

Summer Reading List for Rising 8th Graders Summer 2025

Please select **one** volume from each of the lists below (i.e., choose one **classic** and one **modern**) to read over the summer **along with the required** reading, *The Pearl*. You will write a book review about one of the novels you have chosen (not *The Pearl*). The review should be typed (double-spaced; Times New Roman; 12-point font), using one inch margins. The review must be **at least 2 pages long**. **Please note that students may NOT re-read a book they have previously read.** You will complete a creative project on the second novel you have chosen.

Classic Novels (Read UNABRIDGED versions.)

A Room with a View by E.M. Forster

Sense and Sensibility by Jane Austen

Emma by Jane Austen

Mansfield Park by Jane Austen

Persuasion by Jane Austen

Kidnapped by Robert Louis Stevenson

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens

The Scarlet Pimpernel by Baroness Emmuska von Orczy

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer or *The Prince and the Pauper*, by Mark Twain

The Three Musketeers by Alexandre Dumas

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe

The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane

Kim by Rudyard Kipling

The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton

Middlemarch by George Eliot

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

The Last of the Mohicans by James Fenimore Cooper

The Moonstone by Wilkie Collins

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

Journey to the Center of the Earth or *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, by Jules Verne

Modern Novels/Modern Classics

*******The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie* by Alan Bradley

The Wizard of Earthsea (first 3 books) by Ursula K. Leguin

*******The Fellowship of the Ring* by J.R.R. Tolkien

Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier
Cold Comfort Farm by Stella Gibbons
***Master and Commander* by Patrick O'Brian
***The Beekeeper's Apprentice* by Laurie R. King
The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd
A Northern Light by Jennifer Donnelly
Wildwood Dancing by Juliet Marillier
Girl with a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier
Till We Have Faces by C.S. Lewis
***Hornblower: Beat to Quarters* by C.S. Forester
Death on the Nile by Agatha Christie
Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card
The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck
God and Generals by Jeff Shaara
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith
White Fang or *The Call of the Wild*, by Jack London
The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton

**You may read the next book in the series if you have already read the first.

Note: All 8th graders must also read *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck over the summer. There will be a quiz on the novel during the first week of school. You will also write your first essay of the year on this novel, **so be sure to annotate as you read. Annotating will be checked.**

You should purchase the blue Penguin edition (ISBN 978-0-14-017737-4), which is 90 pages long.

The Book Review

You need to write a 2-page book review of one of the books you selected from the lists above. There are two parts to this review. Use the guidelines below to write this assignment.

Part I: The Synopsis (in two paragraphs)

In the first part you need to write one paragraph in which you describe the setting (time and place) of the novel, introduce the main character(s), and provide a brief synopsis of the plot. Try to pique others' interest, but don't give away the ending. In a second paragraph describe one significant symbol of the novel. For example, in *The Sword in the Stone*, Arthur's sword is not merely a sword, but a symbol of his power and the right of kingship. Finally, describe two major themes of the book. What message is the author trying to communicate to the reader...the importance of friendship, respect for the environment?

Part II: The Critique (in one paragraph)

In the second part you will write a critique of the novel. Did the story engage you as a reader? Did the author's style and language help you enjoy the book? Did you connect with the main character? Why or why not? Did the author fully develop the character? Were you able to understand the story in the context of world events? If the book was of the fantasy genre, did the author use good "world-building"? (I.e., Is the world believable?) Would you recommend this book to others? Why or why not? (Be sure to write a meaningful paragraph, not just a list of answers to these questions.)

The Creative Project

Along with the book review on one of your books, you must also complete a creative project on the other. Make sure your project is neatly done and presented in a polished manner. You may choose to...

- Write a song based on the book set to original music.
- Create a short, illustrated poetry anthology (~5 poems).
- Write a children's version of the book and illustrate it.
- Create a game based on the book.
- Write a series of letters between the main character and another character (~5 letters).
- Write a series of journal entries from the point of view of one of the characters (~3 pages typed)
- Build a detailed model based on the book.
- Write a play based on the book.
- Film a book trailer or movie based on one of the books.

Please note: All assignments will be graded and checked for plagiarism. If one or more assignments are plagiarized, the student will receive a score of "0" and disciplinary action will be taken. If you are in NJHS, the faculty council will meet to decide your status.