

Summer Reading Work & Book List for Incoming 8th Graders

All incoming 8th graders must choose **1** book from the list. I've chosen the books carefully to help prepare students for what is ahead in 8th grade! The books are readily available on Kindle and through Amazon. After reading, students will write an essay. **Note to parents:** I'm assessing your student's writing skills with this paper. Please, don't feel compelled to correct/edit. I will use these papers to help guide the 8th grade writing curriculum. 😊

Essay on Theme

Determine the theme of your chosen book. Remember, a theme is NOT a one-word statement (like "freedom"). A theme must contain a verb (example: "Without freedom, life is one dimensional" or "Gaining freedom doesn't always come easy, but when earned, it yields the greatest of rewards").

Once you have decided on a solid theme; one you can support and defend, develop a strong thesis statement to build your paper around. An example might be, "Addy struggled to break out of her small-town life through her education, friends, and music." This thesis tells the reader exactly where the author intends the paper to go.

Paragraph one = Introduction (includes the hook and thesis statement).

Paragraph two = Part one of the thesis – how Addy used her education to break out.

Paragraph three = Part two of the thesis – how Addy used her relationships with friends to break out.

Paragraph four = Part three of the thesis – how Addy used music to break out.

Paragraph five = Conclusion (pulls it all together, restates the thesis in a new and exciting way, and may call the reader to action)

Include evidence from the text to support each assertion you make in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3!
Give credit to your author by citing the page number (example: Jones, B., Pg.72)

Be sure to proof your paper. Check for grammar, punctuation, and spelling! Don't forget your subject/verb agreement rules!

Do your very best to eliminate the word "you" from your paper. "I" is okay, but "you" is not okay.

Example: Instead of –

Have you ever wondered how to make cut flowers last longer?

Try –

I've often wondered how to make my cut flowers last longer in the vase. OR
Many people wonder how to make cut flowers last longer. OR
There are varying opinions regarding how to make cut flowers last longer.

If there are any questions, please email me at j.nelson@stbens.net or nelsonstbens@gmail.com. If you finish your paper prior to the end of summer, feel free to share the document with me via google docs. If you choose to share your document, be sure to use the nelsonstben@gmail.com address because j.nelson@stbens.net isn't linked to google docs and I won't be able to open your document. You can also do the work in MSWord and email to me as an attachment.

All work will be due the first Friday of school in September. If it is not shared with me prior to the start of classes, students must print out their work and turn it in during class.

The Amazing 8th Grade Summer Reading Book List

***Watership Down* by Richard Adams**

Chronicles the adventures of a group of rabbits searching for a safe place to establish a new warren where they can live in peace.

***Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott**

This is the heartwarming story of the March family that has thrilled generations of readers. The story of 4 sisters – Jo, Meg, Amy, and Beth – and the courage, humor and ingenuity they display to survive poverty and the absence of their father during the Civil War.

***The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* by Alexie Sherman**

Contains a collection of 24 short stories by the National Book Award winning author that chronicles daily life on a Native American Indian Reservation in Spokane, WA

***I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou**

In this first of five volumes of autobiography, poet Maya Angelou recounts a youth filled with disappointment, frustration, tragedy, and finally hard-won independence.

***Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt**

The Tuck family is confronted with an agonizing situation when they discover that a 10 year old girl and a malicious stranger now share their secret about a spring whose water prevents one from ever growing any older.

***The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury**

In this science fiction classic, the first Earth people to attempt the colonization of Mars try to build their new world in the image of the civilization they left behind.

***Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte**

A headstrong heroine, a dashing gentleman, a dark and brooding house with a terrible secret in the attic are all found in this classic novel written in the best Gothic tradition.

***The Secret Garden* by Frances H. Burnett**

10 year old Mary comes to live in a lonely house on the Yorkshire moors and discovers an invalid cousin and the mysteries of a locked garden in this classic story of loss, friendship and redemption.

***The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd**

Set in South Carolina during 1964, it is the story of a 14-year-old white girl, Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted "stand-in-mother," Rosaleen, insults three racists in town, they escape to Tiburon, South Carolina – a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. Taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters, Lily finds refuge in the mesmerizing world of bees, honey and the Black Madonna.

***Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck**

The plot of this well-known classic centers on George Milton and Lennie Small who are ranch hands dreaming of one day owning a small farm. George acts as a father figure to Lennie, who is large and simple minded, calming him and helping to rein in his immense physical strength. When a terrible accident involving Lennie takes place, George has an equally terrible decision to make concerning his friend.

***I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai**

"I come from a country that was created at midnight. When I almost died it was just after midday."

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education.

Have a great summer and keep reading! Take time to really enjoy these books. I've read them all and each has something special to offer you. It is going to be a fabulous 8th grade year!

Mrs. Nelson

j.nelson@stbens.net

nelsonstbens@gmail.com