



Reading Without Walls Entering 8th Grade

Nothing but the Truth by Avi. I couldn't put this book down! Ninth grader, Phillip, causes class disruption in an effort to get transferred away from a particular teacher's class. But the chain of events that he sets in motion has the community examining what it means to be truthful, patriotic and respectful of others. The narrative is "documentary style," with dialogue, interviews, letters and diary entries telling the story from different perspectives.

Scar Island by Dan Gemeinhart will remind readers of *Lord of the Flies*, only with a less disturbing outcome. A freak (and I mean freak!) accident leaves all the adults of Slabhenge Reformatory School for Troubled Boys dead, the boys look forward to finally getting away from the wretched place of misery. But a few of the boys decide they would prefer a few days alone on the island before coming under the thumb of adults again. As you can imagine, things go awry in the power vacuum, and secrets previously kept hidden are revealed. It is a very compelling read and your child may have a hard time putting it down.

The Girl Who Drank the Moon by Kelly Barnhill is the 2017 Newbery Award recipient, and rightly so. The Protectorate has always sacrificed a baby to keep the witch in the forest at bay. Little do they know the witch has been saving the babies all these years. One year the witch decides to raise the baby herself, and inadvertently fills her with a fierce and strong magic. As the girl grows older and comes into her magic, a man in the Protectorate vows to find and vanquish the witch, revealing the truth about both the Protectorate and the witch.

The Great Greene Heist by Jackson Greene "A political heist page-turner set in middle school? Is that even possible? Varian Johnson shows us how it's done." Jackson Greene swears he's given up scheming. Then school bully Keith Sinclair announces he's running for Student Council president, against Jackson's former friend Gaby de la Cruz. Gaby wants Jackson to stay out of it -- but he knows Keith has "connections" to the principal, which could win him the presidency no matter the vote count.

The Seventh Most Important Thing by Shelley Pearsall. After Arthur hurls a brick at a man collecting trash, the judge overseeing his case sentences him to community service working for the victim. The “junk man,” James, gives Arthur a list of the Seven Most Important Things he must collect. James, it turns out, is creating a fantastical work of art. Set in the 1960s, and inspired by folk artist James Hampton, this unusual story will get kids thinking about redemption, and friendship.

The Cat Ate My Gymsuit by **Paula Danziger** High school junior, Marcy Lewis, campaigns to get Ms. Finney, an English teacher and Marcy's mentor, reinstated after she is suspended.

Absolutely Normal Chaos by Sharon Creech Thirteen-year-old Mary Lou grows up considerably during the summer while learning about romance, homesickness, death, and her cousin's search for his biological father.

Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech After her mother leaves home suddenly, thirteen-year-old Sal and her grandparents take a car trip retracing her mother's route. Along the way, Sal recounts the story of her friend Phoebe, whose mother also left.

Blue Birds by Caroline Starr Rose is a lovely book, written in verse, about a friendship between two 12 year old girls in late 16th century Roanoke. What happened to the Roanoke colony remains a mystery to this day. Alis, an English settler meets Kimi, a member of the Roanoke tribe and the two form a strong bond, despite their lack of a common language. During heightened tensions between the settlers and two different Native American communities Alis and Kimi decide go against their communities and risk everything to help each other.

Lowriders in Space by Cathy Camper, illustrated by Raul the Third. You might not think that a space adventure would easily combine with Mexican car culture. Well, you'd be wrong! Lowriders is great fun and has a good message about working together and friendship. Lupe Impala, El Chavo Flapjack, and Elirio Malaria are a great team when it comes to fixing cars. Together they enter a contest to turn a hunk of junk into the best car in the solar system. This was a great one for my son who is starting to learn Spanish. A glossary in the back helps kids with the Spanish words sprinkled throughout the text.

The Egypt Game, a Newbery Honor book, is on many “top kid novels of all time” lists. A group of friends hang out near an old curio shop and engage in some imaginary world building. Mysterious and suspenseful, it will be especially loved by kids who like all things Egyptian.

The Seventh Most Important Thing by Shelley Pearsall. After Arthur hurls a brick at a man collecting trash, the judge overseeing his case sentences him to community service working for the victim. The “junk man,” James, gives Arthur a list of the Seven Most Important Things he must collect. James, it turns out, is creating a fantastical work of art. Set in the 1960s, and inspired by folk artist James Hampton, this unusual story will get kids thinking about redemption, and friendship.

Amina's Voice by Hena Khan. A thoughtful story about a Pakistani-American middle schooler Amina, who must balance the love of her cultural identity with her anxieties about fitting in with her peers. An attack on the local mosque puts the community on edge and Amina, her family and friends struggle with their feelings. No matter what their cultural or religious identity, all readers will relate to Amina's coming of age story.

Hello, Universe by Erin Entrada Kelly, illustrated by Isabel Roxas. A diverse group of children come together when a prank puts one of the kids and a guinea pig at the bottom of a well. Four different voices narrate the story of middle schoolers pooling their strengths and cooperating to make things right.

The False Prince (trilogy) by Jennifer A. Nielsen. I love to put this title on book lists. I devoured this series as it was being published. Each year I eagerly awaited the publication date of each new installment in the trilogy. The Kingdom of Farthenwood is in turmoil and a nobleman is determined to pass off an unknown orphan as the missing prince. He brings three boys to train at his estate, promising that the one who best completes the test will have a new life as the ruler of Farthenwood. As a reader, I was constantly on my toes as to the outcome and a surprise twist will leave kids eager to read the next two books.

GHOST by JASON REYNOLDS. (Realistic Fiction) Ghost (Castle Crenshaw) has been running away from a dark event from his childhood when his father got really mad at him and his mother -- and that's why he's so fast! By chance, Ghost is recruited into a local youth track team and finally starts to see some hope and brightness in his future as the track coach gives him support both on and off the field.

THE GUTSY GIRL by CAROLINE PAULI (Memoir) Although she often gets into trouble and does warn readers to not make the same (sometimes life-threatening or law-breaking) mistakes as she did in pursuing a life of thrilling adventures, Caroline Paul shows everyone how to be brave and take control of one's own life and confront fears and timidity head on! This memoir is humorous, with whimsical line drawings and space for journaling.

FEED M.T. by ANDERSON (SciFi) In a futuristic world in which schools are TradeMarked, run by big corporations, and everyone gets a "24/7 feed" implanted into the brain, a tragic romance occurs between Titus and Violet because Violet becomes deathly ill when her "feed" chip malfunctions. This is a chilling tale of a Dystopia.

THE ASTONISHING LIFE OF OCTAVIAN NOTHING by M.T. ANDERSON (Historical) Set against the disquiet of Revolutionary Boston, Octavian's life is filled with contradictions, mysteries, and surprising revelations. The issues of slavery and

human rights, racism, free will, and wars are all highly relevant today. This was a National Book Award Winner. Its sequel has received much acclaim as well: **THE KINGDOM ON THE WAVES**

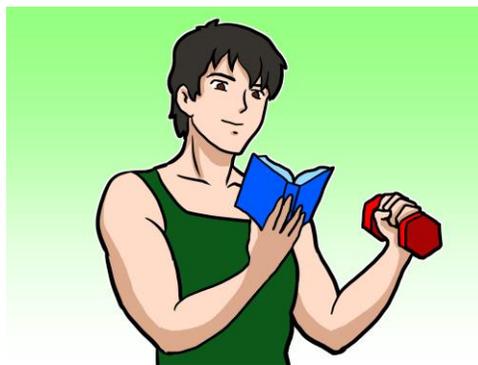
THE CHOCOLATE WAR by ROBERT CORMIER (Realistic) This is a powerful and suspenseful novel about high school politics, cruelty, and conformity.

THE GRAVEYARD BOOK by NEIL GAIMAN (Fantasy/Horror) What happens when a baby is adopted by a graveyard full of (mostly) friendly ghosts? He learns all the ghostly knowledge and skills: fading, haunting, sliding from human sights. He also encounters strange and (often) frightening creatures: ghouls, seers, hell hounds, and murderers. This is the 2009 Newbery Award winning title.

OWL IN LOVE by PATRICIA KINDL (Fantasy) Humorously and tenderly depicted, Owl Tycho's joy and angst of being a "were-owl" (a shape-shifter) who falls in love with her science teacher, guarantees a light but satisfying read.

JULIA VANISHES by CATHERINE EGAN (Mystery) Julia has an uncanny ability to not be seen, perfect for her unseemly "profession" as a thief and a spy. But when the assignment of pretending to be a housemaid at Mrs' Och's mansion seems to be connected to the series of murders in town, Julia has to fend for herself and discover the dangerous truth.

NATION (Fantasy) by TERRY PRATCHETT. After a tsunami, island native, Mau, and shipwreck survivor, soon-to-be-princess Daphne, construct a nation that blends each other's customs, science, and faith in a multi-leveled novel of survival and politics.





Shuang Wen School

Summer Reading Assignment
Entering Grade 8

The following questions pertain to a book you have read over the summer. Answer the questions in complete sentences. Edit for correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. All responses must be at least 1½ pages. Specific text-based examples should be used to demonstrate an insightful understanding of the text (plot, characters, setting, conflict and/or theme).

1. Record the words and phrases used by the author to describe the setting. Explain how the setting is important to the story.
2. Make a list of five to eight gifts that one of the characters might request for his/her birthday. Explain why these gifts are significant to the character.
3. Explain the major conflict that the main character faces and how it is resolved.
4. What do you think the author is trying to tell us about life and/or people? Use details from your reading to support your answer.
5. Would you want to read another book by this author? Why or why not?