**Students Entering Grade 8 Suggested Summer Readings**

**(as always, your parents have the final say on what you can read)**

**\*Don’t forget to use your library card through the public library as well as Libby.**

**Libby is the online source for the audiobooks.**

**Please note the following abbreviations:**

**[RR]**– recommended for reluctant readers

**[M] -**for mature readers; may contain mature themes or may include occasional use of questionable language.

**GRL**: Guided Reading Level (Fountas & Pinnell) indicates text complexity A-Z

**Bayron, Kalynn.  Cinderella is Dead Lexile: n/a  GRL: n/a**It’s 200 years after Cinderella found her prince, but the fairy tale is over. Teen girls are now required to appear at the Annual Ball, where the men of the kingdom select wives based on a girl’s display of finery. If a suitable match is not found, the girls not chosen are never heard from again.  
Sixteen-year-old Sophia would much rather marry Erin, her childhood best friend, than parade in front of suitors. At the ball, Sophia makes the desperate decision to flee, and finds herself hiding in Cinderella’s mausoleum. There, she meets Constance, the last known descendant of Cinderella and her stepsisters. Together they vow to bring down the king once and for all–and in the process, they learn that there’s more to Cinderella’s story than they ever knew . . .

**Bowler, Tim.  Storm Catchers  [M] Lexile: 560 GRL: V**Filled with guilt over his younger sister Ella’s kidnapping, Fin tries to rescue her and in the process learns about a dark family secret.  Fin comes to realize that Ella is not the only victim and that the real villain may be closer to home than he thought.

**Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker.  The War That Saved My Life - Lexile: 580 GRL: Z**A young disabled girl and her brother are evacuated from London to the English countryside during World War II, where they find life to be much sweeter away from their abusive mother.

**Esplin, J. L. 96 Miles - Lexile: 760 GRL: n/a**During a massive blackout in rural Nevada, two brothers struggle to survive without their self-reliance-obsessed dad and without enough water to cross the desert for help.

**Evans, Richard Paul. Michael Vey: The Prisoner of Cell 25 - Lexile: 500 GRL: Z**Fourteen-year-old Michael discovers he has special electric powers, and with the help of his best friends, realizes there are other teens with similar powers. Then his mother gets kidnapped, and Michael and his friends begin a quest to rescue his mom and save themselves.

**Freeman, Megan. Alone - Lexile: 690 GRL: Z**Twelve-year-old Maddie had schemed to host a harmless sleepover, but instead finds herself in a nightmare adventure when she wakes up all alone--not just without her friends, but without anyone in her town at all. Not knowing why everyone was evacuated, Maddie and her only companion--George the Rottweiler--forage for food and find out what happened. Her solitude is broken by wild animals, looters, and natural disasters in the months to come, and her only solace and hint at what happened is her stepbrother's left-behind book report on loneliness.

**Gephart, Donna. Lily and Dunkin - Lexile: 680 GRL: Z**Lily Jo McGrother, born Timothy McGrother, is a girl. But being a girl is not so easy when you look like a boy. Especially when you're in the eighth-grade. Norbert Dorfman, nicknamed Dunkin Dorfman, is bipolar and has just moved from the New Jersey town he's called home for the past thirteen years. This would be hard enough, but the fact that he is also hiding from a painful secret makes it even worse. One summer morning, Lily Jo McGrother meets Dunkin Dorfman, and their lives forever change.

**Gratz, Alan. Ground Zero. - Lexile: 690 GRL: T**It's September 11, 2001. Brandon, a 9-year-old boy, goes to work for the day with his dad . . . at the World Trade Center in New York City. When two planes hit the towers, Brandon and his father are trapped inside a fiery nightmare as terror and confusion swirl around them. Can they escape -- and what will the world be like when they do?

In present-day Afghanistan, Reshmina is an 11-year-old girl who is used to growing up in the shadow of war, but she has dreams of peace and unity. When she ends up harboring a wounded young American soldier, she and her entire family are put in mortal danger. But Reshmina also learns something surprising about the roots of this endless war.

**Green, Tim.  Left Out.   - Lexile: 800 GRL: V**Landon Dorch has always felt left out due to his deafness that affects his speech and requires him to have cochlear implants. He finally secures a place on the seventh-grade football team, but it proves harder than he thought. Then Landon gets some help from star players who know all about being different, and he digs deep into himself to fight his way off the bench.

**Hiranandani, Veera.  The Night Diary.  Lexile: 700 GRL: Y**It's 1947, and India, newly independent of British rule, has been separated into two countries: Pakistan and India. The divide has created much tension between Hindus and Muslims, and hundreds of thousands are killed crossing borders.  
Half-Muslim, half-Hindu twelve-year-old Nisha doesn't know where she belongs, or what her country is anymore. When Papa decides it's too dangerous to stay in what is now Pakistan, Nisha and her family become refugees and embark first by train but later on foot to reach her new home. The journey is long, difficult, and dangerous, and after losing her mother as a baby, Nisha can't imagine losing her homeland, too. But even if her country has been ripped apart, Nisha still believes in the possibility of putting herself back together.

**Hughes, Dean. Search and Destroy [M] Lexile: 740 GRL: W**Recent high school graduate Rick Ward, undecided about his future and eager to escape his unhappy home life, joins the Army and experiences the horrors of the war in Vietnam.

**Keller, Tae.  When You Trap a Tiger  - Lexile: 590 GRL: V**Some stories refuse to stay bottled up…When Lily and her family move in with her sick grandmother, a magical tiger straight out of her halmoni's Korean folktales arrives, prompting Lily to unravel a secret family history. Long, long ago, Halmoni stole something from the tigers. Now they want it back. And when one of the tigers approaches Lily with a deal--return what her grandmother stole in exchange for Halmoni's health--Lily is tempted to agree. But deals with tigers are never what they seem! With the help of her sister and her new friend Ricky, Lily must find her voice...and the courage to face a tiger.

**Koja, Kathe.  Buddha Boy   - Lexile: 1090 GRL: X**Justin’s life at Edward Rucher High changes dramatically when he befriends the bizarre Buddha Boy, who is rejected by the popular kids in the school.  Justin is exposed to a new world and a unique way of looking at life, as he is forced to choose between genuine friendship and social acceptance.

**Liparulo, Robert. The House of Dark Shadows - Lexile: 580 GRL: Y**Fifteen-year-old Xander and his family move into an old, abandoned house in the middle of a dense forest outside of a small California town. They soon discover that not only are some of the rooms portals into other places, but that malevolent forces are also at work.

**Lu, Marie. Skyhunter - Lexile: 870 GRL: n/a**Talin is a Striker, a member of an elite fighting force that stands as the last defense for the only free nation in the world: Mara.  
A refugee, Talin knows firsthand the horrors of the Federation, a world-dominating war machine responsible for destroying nation after nation with its terrifying army of mutant beasts known only as Ghosts. But when a mysterious prisoner is brought from the front to Mara's capital, Talin senses there’s more to him than meets the eye. Is he a spy from the Federation? What secrets is he hiding?  
Only one thing is clear: Talin is ready to fight to the death alongside her fellow Strikers for the only homeland she has left . . . with or without the boy who might just be the weapon to save—or destroy—them all.

**Marshall, Kate Alice. I Am Still Alive - Lexile: HL690 GRL: n/a**After a car crash kills her mother, Jess goes to live with her survivalist, off-the-grid father--whom she hasn't seen in a decade--in the Canadian wilderness. But just as the two begin to reconnect, a secret from his past arrives leaving him dead and the cabin burned to the ground. Suddenly, Jess finds herself abandoned in the cold Canadian wilderness. With only her dog for company, Jess must find a way to survive the harsh environment if she is to seek revenge on the person who killed her father.

**Mass, Wendy.  A Mango-shaped Space - Lexile: 770 GRL: V**Teenaged Mia has a secret ability that makes her feel like a freak. She embarks on an intense journey of self-discovery, but by the time she realizes she has isolated herself from everyone who cares about her, it’s almost too late. This is realistic fiction with an unusual twist.

**Morrison, Laura.  Up for Air - Lexile: 900 GRL: Z**Thirteen-year-old Annabelle struggles in school, no matter how hard she tries. But as soon as she dives into the pool, she’s unstoppable. She’s the fastest girl on the middle school swim team, and when she’s asked to join the high school team over the summer, everything changes. Suddenly, she’s got new friends, and a high school boy starts treating her like she’s somebody special—and Annabelle thinks she’ll finally stand out in a good way. She’ll do anything to fit in and help the team make it to the Labor Day Invitational, even if it means blowing off her old friends. But after a prank goes wrong, Annabelle is abandoned by the older boy and can’t swim. Who is she without the one thing she’s good at? Heartwarming and relatable, Up for Air is a story about where we find our self-worth.

**Palacio, R.J. Pony Lexile: 740 GRL: Y  
\*\*Challenging read not similar to Wonder.\*\***Twelve-year-old Silas is left scared and shaken by himself after three mysterious horsemen take his father away in the night. Left with no companionship except that of Mittenwool, a ghost, Silas decides to wait, as instructed, for his father to return in a week. However, when a strange pony one of the men was riding shows up at his door, Silas sees it as a sign from his father to go find him, Silas mounts up and sets out on a journey across the Western American landscape to find his father and help him make sense of the mysterious ghosts he sees and the changing world around him.

**Palacio, R.J. White Bird  [M] Lexile: 440 GRL: Y**Inspired by her blockbuster phenomenon Wonder, R. J. Palacio makes her graphic novel debut with an unforgettable story of the power of kindness and unrelenting courage in a time of war. Sara's harrowing experience movingly demonstrates the power of kindness to change hearts, build bridges, and even save lives.

**Priest, Cherie.  I Am Princess X - Lexile: 790 GRL: Z+**Years after writing stories about a superheroine character she created with a best friend who died in a tragic car accident, 16-year-old May is shocked to see stickers, patches and graffiti images of the superheroine appearing all over town.

**Reynolds, Jason and Ibram X. Kendi.  Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You. - Lexile: 1000 GRL: Z+**

A timely, crucial, and empowering exploration of racism--and antiracism--in America.  
This is NOT a history book.This is a book about the here and now.A book to help us better understand why we are where we are.A book about race.The construct of race has always been used to gain and keep power, to create dynamics that separate and silence. This remarkable reimagining of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning reveals the history of racist ideas in America, and inspires hope for an antiracist future. It takes you on a race journey from then to now, shows you why we feel how we feel, and why the poison of racism lingers. It also proves that while racist ideas have always been easy to fabricate and distribute, they can also be discredited.

**Riordan, Rick.  Daughter of the Deep- Lexile: n/a GRL: n/a**As a freshman at the prestigious marine and aquatics science high school Harding-Pencroft, fourteen-year-old orphan Ana Dakkar and her classmates find themselves the school's only survivors when an attack destroys their school while they were en route to their end-of-year trials. Regrouping on a hidden island outpost, the freshmen learn from their teacher that the attack was perpetrated by their rival school, the Land Institute, and that the key to their survival lies in unlocking the technology of Captain Nemo's "Nautilus."

**Rowling, J.K.- The Ickabog Lexile: 1090 GRL: W**Once upon a time there was a tiny kingdom called Cornucopia, as rich in happiness as it was in gold, and famous for its food. From the delicate cream cheeses of Kurdsburg to the Hopes-of-Heaven pastries of  Chouxville, each was so delicious that people wept with joy as they ate them.  
But even in this happy kingdom, a monster lurks. Legend tells of a fearsome creature living far to the north in the Marshlands... the Ickabog. Some say it breathes fire, spits poison, and roars through the mist as it carries off wayward sheep and children alike. Some say it's just a myth…  
And when that myth takes on a life of its own, casting a shadow over the kingdom, two children — best friends Bert and Daisy — embark on a great adventure to untangle the truth and find out where the real monster lies, bringing hope and happiness to Cornucopia once more.

**Salisbury, Melinda.  Hold Back the Tide - Lexile: n/a GRL: n/a**When Alva was nine, her father killed her mother, but lack of evidence prevented him from being convicted. Alva has kept a low profile around her father until she can run away, helping him with his duties monitoring the water levels of Loch Lake. When water levels drop too low, deadly creatures emerge from the caves, and her father does nothing to stop them, leaving Alva to warn the villagers and find a way to destroy them.

**Sanderson, Brandon.  Steelheart - Lexile: 680 GRL: Z**At age eight, David watched as his father was killed by an Epic, a human with superhuman powers, and now, ten years later, he joins the Reckoners- the only people who are trying to kill the Epics and end their tyranny.

**Schwab, Victoria. Gallant Lexile: n/a GRL: n/a**Even though she's lived there her whole life, the Merilance School for Independent Girls has never felt like home to fourteen-year-old Olivia. The other girls ridicule her because she speaks with sign language, and the teachers treat her as though she's stupid, just because she's mute. And for just as long, she's been seeing the ghouls prowling the school. When a letter arrives from her uncle Arthur Prior, inviting her to live with him at his manor Gallant, Olivia is thrilled and imagines her life will only get better. When an old abandoned garden calls to her, she enters and finds a shadow world mirroring the real one, leading her to discoveries about Gallant, her parents, and her destiny.

**Sonnenblick, Jordan. Curveball: The Year I Lost My Grip [M] Lexile: 800 GRL: X**After an injury ends star pitcher Peter Friedman’s athletic dreams, he concentrates on photography, which leads him to a girlfriend, new fame as a sports photographer and a deeper relationship with his aging grandfather, who is developing Alzheimer’s.

**Sonnenblick, Jordan.  Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie - Lexile: 940 GRL: Y**When his younger brother is diagnosed with leukemia, 13-year-old Steven tries to deal with his complicated emotions, his school life, and his desire to support his family. Readers will love both brothers, laughing, crying, and rooting for both of them!

**Spinelli, Jerry.  Milkweed - Lexile: 510 GRL:Y**This is a historical, fictionalized account of a street child known only as Stopthief. Stopthief finds a community when he is taken in by a band of orphans in the Warsaw ghetto, and they help him to weather the horrors of the Nazi regime.

**Standish, Ali.  The Ethan I Was Before - Lexile: 730 GRL: n/a**Twelve-year-old Ethan Truitt and his family have relocated from Boston to a small town in Georgia after a tragic accident involving his best friend Kacey—an incident that leaves him haunted by guilt. He thinks he might never find joy again until he meets Coralee, a daring girl who helps him feel alive again. But there's more to Coralee than meets the eye—and her secrets could put both their lives at risk.

**Stiefvater, Maggie. The Raven Boys [M] Lexile: 760 GRL: Z**Though she is from a family of clairvoyants, Blue Sargent's only gift seems to be that she makes other people's talents stronger, and when she meets Gansey, one of the Raven Boys from the expensive Aglionby Academy, she discovers that he has talents of his own--and that together their talents are a dangerous mix.

**Toalson, R.L. The Colors of the Rain** [M] **Lexile: n/a GRL: n/a**  
Written in free verse, set against the backdrop of the desegregation battles in 1972 Houston, Texas is about a young boy and his family dealing with loss and the revelation of dark family secrets. The Colors of the Rain is an authentic, heartbreaking portrait of loss and human connection during an era fraught with racial tension set in verse from debut author R. L. Toalson.

**Van Draanen, Wendelin.  Runaway - Lexile: 740 GRL: W**After running away from her fifth foster home, Holly, a twelve-year-old orphan, travels across the country, keeping a journal of her experiences and struggle to survive.

**Williams, Alicia.  Genesis Begins Again - Lexile: 670 GRL: Y**Thirteen-year-old Genesis keeps a list of all the things she hates about herself--she's up to ninety-six--the last of which is her very dark skin. Her gambling-addict father has once again lost their rent money, so Genesis moves in with her grandmother who claims that none of this would've happened if her mother had married a light-skinned man. At school, Genesis tries out for the talent show, but is ashamed of her dark skin, so she tries a number of skin-lightening techniques to no avail. She is now faced with either getting that list to 100 and beyond, or learning to love the skin she has.

**Wolk, Lauren. Echo Mountain - Lexile: 690 GRL: Z**A young heroine in Depression-era Maine is navigating the rocky terrain of her new life on Echo Mountain.  
After the financial crash, Ellie and her family have lost nearly everything--including their home in town. They have started over, carving out a new life in the unforgiving terrain of Echo Mountain. Though her sister Esther, especially, resents everything about the mountain, Ellie has found more freedom, a new strength, and a love of the natural world that now surrounds them. But there is little joy, even for Ellie, as they all struggle with the sorrow and aftermath of an accident that left her father in a coma. An accident for which Ellie has accepted the unearned weight of blame.  
Urgent for a cure to bring her father back, Ellie is determined to try anything. Following her heart, and the lead of a scruffy mutt, Ellie will make her way to the top of the mountain, in search of the healing secrets of a woman known only as "the hag." But the mountain still has many untold stories left to reveal to Ellie, as she finds her way forward among a complex constellation of strong women spanning generations.

**Woodson, Jacqueline. Brown Girl Dreaming - Lexile: 990 GRL: Z**The author shares her childhood memories and reveals the first sparks that ignited her writing career in free-verse poems about growing up in the North and South.