

Incoming Eighth Grade Summer Reading List and Requirements 2023

There is no one mandatory book that all incoming eighth graders must read. Instead each student must read a total of three books, choosing one book each from the three genre categories below:

Category 1: Classics / Historical Fiction

<i>The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</i>	John Boyne
<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	William Golding
<i>The Mists of Avalon</i>	Marion Zimmer
<i>Out of the Dust</i>	Karen Hesse
<i>The Tenth Man</i>	Graham Greene
<i>20,000 Leagues Under the Sea</i>	Jules Verne
<i>Wolf Hollow</i>	Lauren Wolk

Category 2: Contemporary / Miscellaneous

<i>Cinder</i>	Marissa Meyer
<i>The House on Mango Street</i>	Sandra Cisneros
<i>The Lord of Opium</i>	Nancy Farmer
<i>Mycroft Holmes</i>	Kareem Abdul-Jabaar
<i>A Northern Light</i>	Jennifer Donnelly
<i>The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency</i>	Alexander McCall Smith
<i>Red Kayak</i>	Priscilla Cummings
<i>Ship Breaker</i>	Paolo Bacigalupi
<i>Whirligig</i>	Paul Fleischman

Category 3: Nonfiction

<i>Brown Girl Dreaming</i>	Jacqueline Woodson
<i>Farewell to Manzanar</i>	Jeanne Houston and James D. Houston
<i>Flags of Our Fathers: Heroes of Iwo Jima</i>	James Bradley, adapted by Michael French
<i>Hiroshima</i>	John Hersey
<i>The Long Shadow of Little Rock</i>	Daisy Bates
<i>Never Cry Wolf</i>	Farley Mowat
<i>Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team</i>	Steve Sheinkin
<i>A Walk in the Woods</i>	Bill Bryson

St. Michael's Summer Book Report Requirements for Eighth Grade

Students entering Eighth Grade must read a total of **three** books over the summer. (There is no single book that all students must read.) Students must choose and read one book from each of the three categories provided on the reading list. They must then complete a single project: an illustrated book jacket that incorporates information and reflections on all three books read. This book report is due in class on **Friday, August 11**, the first day of school.

Students must create a book jacket with a front cover, interior two-page spread, and back cover. The front and back cover pages are based on ONE of the three selected books they read. The text written in the interior two-page spread compares and contrasts the OTHER two books read by the student. The entire book jacket should fit on a single sheet of folded, white 8 1/2 x 11" paper.

- The front cover must include title, author, and student's name, as well as one original color drawing (or digital illustration) of a significant scene in the book **and** one significant quote.
- The back cover must include a **10-15 sentence personal response** to the book: how does this book compare to other books you've read in the same genre? how did the characters appeal to you? did you relate personally to any of the characters or events? why did or didn't you enjoy the book? This must be hand-written in ink and, of course, original!

The interior of the book jacket is designed as a three-paragraph formal essay totaling **500-1,000 words**. The report must be typed and printed in landscape orientation so it can be attached into the interior of the book jacket. The purpose of this interior text is to compare and contrast the two books that were NOT featured on the front and back cover pages. The requirements are as follows:

Paragraph One: Compare and contrast the key events of the two books, focusing on how the authors built tension, and how they designed creative resolutions (endings) to their novels.

Paragraph Two: Compare and contrast one or more protagonists (main characters) in each book. How do their personalities shape the way the plots unfold?

Paragraph Three: Discuss a theme (such as courage, friendship, prejudice, or compassion) that both books have in common, and how specific moments in each book helped develop that theme.

For this interior section, you might consider selecting books that have particular opportunities for comparison. For example, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, *The Tenth Man*, *Farewell to Manzanar*, *Flags of Our Fathers*, *Wolf Hollow*, and *Hiroshima* all deal with war and/or imprisonment; *The Tenth Man*, *The Red Kayak*, and *Whirligig* involve ethical dilemmas and opportunities for redemption; *The Mists of Avalon*, *Out of the Dust*, *Cinder*, *The House on Mango Street*, *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*, *Brown Girl Dreaming*, and *The Long Shadow of Little Rock* contain strong female protagonists; *Lord of the Flies*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and *The Lord of Opium* portray leaders facing enormous challenges, and *Out of the Dust*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *Red Kayak*, *Ship Breaker*, *Never Cry Wolf*, and *A Walk in the Woods* depict the beauty and/or devastating power of nature.

See the final page of this document for a sample project layout. Still confused? Please don't hesitate to contact Mr. Hawes (ahawes@stmichael.net) at any time!

Please include this form completed when you turn in your book report at the start of school.

Student's Name _____

Book One (Title and Author): _____

Book Two (Title and Author): _____

Book Three (Title and Author): _____

PARENT VERIFICATION

I verify that my child has read all three of these books and that this report represents the original work of my child. (Evidence of plagiarism will result in a zero on the report.)

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

BOOK JACKET SAMPLE: Middle School Summer Report

FRONT COVER:



BACK COVER:

Eragon finds a beautiful blue stone in the Spine that soon hatches into a dragon. From the very beginning he is puzzled by Saphira's (the dragon) appearance and by the stories that are spreading. It takes time, but Eragon comes to trust Saphira and his own abilities. This developing friendship that requires a great deal of trust, communication, and willingness to believe in one's ability is the main reason I liked the book. Evil creatures constantly harass them, but their friendship and the support of good people (or creatures) never waiver in their dedication to stopping evil. I will always want to believe that goodness will prevail.

I also enjoyed the book because of the description of the landscape and places. Paolini obviously loves the big open spaces of his home, and I could easily envision the mountains and valleys Eragon had to traverse while being chased by Urghals. Any book that includes a map in the opening pages is intriguing.

INTERIOR TWO-PAGE SPREAD:

Holes by Louis Sachar and McElliott's *Pool* by Dr. Seuss appear on the surface to discuss very different sorts of events. In *Holes*, the main character, Stanley Yelnats, has been sent to a juvenile-detention facility, Camp Green Lake, as punishment for supposedly stealing a pair of sneakers. In Dr. Seuss's picture book, a young boy is warned by a passing farmer that his attempts at hooking a fish from a small pond are foolhardy. Nonetheless, both authors develop a sense of mystery by offering readers hidden treasures: in the case of *Holes*, a literal treasure box buried by Kissin' Kate Barlow, and in the case of *McElliott's Pool*, the promise of an exotic, aquatic prize, such as a kangaroo fish, a checkerboard fish, or even a Thing-a-Ma-Jigger.

The unnamed hero of *McElliott's Pool* and young Stanley Yelnats both demonstrate fearlessness at times, although the young fisherman approaches life with far more optimism than Stanley, who begins the book despairing over a decades-old curse that, his family believes, dooms their dreams and clouds their consciences. Dr. Seuss's perky hero exudes sunny optimism when he proclaims, "And that's why I think / That I'm

not such a fool / When I sit here and fish / In McElliott's Pool!" Meanwhile, Stanley wallows in self-doubt, especially when he first arrives at Camp Green Lake and discovers it is not the idyllic destination he has been promised: "This isn't a Girl Scout camp," said Mr. Sir.

Persistence, the personal quality of grit and determination, stands at the core of each book. Stanley and Zero face desperate odds when fleeing camp and climbing up God's Thumb. The protagonist of *McElliott's Pool* is teased for even considering that he might catch a fish. Yet he perseveres, allowing his book the opportunity to follow an underground channel under State Highway Two-Hundred-and-Three and Sneeden's Hotel on its journey to the ocean. The symbolism of holes permeates both works. A hole can represent failure or emptiness—the opposite of success and fulfillment. The campers continue to dig holes despite the likelihood they will never discover the hidden treasure, and the boy continues to sit patiently by the fishing hole.