

## **8<sup>th</sup> GRADE SUMMER READING LIST**

The Following list of books is a resource for you to explore over the summer. It is optional but encouraged for those who want to get ahead. The first list is comprised of books we will be reading next year. The second list is comprised of books that are similar in scope and genre and will better help students to understand themes and subject matter.

### **LIST 1: BOOKS WE WILL READ NEXT YEAR**

#### *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* - Mark Haddon

A bestselling modern classic—both poignant and funny—about a boy with autism who sets out to solve the murder of a neighbor's dog and discovers unexpected truths about himself and the world. Nominated as one of America's best-loved novels by PBS's *The Great American Read*. Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow. This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years

#### *Shattering Glass* - Gail Giles

*Shattering Glass* is narrated in the first person by Thaddeus R. Steward IV, whose nickname is “Young”. Young is a self-styled intellectual and wants to be a writer; his ambitions are helped by his family's sizeable income. The novel's themes include ostracization, confidence, mercy, and personal integrity. The novel is set at BrazosVale High, where the social scene is ruled by the rich and popular. The novel opens as a transfer student, Rob Haynes, arrives, replacing the prominent figure of Lance Ansley, who once ruled the school with his handsome looks and indefatigable confidence. Lance is convinced that Rob won't rest until his life has been ruined. But the battle between Lance and Rob proves to be a minor subplot. The real story is what Rob Hayes wants to do with Simon Glass, the geekiest guy in school. He speaks and moves awkwardly and his peers like to make fun of his weight. Simon Glass was the main target of Lance's laughter, but now that there's a new alpha male on the high school social landscape—Rob—Simon's fate has changed. To demonstrate just how popular and powerful he is, Rob plans on doing the impossible: making Simon Glass graduate with the student body class superlative of “Class Favorite.” He also wants to transform Simon Glass to get back at Lance; after all, he only took notice of Simon after he saw Lance bully him in a hallway.

#### *The Outsiders* - S.E. Hinton

50 years of an iconic classic! This international bestseller and inspiration for a beloved movie is a heroic story of friendship and belonging. No one ever said life was easy. But Ponyboy is pretty sure that he's got things figured out. He knows that he can count on his brothers, Darry and Sodapop. And he knows that he can count on his friends—true friends who would do anything for him, like Johnny and Two-Bit. But not on much else besides trouble with the Socs, a vicious gang of rich kids whose idea of a good time is beating up on “greasers” like Ponyboy. At least he knows what to expect—until the night someone takes things too far. *The Outsiders* is a dramatic and enduring work of fiction that laid the groundwork for the YA genre. S. E. Hinton's classic story of a boy who finds himself on the outskirts of regular society remains as powerful today as it was the day it was first published.

#### *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* - John Boyne

Berlin, 1942: When Bruno returns home from school one day, he discovers that his belongings are being packed in crates. His father has received a promotion and the family must move to a new house far, far away, where there is no one to play with and nothing to do. A tall fence stretches as far as the eye can see and cuts him off from the strange people in the distance. But Bruno longs to be an explorer and decides that there must be more to this desolate new place than meets the eye. While exploring his new environment, he meets another boy whose life and circumstances are very different from his own, and their meeting results in a friendship that has devastating consequences.

#### *Hatchet* - Gary Paulsen

This award-winning contemporary classic is the survival story with which all others are compared—and a page-turning, heart-stopping adventure, recipient of the Newbery Honor. Thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson is on his way to visit his father when the single-engine plane in which he is flying crashes. Suddenly, Brian finds himself alone in the Canadian wilderness with nothing but a tattered Windbreaker and the hatchet his mother gave him as a present—and the dreadful secret that has been tearing him apart since his parent's divorce. But now Brian has no time for anger, self pity, or despair—it will take all his know-how and determination, and more courage than he knew he possessed, to survive.

## LIST 2: BOOKS THAT ARE SIMILAR AND WILL HELP WITH THEME AND CONTENT

### Feed - M.T. Anderson

For Titus and his friends, it started out like any ordinary trip to the moon - a chance to party during spring break and play with some stupid low-grav at the Ricochet Lounge. But that was before the crazy hacker caused all their feeds to malfunction, sending them to the hospital to lie around with nothing inside their heads for days. And it was before Titus met Violet, a beautiful, brainy teenage girl who has decided to fight the feed and its omnipresent ability to categorize human thoughts and desires. Following in the footsteps of George Orwell, Anthony Burgess, and Kurt Vonnegut Jr., M. T. Anderson has created a not-so-brave new world — and a smart, savage satire that has captivated readers with its view of an imagined future that veers unnervingly close to the here and now.

### Fahrenheit 451 - by Ray Bradbury

Ray Bradbury's internationally acclaimed novel *Fahrenheit 451* is a masterwork of twentieth-century literature set in a bleak, dystopian future. Guy Montag is a fireman. In his world, where television rules and literature is on the brink of extinction, firemen start fires rather than put them out. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television "family." But then he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television. When Mildred attempts suicide and Clarisse suddenly disappears, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known.

### The Hounds of Baskerville - Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

When Sir Charles Baskerville is found suspiciously dead, his friend, Dr. James Mortimer asks Sherlock Holmes to look into the death. While the cause of death is determined to be a heart attack, Mortimer suspects foul play and fears that Sir Charles's nephew and sole heir, Sir Henry Baskerville, may be in danger next. At the center of the investigation is the curse of the Baskervilles, which dates back to the time of the English Civil War. Supposedly the family's ancestor, Hugo Baskerville, sold his soul to the devil, and the family has been haunted by a large spectral hound ever since. Because Sir Charles was found with a look of horror on his face when he died, appeared to be running away from something, and large paw prints had been found near his body, there is reason to believe that the "Hound" may have returned. The details of the case spark the interest of Sherlock and he agrees to take up the case. "The Hound of the Baskervilles," is the third of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes novels and is widely regarded as one of his best.

### The House on Mango Street - 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.

### Warriors Don't Cry - Melba Pattillo Beals

An innocent teenager. An unexpected hero. In 1957, Melba Pattillo turned sixteen. That was also the year she became a warrior on the front lines of a civil rights firestorm. Following the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*, Melba was one of nine teenagers chosen to integrate Little Rock's Central High School. Throughout her harrowing ordeal, Melba was taunted by her schoolmates and their parents, threatened by a lynch mob's rope, attacked with lighted sticks of dynamite, and injured by acid sprayed in her eyes. But through it all, she acted with dignity and courage, and refused to back down. This is her remarkable story.

### Call of the Wild - Jack London

Jack London's novels and ruggedly individual life seemed to embody American hopes, frustrations, and romantic longings in the turbulent first years of the twentieth century, years infused with the wonder and excitement of great technological and historic change. The author's restless spirit, taste for a life of excitement, and probing mind led him on a series of hard-edged adventures from the Klondike to the South Seas. Out of these sometimes harrowing experiences — and his fascination with the theories of such thinkers as Darwin, Spencer, and Marx — came the inspiration for novels of adventure that would make him one of America's most popular writers. *The Call of the Wild*, considered by many London's greatest novel, is a gripping tale of a heroic dog that, thrust into the brutal life of the Alaska Gold Rush, ultimately faces a choice between living in man's world and returning to nature. Adventure and dog-story enthusiasts as well as students and devotees of American literature will find this classic work a thrilling, memorable reading experience.