

REQUIRED SUMMER READING LIST FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 8
(Pick **two** and read before the beginning of 2009-2010 school year)

Avi / Nothing But the Truth: To begin a discussion of the Bill of Rights, you can use Avi's novel. Ninth grader Philip Malloy is forbidden to join the track team because of his failing grades in English class. Convinced that the teacher just doesn't like him, Phillip creates a plan to get transferred into a different homeroom. Instead of standing silently during the national anthem, he hums along and ends up on trial.

Bernays / Growing Up Rich: Sarah Agard Stern is a young girl, half-Jewish, growing up in the 1940's. Sally, as she is called by everyone, loses her mother and her step-father in an airplane crash and finds herself and her spoiled brother Roger willed to a Boston family.

Blackwood / The Shakespeare Stealer: A boy with the ability to write in code is sent by a ruthless master to steal a new Shakespeare play; when he gets to the Globe, he finds he likes his new friends and surroundings. How does he get out of his mission?

Buck / The Good Earth: The story of a Chinese peasant, Wang Lung. We first meet him as a young man on his way to pick up his bride, whom he has purchased from the estate of a wealthy landowner. O-Lan turns out to be the perfect farmer's wife, hardworking, efficient, and, it turns out, wonderfully fertile. The silent O-Lan possesses a strength that will save her family time and again, during prosperous years and times of famine. This is a good book for anyone interested in China and its culture.

Carroll / Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: Alice enters into a magical, funny world of unique characters and unusual settings. It will leave the reader entertained, curious, and thirsting for more.

Carroll / Through the Looking Glass: The 1872 sequel to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland finds Carroll's inquisitive heroine in a fantastic land where everything is reversed. Alice encounters talking flowers, madcap kings and queens, and strange mythological characters when she becomes a pawn in a bizarre chess game involving Humpty Dumpty, Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Dumas / The Count of Monte Cristo: Could life get any better for Edmond Dantes? He will soon become captain of his own ship, and he is also about to marry his true love, Mercedes. However, on the joyous day of his wedding his life changes forever and for the worse. He is arrested and—without a fair trial—condemned to solitary confinement in a horrible prison. Although Edmond has been framed by a handful of powerful people, he commits the rest of his life to the cause of revenge against his enemies.

Edmonds / Drums along the Mohawk: The American Revolution forms the background for this book. Young farmer Gilbert Martin and his bride Lana marry shortly before the revolutionary war starts. They settle in Upstate New York but for the next six years Gilbert fights in the war as he and Lana try to establish their homestead.

Fast / April Morning: Adam grows up over the morning of the first day of the American Revolution. He doesn't want to leave childhood, but the world isn't under his control. Reading this book will teach you about the beginning of the American Revolution, and it will also show how modern people aren't so very different from the people who inhabited our world over two-hundred years ago.

Finney / Time and Again: "Sleep. And when you awake everything you know of the twentieth century will be gone from your mind. Tonight is January 21, 1882." Did illustrator Si Morley really step out of his twentieth-century apartment one night—right into the winter of 1882? The U.S. Government believed it, especially when Si returned with a portfolio of brand-new sketches and tintype photos of a world that no longer existed—or did it?

Frank / The Diary of a Young Girl: Born in 1929, Anne Frank received a blank diary on her 13th birthday, just weeks before she and her family went into hiding in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam. During the difficult years of World War II, she recorded her thoughts, emotions, and feelings. Anne would eventually die in a concentration camp, but her incredible spirit lives on through her marvelously detailed diary.

Gaines / A Gathering of Old Men: A touching story about race. This tale is about older black men finally standing up for all the wrongdoings of those particular white people who have not considered them worthy human beings. Set on a Louisiana sugarcane plantation in the 1970's, this is a powerful depiction of racial tensions arising over the death of a Cajun farmer at the hands of a black man.

Herriot / All Creatures Great and Small: James Herriot is the world's best-loved animal doctor. Whether struggling mightily to position a calf for birthing, or comforting a lonely old man whose beloved dog and only companion has died, Herriot's heartwarming and often hilarious stories of his first years as a country vet depict the wonderful relationship between man and animal.

Keyes / Flowers for Algernon: Charlie Gordon has an IQ of 68 and can't beat the laboratory mouse, Algernon, at maze-solving. Algernon is extra-clever thanks to an experimental brain operation so far tried only on animals. Charlie eagerly volunteers as the first human subject. Although Charlie gradually becomes more intelligent, his new knowledge brings him far more pain than he had hoped. Once Charlie becomes a genius, he feels more alone than ever. Then, ominously, the smart mouse Algernon begins to deteriorate.

Kinsella / Shoeless Joe: This is a book about baseball and much more. "If you build it, he will come." These are the mysterious words which travel through the head of Iowa farmer, Ray Kinsella. To honor this voice, Kinsella carves a baseball diamond in the middle of his cornfield. Who should show up to this field but none other than Ray's father's favorite player, Shoeless Joe Jackson. The rest of the events that occur on this baseball diamond are nothing short of magical.

Levitin / The Cure: Takes place in two different time periods. In the year 2407, Gemm 16884 is given the choice between being recycled or undergoing a painful and mysterious cure. Gemm chooses the cure, and suddenly finds himself living the life of Johannes, a 16-year-old Jewish musician in Germany, in 1348, at the onset of the Black Death. As the disease spreads, the townspeople begin to accuse the Jews of causing the disease.

Maguire / The Good Liar: For Marcel and his two older brothers, World War II seems far away from their tiny village in France. They spend a happy summer fishing, playing, and holding a contest to see who is the biggest liar. Then the Nazis occupy their village, and Marcel and his brothers learn who the best liar of them all is.

Mah / Chinese Cinderella: Adeline Yen Mah tells the story of her painful childhood and her ultimate triumph and courage in the face of despair. Adeline's affluent, powerful family considers her bad luck after her mother dies giving birth to her. Life does not get any easier when her father remarries.

Rees / Witch Child: Mary is forced to leave her home after her grandmother is executed for witchcraft. At first she flees to the English countryside, but there the atmosphere of superstition and suspicion becomes impossible to avoid. Therefore, she decides to leave on a boat for America in the hope that she can start over and forget her past.

Ten Boom / The Hiding Place: Corrie Ten Boom, her sister, and father courageously protect Dutch Jews from the Nazis during World War II. However, once this is discovered, they are arrested and imprisoned in a Nazi extermination camp.

Verne / 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea: Professor Aronnax sets out an incredible underwater journey. From Atlantis to the South Pole, the reader is taken through dangers, surprises, and the unsurpassed majesty of the marine world.

Verne / Around the World in 80 Days: Was it possible to travel around the world in 80 days? When a Victorian Englishman bets that with the new steamships and railways he can, most people are in disbelief. However, the results are exciting as they unfold in the pages of this book.