

# The Eighth Grade Reading List





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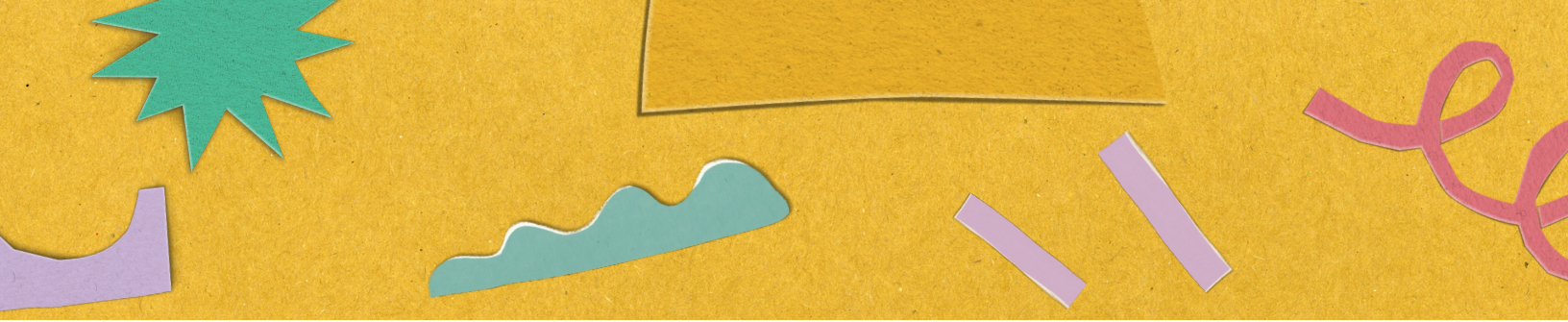
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### **1. The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy by Douglas Adams**

It's an ordinary day for Arthur Dent--until his home gets demolished. Soon after, Earth was also destroyed to make way for an intergalactic freeway. However, Arthur's friend, Ford Prefect, reveals to him that he is an alien and saves him just in time. With only just a towel, a small yellow fish, and a book, Arthur and Ford hitch a ride on a spaceship and begin their journey through the galaxy in the company of fellow space travelers. Its strange, wonderful, and well-developed characters and its mind-boggling, suspenseful storyline make The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy a science-fiction classic that is sure to captivate readers.

### **2. Skyward by Brandon Sanderson**

Spensa's world has been under attack for decades, almost driven to extinction. With the human race constantly attacked by alien starfighters called the Krell, humanity's only hope is the courageous, young pilots who fight the enemies in the skies. Seventeen-year-old Spensa has always dreamed of becoming one of them. However, her chances of becoming a pilot seem impossible due to her father's actions during the historic Battle of Alta. When Spensa discovers an ancient starship, she realizes her dream may be possible after all. For this ship, uniquely, seems to have a soul, and may be willing to help her. Skyward is an action-packed and compelling novel that will make readers eager to get their hands on the sequel, as they follow Spensa's quest to claim the stars and ultimately save humanity.

### **3. Forget Me Not by Ellie Terry**

Calliope June has Tourette Syndrome, which can cause her to make faces or noises that she doesn't mean to make. Her mother and Calliope have been moving around a lot since her father died. After arriving in yet another town, Callie tries to hide her TS to fit in her new school but soon finds it difficult and seems to make her tics worse. Exhausted by her inability to fit in, she seeks out solace in her friendship with Jinsong, the student body president, who lives next door. He's hesitant to be seen with her at first, but then beautiful friendship blossoms between them. Written in free verse, this book beautifully reflects Calliope's strength and spirit, and its story of acceptance, self-love, and friendship will stay in the minds of readers for a long time.



#### **4. The Witch Of Blackbird Pond by Elizabeth George Speare**

Sixteen-year-old Katherine "Kit" Tyler had to leave her island home of Barbados to live with her aunt and her strict uncle in colonial Connecticut in 1687, after her grandfather, who raised her, passed away. In her relatives' stern Puritan community, she feels out of place, and people don't trust her. Feeling lonely and misunderstood, she finds friendship in Hannah Tupper, a Quaker shunned out of the community and believed by the colonists to be a "witch." After Kit's friendship with Hannah is discovered, she couldn't have anticipated the consequences that follow. Full of wonderful historical details and lively characters, this book is a charming classic and a must-read for any fan of historical fiction.

#### **5. Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs**

Jacob was raised by his grandfather and grew up hearing fantastic stories about his childhood during World War II, and about a children's home where he grew up. As Jacob grows older, he begins doubting his grandfather's tales and assumes that the old photographs that accompany them are also fake. But when Jacob's grandfather mysteriously died, this led him to embark on a journey to a mysterious island off the coast of Wales, to find the children's home from his grandfather's past and to figure out his grandfather's cryptic dying words and what they meant. A fast-paced, fascinating story characterized by unique photographs throughout the book, Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children will appeal to mystery lovers.

#### **6. Peter And The Starcatchers by Dave Barry**

In 19th century London, an orphaned boy named Peter is shipped out to an island aboard the Never Land, a decrepit ship carrying a magical and mysterious trunk. Peter then meets a passenger his age named Molly Aster, a sweet but sophisticated girl who knows much more than she lets on about the magical trunk's contents. Meanwhile, when the fearsome Captain Black Stache plots to capture the magical trunk and the ship, Peter and Molly must keep the trunk safe against pirates and raging storms. This adventure story is carefully crafted, with its fast-paced chapters and unforgettable characters. It sets the stage to reveal the secrets and mysteries of the beloved story of Peter Pan and serves as a "prequel" to the original story.





### **7. The Book Thief by Markus Zusak**

It is 1939 in Germany. The story follows Liesel Meminger, who moves into her foster parents' home after the death of her younger brother. Soon, she starts to settle down into her new home, makes friends with her next-door neighbor, Rudy, and develops a love for books. With the help of her foster father, Liesel learns how to read and begins to steal books wherever she can find them. As the Nazis take over Germany, her foster parents hide a Jewish man named Max Vandenburg in their basement. During their time together in the basement, Liesel would share her stolen books with Max, who would then write a story for her. However, these are dangerous times, and Liesel will bear witness to the atrocities of war, loss, and love, which will turn her life upside down.

### **8. Grenade by Alan Gratz**

A historical fiction novel set during World War II in Japan, it is the story of Hideki from Okinawa, who was forced to join the Japanese army, and Ray, a young US Marine who just arrived on the island of Okinawa. As Hideki and Ray struggle to make it across the island, surviving gunfire, snipers, and ambushes, neither knows if they will make it out alive. When the two collide in the middle of the battle, the choices they make at that moment might be the difference between life and death. Compelling and gripping, Grenade tells the story of the Battle of Okinawa, as seen from the perspectives of Hideki and Ray. It is a riveting story of survival and bravery that would appeal to anyone interested in learning more about World War II, from middle school and up.

### **9. Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson**

Trouble-maker Cole Matthews has been stealing and fighting for years. He takes his rage out on other people, and this time, he severely injured Peter Driscoll, causing irreparable brain damage. In place of incarceration, Cole is sentenced to attend Circle Justice, a program that focuses on healing and changing the offender's ways based on Native American traditions. To avoid jail, Cole plays along and is then sent to live on a remote Alaskan island, where he encounters the Spirit Bear, which soon causes him to reevaluate his actions and gain a deeper understanding of himself, others, and his world.





### **10. All The Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr**

Marie-Laure is a young blind girl living with her father, who is a locksmith at the Paris Museum of Natural History. During the Nazi invasion of Paris, Marie-Laure and her father are forced to flee to Saint-Malo, where her reclusive uncle lives. Marie-Laure does not know that her father also holds a jewel that might be the museum's most valuable and dangerous treasure. Meanwhile, Werner Pfennig, an orphan from Germany, is exceptionally knowledgeable about anything electrical, especially radio transmitters. Eventually, we see how Marie-Laure and Werner's paths collide in this poignant tale of secret radio broadcasts, a cursed jewel, and the power of kindness in the face of a devastating war.

### **11. I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives by Martin Ganda & Caitlin Alifirenka**

A simple assignment turned into a life-long friendship between two students from two different parts of the world. Caitlin, a 12-year-old American girl, has to write a letter to an unknown student from another country for her English class. Choosing a pen pal from Zimbabwe, she matched with a bright and cheerful 14-year-old boy named Martin. Through their correspondence over the years, they learned about each other's cultures and way of life resulting in a more positive outlook and a new understanding of the world. Told in alternating chapters and featuring excerpts of their actual letters, this heartwarming true story will appeal to readers of all ages.

### **12. Luck of the Titanic by Stacey Lee**

Luck of the Titanic is a historical fiction that tells the story of the Luck twins aboard the ill-fated ship, Titanic. Valora Luck dreams of leaving England for a better life for her and her brother in America. Despite having a ticket for the largest ocean liner in the world, she was turned away due to the Chinese Exclusion Act. Determined to make it to America, Val devises a plan to audition as an acrobat for a circus in New York. The only problem is: her twin brother Jamie doesn't share her desire to make a life in the US. Then one moonless night in the middle of the North Atlantic, the supposedly unsinkable ship is struck by disaster, and Val now has to fight to stay alive.





### **13. One For The Murphys by Lynda Mullaly Hunt**

Twelve-year-old Carley Connors finds herself in the foster care system after a violent episode with her stepfather. A caring and loving household has never been a part of Carley's life, and she doesn't believe she deserves one. However, when she moved in with the Murphys, she is treated with kindness, respect, and patience; a new experience for Carley which she finds confusing and uncomfortable. Soon, she learns to trust the Murphys until her mother wants her back. One For The Murphys is a touching and thought-provoking novel that shows how unconditional love can change a person's life. It is a quick read that will have readers rooting for Carley and the Murphys.

### **14. The War That Saved My Life by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley**

Ten-year-old Ada has never been outdoors. Born with a twisted foot, her cruel, abusive mother felt too embarrassed to let her outside. In addition to beating her, her mother locks her in a cabinet as a form of punishment. During World War II, the British government began evacuating children from urban areas to the countryside, however, her mother refuses to send Ada, claiming that no one will care for her. Despite this, Ada sneaks away with her little brother Jaimie to escape the war. A new adventure awaits for Ada and her brother as they are taken in by Susan, a woman who was forced to take them in and have issues of her own. Ada's spunk and determination will captivate readers as she learns to navigate the outside world and grows to trust their new guardian in Susan, despite dangerous times ahead.

### **15. Out Of My Mind by Sharon M. Draper**

Melody Brooks, an 11-year-old born with cerebral palsy, tells her story in Out Of My Mind. Melody is unable to talk, walk or even feed herself. However, Melody is extremely intelligent and has a photographic memory, and she is determined not to let her disability define her. Although she wants to express her thoughts and feelings, most people look past her and treat her as mentally challenged, even when she is not. Through this book, readers are given a glimpse into Melody's world through an inspiring and powerful story about her quiet strength and determination, and about disabilities and the challenges they entail.





### **16. The Seventh Most Important Thing by Shelley Pearsall**

Following the death of his father and being traumatized by the loss, 13-year-old Arthur T. Owens, hurled a brick at a man that collects junk in his neighborhood. While the brick struck the Junk Man in the arm, it didn't matter to the judge, and Arthur was sentenced to juvenile detention. However, James Hampton (the Junk Man) offers an alternative: Arthur will complete 120 hours of community service, helping him out by collecting discarded light bulbs, foil, mirrors, pieces of wood, glass bottles, cardboard, and coffee cans. Initially, Arthur is embarrassed when he finds himself rummaging through people's trash, but it's not long before he realizes the Junk Man isn't who he seems to be. Arthur's life is shaped by each item on Mr. Hampton's list, allowing him to grow and gain a deeper understanding of the world. Involving a cast of well-rounded, interesting characters, it is a memorable read that will stay with you forever.

Based on the life of folk artist James Hampton and his work of art, "The Throne of the Third Heaven" which is now displayed in the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

### **17. Genesis Begins Again by Alicia D. Williams**

Genesis doesn't feel comfortable in her own skin. The dark complexion of her skin makes her the target of taunts not only from kids at school but also from her own family. It has been a struggle for Genesis to cope with her father's verbal abuse and her grandmother's backward ideas about skin color, to the point where she has tried bleaching her skin. Not to mention her father's gambling habit, which threatens to evict her and her Mama from the house at every turn, destroying her sense of security and adding to her sense of self-loathing. But things aren't all bad as Genesis and her Mama move into a nice house bought by her Dad, who promises to be better. Soon, she begins attending a new school where she makes new friends and even finds a talent for singing. Yet Genesis often wonders if this change is for good and what will happen when they get evicted again?

Genesis Begins Again is the perfect middle-grade story about the pressures to fit in with a powerful message about colorism, belonging, self-love, and the power of friendship and music.





### **18. The Line Tender by Kate Allen**

Lucy Everhart's mother, a marine biologist and shark expert passed away five years ago. Lucy, now twelve years old, lives with her father in a sleepy tourist town in Rockport, Massachusetts. In the summer, Lucy and her best friend, Fred, work on their summer assignment, a field guide that documents all living creatures they encounter along the beach. When Lucy finds out about the Great White shark caught in the harbor, it piques her interest as it reminds her of her mother's work. Suddenly another tragedy strikes and Lucy draws strength from her mother's research, determined to complete the research she left behind. Lucy's father, a local fisherman, and an elderly neighbor help Lucy with the research, and thanks to their unlikely bond, they might be able to overcome their grief and struggle with loss...simply by following the sharks.

### **19. Ghost by Jason Reynolds**

The only thing Castle Crenshaw (a.k.a. Ghost) has ever known is running. He ran for the first time as a small boy--and it was for his life, as his father chased him and his mother with a loaded gun. Ghost, now older, uses his natural talent by joining the track team. Ghost is determined to be the fastest sprinter on his middle school team, but his past seems to be holding him back. Rather than simply a sports story, Ghost is a sensitive, realistic portrayal of a young person dealing with trauma, overcoming obstacles, and believing in oneself.

### **20. Nowhere Boy by Katherine Marsh**

14-year-old Ahmed and his father flee Aleppo, Syria, after losing most of their family due to the bombing of their home. To make matters worse, Ahmed also loses his father during their perilous journey to Europe. Ahmed now finds himself all alone in Brussels, Belgium, and with no one to turn to and no one to trust, he loses hope. Then he meets an American boy named Max, who is homesick and lonely. While they both face struggles and uncertainties, they form an unlikely friendship that encourages them to be brave. Nowhere Boy is a touching story of hope, resilience, and friendship, which also promotes discussion about the difficulties refugees and immigrants face.





### **21. Whirligig by Paul Fleischman**

After being humiliated at an after-school party, Brent Bishop tries to end it all by crashing his car. He escapes with only minor cuts and bruises, but the crash kills a young woman named Lea. As part of his sentence, Lea's mother asks Brent to create four whirligigs and place them in the four corners of the United States in honor of her daughter. Along the way, Brent learns some important lessons about himself and meets people who help him realize that he can still change for the better. Interwoven alongside Brent's story are the stories of people whose lives have been touched and changed by Brent's creations. It is a beautiful and compelling story of redemption that is well-worth reading.

### **22. No Summit Out Of Sight: The True Story Of The Youngest Person To Climb The Seven Summits by Jordan Romero**

A remarkable account of the youngest person to climb each continents' highest mountains. Meet Jordan Romero. At the age of 13, he became the youngest person to summit Mt. Everest. At 15, he was able to reach all seven summits. Jordan recounts in this book his experiences and adventures climbing mountains, the struggles he faced, and the sacrifices he made to achieve his goals. Jordan's extraordinary story will surely inspire readers to pursue their dreams and work hard to achieve them. The perfect book for young adults and adventure lovers.

### **23. The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien**

Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who lives comfortably in an underground hole. A comfortable, peaceful life in his hobbit-hole is suddenly disturbed when Gandalf the Grey appears on his doorstep, whisking him away on an adventure with a group of dwarves seeking to get back the treasure guarded by the dragon Smaug the Magnificent. After reluctantly joining the journey, Bilbo eventually meets the tormented Gollum and finds himself in possession of a powerful and dangerous ring. As a charming and entertaining prequel to Tolkien's classic masterpiece, The Lord Of The Rings, The Hobbit is a timeless classic that is an absolute must-read for all ages.





#### **24. When You Were Everything by Ashley Woodfolk**

Cleo and Layla have been best friends for years. As their sophomore year begins, though, they start to take different paths. When Layla began to hang out with new friends from the school chorus group, the two became increasingly distant until they ended their friendship. It hurts Cleo's feelings, because not only is she losing her best friend, she is dealing with her parent's divorce as well. Cleo desperately wants to forget everything about her ex-best friend, but it proved impossible when she was assigned to be Layla's tutor. When You Were Everything merges past and present into a deeply relatable, emotional tale about the ending of a friendship, forgiveness, and being open to new beginnings.

#### **25. Dry by Neal Shusterman & Jarrod Shusterman**

Southern California is running out of water. The drought--or the "Tap-Out", as everyone calls it, escalates to catastrophic proportions. Alyssa's neighborhood is wracked by chaos as she witnesses people turning against each other in search of water. After Alyssa's parents go missing after going out to find water, Alyssa, her brother Garrett, and their nerdy survivalist neighbor Kelton must find a way to survive. The plot of the novel is thought-provoking and realistic, keeping readers riveted as they follow the teens struggle in a world without water.

#### **26. The Memory Of Things by Gae Polisner**

16-year-old Kyle Donohue watches out the window as the first tower comes crashing down on that morning of September 11, 2001. Kyle is rushing to get to safety when he encounters a teenage girl on the Brooklyn Bridge. She is wearing a pair of angel wings and covered in ash. Kyle thinks she's going to jump, but he was able to convince the girl to come home with him and to try and help her find her family. It appears, however, that the mysterious girl has lost her memory. What follows is the story of their budding friendship despite the tragedy and chaos following the 9/11 attacks. The Memory of Things tells a gripping and moving story of loss and devastation, but also hope, healing, and love.





### **27. A List Of Cages by Robin Roe**

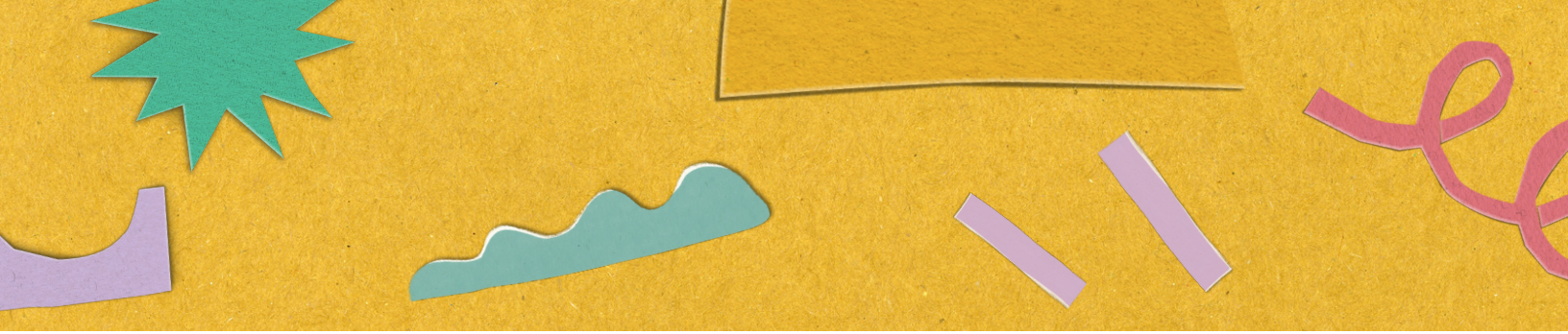
Adam Blake is a high school senior with ADHD. A bright and popular student, he just landed the best elective--serving as an aide to the school psychologist. His first assignment is to track down a troubled freshman who keeps skipping his counseling sessions. Little did Adam know that the freshman was his former foster brother, Julian. Adam is excited to be reunited with Julian again. Though kind-hearted and still enjoys writing stories, Julian seems quite shy and secretive. As Adam tries to find out what is happening with Julian, he finds that his involvement could prove more dangerous than he anticipated. *A List of Cages* is an inspiring and powerful book filled with unforgettable characters that will make you root for them.

### **28. The Kingdom Of Back by Marie Lu**

Nannerl Mozart has just one wish: to be remembered. A masterful musician with a gift of music, Nannerl delights audiences with her compositions. However, as a young woman in 18th century Europe, things were different for her and her passion. Being a woman musician at the time was a forbidden profession. Having reached marriageable age, she no longer was permitted to perform alongside her brother Wolfgang, who achieved fame and recognition through his musical career. Until one day, a mysterious stranger from a magical land appears with an irresistible offer to grant her wish--but it might just cost Nannerl everything. Beautifully written historical fiction, *The Kingdom of Back* is a story of music and magic that will captivate readers of all ages.

### **29. Listen, Slowly by Thanhha Lai**

12-year-old Mai, born and raised in California, is looking forward to spending the summer at the beach with her best friend and the boy she has a crush on. Her plans were interrupted when she was selected to accompany her grandmother to Vietnam, who wants to find out what happened to her husband during the Vietnam War. Mai's parents think that this trip will help her learn more about her Vietnamese heritage, however, Mai isn't thrilled to go and initially finds it difficult to adjust to the hot, humid climate of Vietnam, the local customs, and even communicate with her relatives. After learning more about her heritage and becoming more aware of the richness of her culture, Mai gradually begins to see things from a different perspective. *Listen, Slowly* is an engaging and thoughtful story of family, heritage, and friendship.



### **30. The Color Of My Words by Lynn Joseph**

Ana Rosa enjoys writing and expressing her feelings through it. She wants to become a writer, despite knowing that writing is a career that is fraught with danger in the Dominican Republic. However, this doesn't stop Ana Rosa from writing as she writes about her community, her family, and her struggles. When Ana Rosa attempts to find her own voice and her place in the world, she realizes how powerful her words and stories can be. A beautiful blend of poetry and prose, *The Color of My Words* beautifully conveys family loyalty and love, as well as a deep sense of community.





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