

8th Grade
Summer 2019 Reading Program
Exploring Human Potential

Concept: In 8th grade, we will be focusing on our transformation from middle school students into high school students. These summer reading books have been selected to inspire students by allowing them to experience stories that explore human achievement. Students will be incorporating themes and ideas from their summer reading into their first quarter work in 8th grade English.

Assignment: The assignment has two parts:

1. All students are expected to read **No Summit Out of Sight: The True Story of the Youngest Person to Climb the Seven Summits** by Jordan Romero (with Linda LeBlanc).
2. Additionally, all students will read one (or more) of the books from the following list:

<i>A Night Divided</i> Jennifer A. Nielsen	<i>The Benefits of Being an Octopus</i> Braden, Ann
<i>The Forbidden Schoolhouse: The True and Dramatic Story of Prudence Crandall and Her Students</i> Jurmain, Suzanne	<i>The Graveyard</i> Neil Gaiman
<i>The Last Best Days of Summer</i> Hobbs, Valerie	<i>Okay for Now</i> Schmidt, Gary
<i>Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team that Changed a Town</i> St. John, Warren	<i>The Power of Half</i> Kevin Salwen
<i>The Seventh Most Important Thing</i> Pearsall, Shelley	<i>Son</i> Lois Lowry

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A Night Divided
Nielsen, Jennifer A.

It's August 13, 1961. Young Gerta wakes up to see that the Berlin Wall has been built overnight, dividing not only her city but her family. Her father and brother Dominic went looking for work on the west side of the city and now they cannot return home. Gerta, her mother, and brother Fritz are trapped in East Berlin. Years pass and resentment of Russian oppression and her family's separation make the now 12-year-old more than ready to take a dangerous chance when her father's smuggled clues encourage her to dig a tunnel to freedom.

The Benefits of Being an Octopus

Braden, Ann

Seventh-grader Zoey doesn't think she's as good as other kids at school who have nice things. She also doesn't have the inclination to do homework because she's too busy taking care of her siblings—Bryce (four), Aurora (three), and baby Hector—all offspring of different fathers. They and their mother live in a trailer with Mom's fussy, bully of a boyfriend, Lenny, and his cantankerous father. When Zoey's social-studies teacher makes her join the school debate club, she begins to see situations with fresh eyes and from both sides—an ability she courageously applies to the gun debate after a school lockdown occurs. She also comes to understand that instead of succumbing to Lenny's intimidation, Zoey's mother has choices, including moving out and getting a protection order. This engrossing debut novel, narrated by the resourceful Zoey, takes the reader on her journey from the dire side of the class divide to a life of cautious hope as she learns the world is big enough for choices, actions, and results.

The Forbidden Schoolhouse: The True and Dramatic Story of Prudence Crandall and Her Students

Jurmain, Suzanne

Chronicles the life and struggles of Prudence Crandall who, in the 1830s closed her all-white boarding school for girls in Canterbury, Connecticut, and began admitting African-American students; and describes the intense opposition from the townspeople.

The Graveyard

Gaiman, Neil

Nobody Owens, known as Bod, is a normal boy. He would be *completely* normal if he didn't live in a graveyard, being raised by ghosts, with a guardian who belongs to neither the world of the living nor the dead. There are adventures in the graveyard for a boy—an ancient Indigo Man, a gateway to the abandoned city of ghouls, the strange and terrible Sleer. But if Bod leaves the graveyard, he will be in danger from the man Jack—who has already killed Bod's family.

The Last Best Days of Summer

Hobbs, Valerie

Lucy and her best friend Megan plan to follow Seventeen magazine's tips on how to join the popular crowd when they start middle school at the end of summer. Lucy has spent the last few months as a caregiver for Eddie, a classmate with special needs. What if Eddie tries to hang out with her at school? Will it hurt her chances with the "in" group?

During summer vacation, Lucy is happy to leave Eddie and spend some time with her beloved Grams at the lake, but Grams requires supervision too: she is becoming forgetful. Then Eddie turns up at Grams after a long, difficult bus ride to bring Lucy a token of friendship. In the end, kindhearted Lucy refuses to reject Eddie in favor of the superficial, glamorous crowd.

No Summit Out of Sight: The True Story of the Youngest Person to Climb the Seven Summits

Romero, Jordan

On May 22, 2010, at the age of 13, American teenager Jordan Romero became the youngest person to climb to the summit of Mount Everest. At 15, he became the youngest person to reach the summits of the tallest mountains on each of the seven continents.

Okay for Now

Schmidt, Gary

As a fourteen-year-old who just moved to a new town, with no friends and a louse for an older brother, Doug Swieteck has all the stats stacked against him. So begins a coming-of-age masterwork full of equal parts comedy and tragedy from Newbery Honor winner Gary D. Schmidt. As Doug struggles to be more than the "skinny thug" that his teachers and the police think him to be, he finds an unlikely ally in Lil Spicer--a fiery young lady who "smelled like daisies would smell if they were growing in a big field under a clearing sky after a rain." In Lil, Doug finds the strength to endure an abusive father, the suspicions of a whole town, and the return of his oldest brother, forever scarred, from Vietnam. Together, they find a safe haven in the local library, inspiration in learning about the plates of John James Audubon's birds, and a hilarious adventure on a Broadway stage. In this stunning novel, Schmidt expertly weaves multiple themes of loss and recovery in a story teeming with distinctive, unusual characters and invaluable lessons about love, creativity, and survival.

Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team that Changed a Town

St. John Warren

Exciting youth soccer action blends with politics in this story of refugee kids from across the world, including Kosovo, Mozambique, Liberia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Sudan, who find a home in the small town of Clarkston, Georgia. There, a tough volunteer coach, Luma Mufleh from Jordan, organizes three youth soccer teams that take on other local players and sometimes win. The account is filled with fast kicks, scrimmages, dribbles, crosses, corners, shots, and misses on the field that will grab kids, as will the harrowing stories of what the families fled from and their continuing struggle. Unlike the home teams, with their benches of supporters, the refugee teams have parents who are too busy holding multiple jobs to attend games.

The Power of Half

Salwen, Kevin

Warm, funny, and deeply moving, *The Power of Half* is the story of how one family grew closer as they discovered that half could be so much more.

The Seventh Most Important Thing

Pearsall, Shelley

When Arthur T. Owens hurls a brick at the local trash picker, James Hampton, whom he spies wearing his recently deceased father's hat, he receives a most unusual sentence: 120 hours of community service with the Junk Man himself. Toting Hampton's list of the seven most important things, Arthur reluctantly scavenges, unsure of the purpose of wood, lightbulbs, coffee cans, foil, mirrors, glass bottles, and cardboard, until he discovers what James does with them. In the garage is the Junk Man's shiny, throne like masterpiece, which he calls The Throne of the Third Heaven. Readers will be moved by Arthur's growth, as he forms an attachment to the man to whom he initially gave so little thought, as well as by his dedication to saving the folk artist's prized work after his death.

Son

Lowry, Lois

They called her Water Claire. When she washed up on their shore, no one knew that she came from a society where emotions and colors didn't exist. That she had become a Vessel at age thirteen. That she had carried a Product at age fourteen. That it had been stolen from her body. Claire had a son. But what became of him she never knew. What was his name? Was he even alive? She was supposed to forget him, but that was impossible. Now Claire will stop at nothing to find her child, even if it means making an unimaginable sacrifice.