



What does it take to be an astronaut? Excellence at flying, courage, intelligence, resistance to stress, top physical shape--any checklist would include these. But when

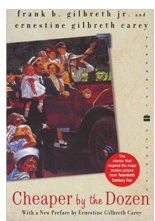
America created NASA in 1958, there was another unspoken rule: you had to be a man. Here is the tale of thirteen women who proved that they were not only as tough as the toughest man but also brave enough to challenge the government. They were blocked by prejudice, jealousy, and the scrawled note of one of the most powerful men in Washington. But even though the Mercury 13 women did not make it into space, they did not lose, for their example empowered young women to take their place in the sky, piloting jets and commanding space capsules. *Almost Astronauts* is the story of thirteen true pioneers of the space age.

***Black and White* by Malorie Blackman**



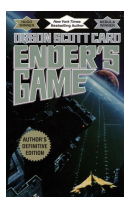
Sephy is part of the ruling class. Callum is considered a second-class citizen. They have been friends all their lives, since before there were barriers and boundaries. Now, things are different--they have to meet in secret, as hate and violence seethe dangerously close to the surface of their society's fragile order. Once, Sephy and Callum thought they only had to protect their love; now, they must defend their very lives.

***Cheaper by the Dozen* by Ernestine Gilbreth Carey and Frank Bunker Gilbreth Jr.**



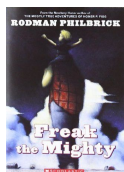
What do you get when you put twelve lively kids together with a father--a famous efficiency expert--who believes families can run like factories, and a mother who is his partner in everything except discipline? You get a hilarious tale of growing up that has made generations of kids and adults alike laugh along with the Gilbreths in *Cheaper by the Dozen*.

***Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card**



Andrew "Ender" Wiggin thinks he is playing computer simulated war games; he is, in fact, engaged in something far more desperate. The result of genetic experimentation, Ender may be the military genius Earth desperately needs in a war against an alien enemy seeking to destroy all human life. The only way to find out is to throw Ender into ever harsher training, to chip away and find the diamond inside, or destroy him utterly. Ender Wiggin is six years old when it begins. He will grow up fast.

***Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick**



Two boys--a slow learner stuck in the body of a teenage giant and a tiny Einstein in leg braces--forge a unique friendship when they pair up to create one formidable human force. A wonderful story of triumph over imperfection, shame, and loss.

***Full Cicada Moon* by Marilyn Hilton**



It's 1969, and the Apollo 11 mission is getting ready to go to the moon. But for half-black, half-Japanese Mimi, moving to a predominantly white Vermont town is enough to make her feel alien. Suddenly, Mimi's appearance is all anyone notices.

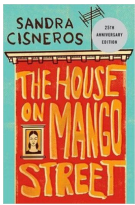
She struggles to fit in with her classmates, even as she fights for her right to stand out by entering science competitions and joining shop class instead of Home Ec. And even though teachers and neighbors balk at her mixed-race family and her refusals to conform, Mimi's dreams of becoming an astronaut never fade--no matter how many times she's told no.

Homesick by Jean Fritz



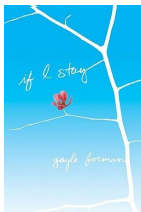
This is the twenty-fifth anniversary of Jean Fritz's award-winning account of her life in China, and, to honor this story, it is only fitting that it be added to our prestigious line of Puffin Modern Classics. This fictionalized autobiography tells the heartwarming story of a little girl growing up in an unfamiliar place. While other girls her age were enjoying their childhood in America, Jean Fritz was in China in the midst of political unrest. Jean Fritz tells her captivating story of the difficulties of living in a unfamiliar country at such a difficult time.

The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros



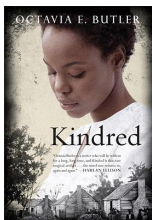
Acclaimed by critics, beloved by readers of all ages, taught everywhere from inner-city grade schools to universities across the country, and translated all over the world, *The House on Mango Street* is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero. Told in a series of vignettes--sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous--it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.

If I Stay by Gayle Forman



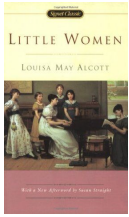
Choices. Seventeen-year-old Mia is faced with some tough ones: Stay true to her first love--music--even if it means losing her boyfriend and leaving her family and friends behind? Then one February morning Mia goes for a drive with her family, and in an instant, everything changes. Suddenly, all the choices are gone, except one. And it's the only one that matters. *If I Stay* is a heart achingly beautiful book about the power of love, the true meaning of family, and the choices we all make.

Kindred by Octavia Butler

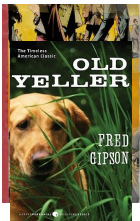


The first science fiction written by a black woman, *Kindred* has become a cornerstone of black American literature. This combination of slave memoir, fantasy, and historical fiction is a novel of rich literary complexity. Having just celebrated her 26th birthday in 1976 California, Dana, an African-American woman, is suddenly and inexplicably wrenched through time into antebellum Maryland. After saving a drowning white boy there, she finds herself staring into the barrel of a shotgun and is transported back to the present just in time to save her life. During numerous such time-defying episodes with the same young man, she realizes the challenge she's been given: to protect this young slaveholder until he can father her own great-grandmother.

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott



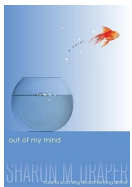
Following the lives of four sisters on a journey out of adolescence, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* explores the difficulties associated with gender roles in a Post-Civil War America.



***Old Yeller* by Fred Gipson**

At first, Travis couldn't stand the sight of Old Yeller. The stray dog was ugly, and a thieving rascal, too. But he sure was clever, and a smart dog could be a big help on the wild Texas frontier, especially with Papa away on a long cattle drive up to Abilene. Strong and courageous, Old Yeller proved that he could protect Travis's family from any sort of danger. But can Travis do the same for Old Yeller?

***Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper**



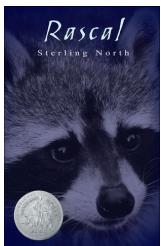
Melody is not like most people. She cannot walk or talk, but she has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She is smarter than most of the adults who try to diagnose her and smarter than her classmates in her integrated classroom--the very same classmates who dismiss her as mentally challenged because she cannot tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by cerebral palsy. And she's determined to let everyone know it--somehow.

***March: Book 1* by Andrew Aydin and John Lewis**



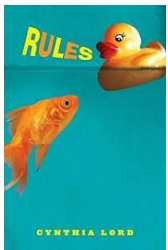
March is a vivid first-hand account of John Lewis' lifelong struggle for civil and human rights, meditating in the modern age on the distance traveled since the days of Jim Crow and segregation. Rooted in Lewis' personal story, it also reflects on the highs and lows of the broader civil rights movement.

***Rascal* by Sterling North**



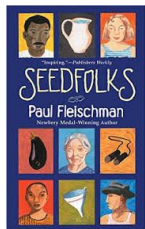
Nothing's surprising in the North household, not even Sterling's new pet raccoon. Rascal is only a baby when Sterling brings him home, but soon the two are best friends, doing everything together--until the spring day when everything suddenly changes. *Rascal* is a heartwarming boyhood memoir that continues to find its way into the hearts of readers fifty years later. This special anniversary edition includes the book's classic illustrations restored to their original splendor, as well as a letter from the author's daughter, and material from the illustrator's personal collection.

Rules by Cynthia Lord



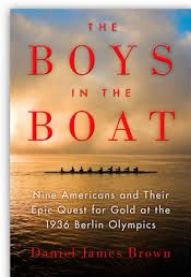
Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules--from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to "keep your pants on in public"--in order to stop his embarrassing behaviors. But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a paraplegic boy, and Kristi, the next-door friend she's always wished for, it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal?

Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman



Kim begins the garden, planting a few lima beans to connect with her father who died when she was a baby in Vietnam. Then Tío Juan, a farmer from Guatemala, gains purpose when he teaches the neighborhood children how to plant. Soon curious neighbors join in and together they grow a beautiful garden. With each bean sprout and cucumber blossom the residents of Gibbs Street find hope and meaning in their little green paradise.

The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown



Daniel James Brown's robust book tells the story of the University of Washington's 1936 eight-oar crew and their epic quest for an Olympic gold medal, a team that transformed the sport and grabbed the attention of millions of Americans. The sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the boys defeated elite rivals first from eastern and British universities and finally the German crew rowing for Adolf Hitler in the Olympic games in Berlin, 1936. Drawing on the boys' own diaries and journals, their photos and memories of a once-in-a-lifetime shared dream, *The Boys in the Boat* is an irresistible story about beating the odds

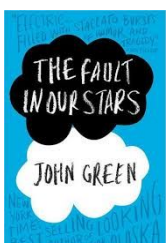
and finding hope in the most desperate of times--the improbable, intimate story of nine working-class boys from the American west who, in the depths of the Great Depression, showed the world what true grit really meant. It will appeal to readers of Erik Larson, Timothy Egan, James Bradley, and David Halberstam's *The Amateurs*.

The Chalk Box Kid by Clyde Robert Bulla



A new neighborhood. A new school. A lonely birthday. Life isn't easy for nine-year-old Gregory. Then he finds an abandoned chalk factory behind his house. It's a secret place, just for him! Now he can draw anything he imagines on the dark brick walls. What amazing thing will Gregory draw first?

The Fault in Our Stars by John Green



Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis.

But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten.

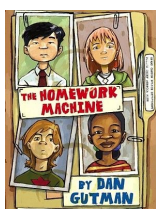
***The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien**



In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

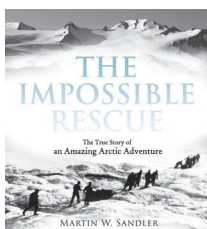
Written for J.R.R. Tolkien's own children, *The Hobbit* met with instant critical acclaim when it was first published in 1937. Now recognized as a timeless classic, this introduction to the hobbit Bilbo Baggins, the wizard Gandalf, Gollum, and the spectacular world of Middle-earth recounts of the adventures of a reluctant hero, a powerful and dangerous ring, and the cruel dragon Smaug the Magnificent.

***The Homework Machine* by Dan Gutman**



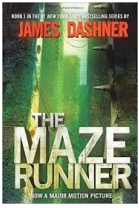
The unlikely foursome made up of a geek, a class clown, a teacher's pet, and a slacker--Brenton, Sam "Snick," Judy and Kelsey, respectively--are bound together by one very big secret: the homework machine. Because the machine, code named Belch, is doing their homework for them, they start spending a lot of time together, attracting a lot of attention. And attention is exactly what you don't want when you are keeping a secret. Before long, members of the D Squad, as they are called at school are getting strange Instant Messages from a shady guy named Milner; their teacher, Miss Rasmussen, is calling private meetings with each of them and giving them pop tests that they are failing; and someone has leaked the possibility of a homework machine to the school newspaper. Just when the D Squad thinks things can't get any more out of control, Belch becomes much more powerful than they ever imagined. Soon the kids are in a race against their own creation, and the loser could end up in jail...or worse!

***The Impossible Rescue: The True Story of an Amazing Arctic Adventure* by Martin W. Sandler**



Whaling in the Arctic waters off Alaska's coast was as dangerous as it was lucrative in 1897. In that particular year, winter came early, bringing with it storms and ice packs that caught eight American whale ships and about three hundred sailors off guard. The ships were imprisoned in ice with no hope of escape. With limited provisions on board the ships that hadn't been crushed by the ice, there was little hope that these men could survive until warmer temperatures arrived at least ten months later. Martin Sandler tells the incredible true adventure story of three men who were ordered by President McKinley to carry out an overland rescue that covered 1,500 miles of treacherous Alaskan terrain in the dead of winter. Their mission was to drive two herds of reindeer the distance to feed the starving men. With their own survival in the balance, these men battled raging storms, killing cold, injured sled dogs, and their own will to continue to bring relief to the stranded whale men. Entries from the journals of two of the rescuers and photographs taken by the third key member of the unlikely expedition dramatically document every mile of their heroic, unprecedented journey.

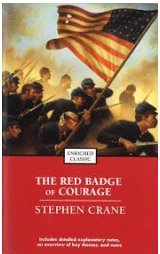
The Maze Runner by James Dashner



If you ain't scared, you ain't human. When Thomas wakes up in the lift, the only thing he can remember is his name. He's surrounded by strangers--boys whose memories are also gone. Nice to meet ya, shank. Welcome to the Glade. Outside the towering stone walls that surround the Glade is a limitless, ever-changing maze. It's the only way out--and no one's ever made it through alive. Everything is going to change. Then a girl arrives. The first girl ever. And the message she delivers is terrifying. Remember.

Survive. Run.

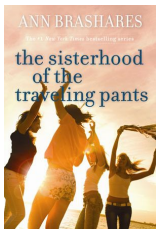
The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane



During an unnamed battle, 18-year-old private Henry Fleming survives what he considers to be a lost cause by escaping into a nearby wood, deserting his battalion. He finds a group of injured men in which one of the group, the "Tattered Soldier," asks Henry, who's often referred to as "The Youth," where he's wounded. Henry, embarrassed that he's whole, wanders thru the forest. He ultimately decides that running was the best thing, and that he's a small part of the army responsible for saving himself. When he learns that his battalion had won the battle, Henry feels

guilty. As a result, he returns to his battalion and is injured when a cannon operator hits him in the head because he wouldn't let go of his arm. When he returns to camp, the other soldiers believe he was harmed by a bullet grazing him in battle. The next morning he goes into battle for a third time. While looking for a stream from which to attain water, he discovers from the commanding officer that his regiment has a lackluster reputation. The officer speaks casually about sacrificing Henry's regiment because they're nothing more than "mule drivers" and "mud diggers." With no regiments to spare, the general orders his men forward. In the final battle, Henry becomes one of the best fighters in his battalion as well as the flag bearer, finally proving his courage as a man.

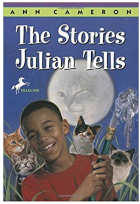
The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants by Ann Brashares



Carmen got the jeans at a thrift shop. They didn't look all that great: they were worn, dirty, and speckled with bleach. On the night before she and her friends part for the summer, Carmen decides to toss them. But Tibby says they're great. She'd love to have them. Lena and Bridget also think they're fabulous. Lena decides that they should all try them on. Whoever they fit best will get them. Nobody knows why, but the pants fit everyone perfectly. Even Carmen (who never thinks she looks good in anything) thinks she looks good in the pants. Over a few bags of cheese puffs, they

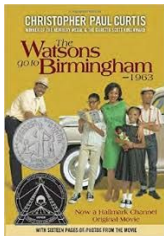
decide to form a sisterhood and take the vow of the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants... the next morning, they say goodbye. And then the journey of the pants--and the most memorable summer of their lives--begins.

The Stories Julian Tells Series by Ann Cameron



Julian is a quick fibber and a wishful thinker. And he is great at telling stories. He can make people--especially his younger brother, Huey--believe just about anything. Like the story about the cats that come in the mail. Or the fig leaves that make you grow tall if you eat them off the tree. But some stories can lead to a heap of trouble, and that's exactly where Julian and Huey end up!

The Watsons Go to Birmingham--1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis



The Newbery Honor-winning American classic, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham--1963*, celebrates 20 years with this anniversary edition featuring a special letter from Christopher Paul Curtis and an introduction by noted educator Dr. Pauletta Bracy. Enter the hilarious world of ten-year-old Kenny and his family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan. There's Momma, Dad, little sister Joetta, and brother Byron, who's thirteen and an "official juvenile delinquent." When Momma and Dad decide it's time for a visit to Grandma, Dad comes home with the amazing Ultra-Glide, and the Watsons set out on a trip like no other. They're heading South to Birmingham, AL, toward one of the darkest moments in America's history.

The Weird School Series by Dan Gutman



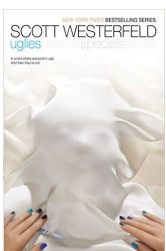
Things have gotten weirder! From a zany graduation ceremony to the off-the-wall antics of their new third-grade teacher, A.J. and the gang from Ella Mentry School have had some weird and wacky adventures.

The Wind and the Willows by Kenneth Grahame



Begun as a series of letters from Kenneth Grahame to his son, *The Wind in the Willows* is a timeless tale of animal cunning and human camaraderie. Since its first publication in 1908, generations of adults and children have cherished this world of gurgling rivers and whispering reeds, serving as home to the most lovable creatures in all literature--Rat, Mole, Badger, and the irrepressible Toad of Toad Hall, with his goggles, overcoat and love of fast cars. Follow these little adventurers through gypsy caravans, stolen sports cars, and their Wild Wood.

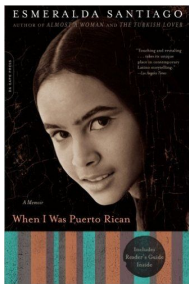
Uglies by Scott Westerfeld



Uglies is the first book in a four book series by Scott Westerfeld. It takes us into the future where society as we know it has disintegrated and our society as we live today is referred to as The Rusties. Within this new world there are several divides. Ugly town, Pretty Town and the authoritative City which also encompasses Special Circumstances, a secret service of the new world. The premise of the book is that when everyone turns sixteen they are given an operation which transforms them into a Pretty, someone who is of perfect dimension, based on their biology, so

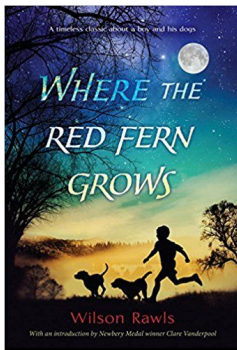
everyone is different, yet the same as they are given the exact proportions of what is determined to be pretty by the order of the City surgeons.

***When I Was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago**



Esmeralda Santiago's story begins in rural Puerto Rico, where her childhood was full of both tenderness and domestic strife, tropical sounds and sights as well as poverty. Growing up, she learned the proper way to eat a guava, the sound of tree frogs in the mango groves at night, the taste of the delectable sausage called *morcilla*, and the formula for ushering a dead baby's soul to heaven. As she enters school we see the clash, both hilarious and fierce, of Puerto Rican and Yankee culture. When her mother, Mami, a force of nature, takes off to New York with her seven, soon to be eleven children, Esmeralda, the oldest, must learn new rules, a new language, and eventually take on a new identity. In this first volume of her much-praised, bestselling trilogy, Santiago brilliantly recreates the idyllic landscape and tumultuous family life of her earliest years and her tremendous journey from the *barrio* to Brooklyn, from translating for her mother at the welfare office to high honors at Harvard.

***Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls**



Billy has long dreamt of owning not one, but two, dogs. So when he's finally able to save up enough money for two pups to call his own--Old Dan and Little Ann--he's ecstatic. It doesn't matter that times are tough; together they'll roam the hills of the Ozarks. Soon Billy and his hounds become the finest hunting team in the valley. Stories of their great achievements spread throughout the region, and the combination of Old Dan's brawn, Little Ann's brains, and Billy's sheer will seems unbeatable. But tragedy awaits these determined hunters--now friends--and Billy learns that hope can grow out of despair, and that the seeds of the future can come from the scars of the past.

***Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder (any book in the series)**



A family travels from the big woods of Wisconsin to a new home on the prairie, where they build a house, meet neighboring Indians, dig a well, and fight a fire. Includes a detailed account of how the novel was written and published.