

Entering 8th Grade Summer Reading List

Please read one book from each category below and write a 2-3 paragraph composition. The composition should include your impressions of the book as well as your recommendations. Also, draw a picture of a scene from the book.

Category A: Fantasy

Myst #1: The Book of Atrus by Rand Miller

Summary – The story follows Atrus through his strange apprenticeship to his father, Gehn, who wields the power to create worlds.

Gate Keepers #1: Ravens Gate by Anthony Horowitz

Summary – When Matt Freeman gets into trouble with the police, he's sent to be fostered in Yorkshire. It's not long before he senses there's something wrong with his guardian: with the whole village. Then Matt learns about the Old Ones and begins to understand just how he is different. But no one will believe him; no one can help.

The Xanth Mystery #1: A Spell for Chameleon by Piers Anthony

Summary – Xanth was the enchanted land where magic ruled--where every citizen had a special spell only he could cast. That is, except for Bink of North Village. He was sure he possessed no magic, and knew that if he didn't find some soon, he would be exiled. According to the Good Magician Humfrey, the charts said that Bink was as powerful as the King or even the Evil Magician Trent. Unfortunately, no one could determine its form. Meanwhile, Bink was in despair. If he didn't find his magic soon, he would be forced to leave....

Okeef Family #1: Arm of the Starfish by Madelein L'Engle

Summary – When Adam Eddington, a gifted marine biology student, makes the acquaintance of blond and beautiful Kali Cutter at Kennedy International Airport on his way to Portugal to spend the summer working for the renowned scientist Dr. O'Keefe, he has no idea that this seemingly chance meeting will set into motion a chain of events he will be unable to stop. Caught between Kali's seductive wiles and the trusting adoration of Dr. O'Keefe's daughter, Polly, Adam finds himself enmeshed in a deadly power struggle between two groups of people, only one of which can have right on its side. As the danger escalates, Adam must make a decision that could affect the entire world--which side is he on?

Category B: Citizen of the World

Words in the Dust by Trent Reedy

Summary – Zulaikha hopes. She hopes for peace, now that the Taliban have been driven from Afghanistan; a good relationship with her hard stepmother; and one day even to go to school, or to have her cleft palate fixed. Zulaikha knows all will be provided for her--"Inshallah," God willing. Then she meets Meena, who offers to teach her the Afghan poetry she taught her late mother. And the Americans

come to her village, promising not just new opportunities and dangers, but surgery to fix her face. These changes could mean a whole new life for Zulaikha--but can she dare to hope they'll come true?

Shooting Kabul by N.H. Senzai

Summary – In the summer of 2001, twelve year old Fadi’s parents make the difficult decision to illegally leave Afghanistan and move the family to the United States. When their underground transport arrives at the rendezvous point, chaos ensues, and Fadi is left dragging his younger sister Mariam through the crush of people. But Mariam accidentally lets go of his hand and becomes lost in the crowd, just as Fadi is snatched up into the truck. With Taliban soldiers closing in, the truck speeds away, leaving Mariam behind. Adjusting to life in the United States isn’t easy for Fadi’s family and as the events of September 11th unfold the prospects of locating Mariam in a war torn Afghanistan seem slim. When a photography competition with a grand prize trip to India is announced, Fadi sees his chance to return to Afghanistan and find his sister. But can one photo really bring Mariam home? Based in part on the Ms. Senzai’s husband’s own experience fleeing his home in Soviet controlled Afghanistan in the 1970s, Shooting Kabul is a powerful story of hope, love, and perseverance.

My Brother, My Sister and I by Yoko Watkins

Summary – Thirteen-year-old Yoko and her older brother and sister live in abject poverty in Japan at the end of World War II. When the clog factory warehouse they call home is destroyed by fire, their lives become even more desperate, particularly when Yoko's sister, Ko, is injured and must be hospitalized and her brother, Hideyo, is accused of murder.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas by John Boyne

Summary – 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 from their home to a new house far far away, where there is no one to play with and nothing to do. A tall fence running alongside stretches as far as the eye can see and cuts him off from the strange people he can see 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 to his own, and their meeting results in a friendship that has devastating consequences.

Red Scarf Girl by Ji-Li Jiang

Summary – It's 1966, and twelve-year-old Ji-li Jiang has everything a girl could want: brains, friends, and a bright future in Communist China. But it's also the year that China's leader, Mao Ze-dong, launches the Cultural Revolution—and Ji-li's world begins to fall apart. Over the next few years, people who were once her friends and neighbors turn on her and her family, forcing them to live in constant terror of arrest. When Ji-li's father is finally imprisoned, she faces the most difficult dilemma of her life.

Category C: USA

My Name Is Aram by William Saroyan

Summary – Aram Garoghlanian was a Californian, born in Fresno on the other side of the Southern Pacific tracks. But he was also part of a large, sprawling family of immigrant Armenians--a whole tribe of eccentric uncles, brawling cousins, and gentle women. Through these unforgettable, often hilarious characters Aram comes to understand life, courage, and the power of dreams. Whether it is fierce Uncle Khosrove who yells "Pay no attention to it" in any situation, Uncle Melik, who tries to grow pomegranate trees in the desert, or angelic-looking Cousin Arak who gets Aram into classroom scrapes, Aram's visions are shaped and colored by this turn-of-the-century clan.

The Chesty Oak by Kate Seredy

Summary – Young Michael of Hungary carries an acorn all the way from his castle home in Chestry Valley to the warm soil of the Hudson Valley farm in the USA where he makes a new home after WWII.

Children of the River by Linda Crew

Summary – Sundara fled Cambodia with her aunt's family to escape the Khmer Rouge army when she was thirteen, leaving behind her parents, her brother and sister, and the boy she had loved since she was a child. Now, four years later, she struggles to fit in at her Oregon high school and to be "a good Cambodian girl" at home. A good Cambodian girl never dates; she waits for her family to arrange her marriage to a Cambodian boy. Yet Sundara and Jonathan, an extraordinary American boy, are powerfully drawn to each other. Haunted by grief for her lost family and for the life left behind, Sundara longs to be with him. At the same time she wonders, Are her hopes for happiness and new life in America disloyal to her past and her people?

And Now Miguel by Joseph Krungold

Summary – When you act like an adult but get treated like a child, what else can you do but keep your wishes secret and pray that they'll come true. This is the story of a twelve-year-old Miguel Chavez, who yearns in his heart to go with the men of his family on a long and hard sheep drive to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains--until his prayer is finally answered, with a disturbing and dangerous exchange.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie

Summary – Junior, a budding cartoonist lives on the Reservation with his family. A Native American Indian teen, culture and loyalty is very important to him and his family and friends. But he feels somehow constricted on the reservation decides that he wants to leave the community school and go to the White School on the other end of town. His decision is met with a mix of support and anger, both of which Junior must sift through while at the same time going on his journey of self-exploration.