

**The Country School Suggested Reading List for Middle School
(Books to Read Before You Leave 8th Grade)**

Adams, Douglas	<i>The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i> Chronicles the off-beat and occasionally extraterrestrial journeys, notions, and acquaintances of galactic traveler Arthur Dent.	<i>science fiction</i>
Adams, Richard	<i>Watership Down</i> Chronicles the adventures of a group of rabbits searching for a safe place to establish a new warren so that they can live in peace.	<i>classic</i>
Alcott, Louisa May	<i>Little Women</i> Chronicles the joys and sorrows of the four March sisters as they grow into young ladies in mid-nineteenth-century New England.	<i>classic/realistic fiction</i>
Alexander, Kwame	<i>The Crossover</i> 12-year old Josh Bell and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood - he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse in this fast and furious novel of family and brotherhood. Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.	<i>novel in verse</i>
Alexie, Sherman	<i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i> Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.	<i>realistic fiction</i>
Anderson, Laurie Halse	<i>Chains</i> When their owner dies at the start of the Revolution, Isabel and her younger sister are sold to Loyalists in New York, where Isabel is offered the chance to spy for the Patriots. If an entire nation could seek its freedom, why not a girl?	<i>historical fiction</i>
Angelou, Maya	<i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> In this first of five volumes of autobiography, poet Maya Angelou recounts a youth filled with disappointment, frustration, tragedy, and finally hard-won independence. Marvelously told, with Angelou's "gift for language and observation," this "remarkable autobiography by an equally remarkable black woman from Arkansas captures, indelibly, a world of which most Americans are shamefully ignorant."	<i>autobiography</i>
Avi	<i>The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle</i> As the lone "young lady" on a transatlantic voyage in 1832, Charlotte learns that the captain is murderous and the crew rebellious.	<i>historical fiction</i>
Babbit, Natalie	<i>Tuck Everlasting</i> The Tuck family is confronted with an agonizing situation when they discover that a ten-year-old girl and a malicious stranger now share their secret about a spring whose water prevents one from ever growing any older.	<i>fantasy</i>
Bradbury, Ray	<i>The Illustrated Man</i> This is one of the classics from the golden age of sci-fi: sixteen tales of horror and terror in the tattoos on an "illustrated" man's body. Even though most were written in the 1940s and 1950s, these 18 classic stories will be just as chillingly effective 50 years from now.	<i>science fiction</i>
Bronte, Charlotte	<i>Jane Eyre</i> Widely regarded as a revolutionary novel, Bronte's masterpiece introduced the world to a radical new type of heroine, one whose defiant virtue and moral courage departed sharply from the more acquiescent and malleable female characters of the day. Passionate, dramatic, and surprisingly modern, Jane Eyre endures as one of the world's most beloved novels.	<i>classic/realistic fiction</i>

Card, Orson Scott	<i>Ender's Game</i> Child hero Ender Wiggin must fight a desperate battle against a deadly alien race if mankind is to survive in this now classic sci-fi adventure story.	<i>science fiction</i>
Carroll, Lewis	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> A little girl falls down a rabbit hole and discovers a world of nonsensical and amusing characters.	<i>classic/fantasy</i>
Christie, Agatha	<i>And Then There Were None</i> Ten strangers, each with a dark secret, are gathered together on an isolated island by a mysterious host. One by one, they die, and before the weekend is out, there will be none.	<i>mystery</i>
Cisneros, Sandra	<i>The House on Mango Street</i> The story of a young girl growing up in the Hispanic quarter of Chicago. Capturing her thoughts and emotions in poems and stories, she is able to rise above hopelessness and create a quiet space for herself in the midst of her oppressive surroundings.	<i>vignettes</i>
Dickens, Charles	<i>Oliver Twist</i> The story of the orphan Oliver, who runs away from the workhouse only to be taken in by a den of thieves, shocked readers when it was first published. Dickens's tale of childhood innocence beset by evil depicts the dark criminal underworld of a London peopled by vivid and memorable characters.	<i>classic/realistic fiction</i>
Golding, William	<i>Lord of the Flies: A Novel</i> The classic tale of a group of English school boys who are left stranded on an unpopulated island, and who must confront not only the defects of their society but the defects of their own natures.	<i>classic/realistic fiction</i>
Hiaasen, Carl	<i>Hoot</i> Roy, who is new to his small Florida community, becomes involved in another boy's attempt to save a colony of burrowing owls from a proposed construction site.	<i>realistic fiction/mystery</i>
Hillenbrand, Laura	<i>Unbroken: An Olympian's Journey from Airman to Castaway to Captive</i> A young adult adaptation of Hillenbrand's World War II story of survival, resilience, and redemption.	<i>nonfiction</i>
Jackson, Shirley	<i>The Haunting of Hill House</i> Five strangers meet at Hill House--a notorious estate in New England to take part in a paranormal science experiment. Hill House is a foreboding structure of towers, buttresses, Gothic spires, gargoyles, strange angles, and rooms within rooms--a place "without kindness, never meant to be lived in...." Shirley Jackson's book has unnerved readers since its original publication in 1959. A tale of subtle, psychological terror, it has earned its place as one of the significant haunted house stories of our time.	<i>horror</i>
Lai, Thanhha	<i>Inside Out and Back Again</i> For all the ten years of her life, Hà has only known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, and the warmth of her friends close by. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. Hà and her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope. In America, Hà discovers the foreign world of Alabama: the coldness of its strangers, the dullness of its food . . . and the strength of her very own family. (A novel in verse)	<i>novel in verse</i>
Lee, Harper	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic.	<i>classic/realistic fiction</i>
Lewis, C.S.	<i>The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe</i> Four English schoolchildren find their way through the back of a wardrobe into the magic land of Narnia and assist Aslan, the golden lion, to triumph over the White Witch, who has cursed the land with eternal winter.	<i>classic/fantasy</i>

L'Engle, Madeline	<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i> Meg Murry and her friends become involved with unearthly strangers and a search for Meg's father, who has disappeared while engaged in secret work for the government.	<i>classic/fantasy</i>
London, Jack	<i>The Call of the Wild</i> Stolen from his life as a beloved pet, Buck must learn to adapt to abuse as a Klondike sled dog, to life with a loving master, John Thornton, and finally to life in the wild as a leader of the wolf pack.	<i>adventure</i>
Lowry, Lois	<i>The Giver</i> Given his lifetime assignment at the Ceremony of Twelve, Jonas becomes the Receiver of Memories shared by only one other in his community and discovers the terrible truth about the society in which he lives. See related quartet.	<i>science fiction</i>
O'Dell, Scott	<i>Island of the Blue Dolphins</i> Left alone on a beautiful but isolated island off the coast of California, a young Indian girl spends eighteen years, not only merely surviving through her enormous courage and self-reliance, but also finding a measure of happiness in her solitary life.	<i>realistic fiction</i>
Palacio, R.J.	<i>Wonder</i> Ten-year-old Auggie Pullman, who was born with extreme facial abnormalities and was not expected to survive, goes from being home-schooled to entering fifth grade at a private middle school in Manhattan, which entails enduring the taunting and fear of his classmates as he struggles to be seen as just another student.	<i>realistic fiction</i>
Paulsen, Gary	<i>Hatchet</i> After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the wilderness, learning to survive initially with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce. First in a series.	<i>adventure</i>
Potok, Chaim	<i>The Chosen</i> This novel tells the story of the friendship that develops between two Jewish boys of different backgrounds, and it examines the tensions that arise as their cultures collide with each other and with modern American society.	<i>realistic fiction</i>
Pullman, Philip	<i>The Golden Compass</i> Accompanied by her daemon, Lyra Belacqua sets out to prevent her best friend and other kidnapped children from becoming the subject of gruesome experiments in the Far North.	<i>fantasy</i>
Rowling, J.K.	<i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i> Rescued from the outrageous neglect of his aunt and uncle, a young boy with a great destiny proves his worth while attending Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry. First in a series.	<i>fantasy</i>
Smith, Betty	<i>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</i> The American classic about a young girl's coming-of-age at the turn of the century. By turns overwhelming, sublime, heartbreaking, and uplifting, the Nolans' daily experiences are tenderly threaded with family connectedness and raw with honesty.	<i>realistic fiction</i>
Steinbeck, John	<i>The Pearl</i> A story of classic simplicity, based on a Mexican folk tale, <i>The Pearl</i> explores the secrets of man's nature, the darkest depths of evil, and the luminous possibilities of love.	<i>classic/realistic fiction</i>
Tolkien, J.R.R.	<i>The Hobbit, or, There and Back Again</i> Bilbo Baggins, a respectable, well-to-do hobbit, lives comfortably in his hobbit-hole until the day the wandering wizard Gandalf chooses him to take part in an adventure from which he may never return.	<i>fantasy</i>

Twain, Mark	<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> The adventures of a mischievous young boy and his friends growing up in a Mississippi River town in the nineteenth century.	<i>classic/realistic fiction</i>
Voigt, Cynthia	<i>Homecoming</i> Abandoned by their mother, four children begin a search for a home and an identity. See the Tillerman Cycle of books for more.	<i>realistic fiction</i>

Which of these titles will YOU try to read in the coming months?

Book Title	Reason for interest