

June 2022

Dear parents of incoming eighth grade students,

Reading is a key to success in all subjects because it stimulates the imagination, builds language and vocabulary skills, and connects us to the world around us. Reading teaches us more about our world than television and video games.

This summer your child will be required to read *at least one* of the works on the attached *Woodmere Middle School* 8th Grade Summer Reading List and complete a few brief activities.

**Students' work will be collected during the first week of school.**

We have taken the time to choose works that we believe your child will enjoy. Please encourage your child to select an appropriate title, and please consider reading the book with him/her.

In addition, we encourage students to be active readers by continuing their practice of reading using post-it notes to actively engage with their reading and be prepared to discuss their books during book talks.

We have included a short description of each work. These descriptions are included to help you and your child make an informed selection.

You should be able to obtain a copy of your selection at the local library and bookstores.

The assignment can also be found on the WMS website, [www.hewlett-woodmere.net](http://www.hewlett-woodmere.net).

We hope that your family will enjoy sharing the great adventure of reading. Have a great summer.

Sincerely,

**Your eighth-grade English teachers**

**Woodmere Middle School**

## 8th Grade Summer Reading List 2022

### **Freak the Mighty** by Rodman Philbrick

Maxwell Kane, a lumbering eighth grader who describes himself as a "butthead goon," has lived with grandparents Grim and Gram ever since his father was imprisoned for murdering his mother. Mean-spirited schoolmates and special ed (for an undetermined learning disability) haven't improved his self-image, so he is totally unprepared for a friendship with Kevin, aka Freak, a veritable genius with a serious birth defect that's left him in braces and using crutches. Together they become *Freak the Mighty*, an invincible duo.

### **Unplugged** by Gordon Korman

As the son of the world's most famous tech billionaire, spoiled Jett Baranov has always gotten what he wanted. So when his father's private jet drops him in the middle of the Arkansas wilderness, at a place called the Oasis, Jett can't believe it. He's forced to hand over his cell phone, eat grainy veggie patties, and participate in wholesome activities with the other kids, who he has absolutely no interest in hanging out with. As the weeks go on, Jett starts to get used to the unplugged life and even bonds with the other kids over their discovery of a baby-lizard-turned-pet, Needles. But he can't help noticing that the adults at the Oasis are acting really strange. Jett is determined to get to the bottom of things, but can he convince everybody that he is no longer just a spoiled brat who is making trouble?

### **Gathering Blue** by Lois Lowry (Book 2 of The Giver)

Lame and suddenly orphaned, Kira is mysteriously removed from her squalid village to live in the palatial Council Edifice, where she is expected to use her gifts as a weaver to do the bidding of the all-powerful Guardians. It is a society ruled by savagery and deceit that shuns and discards the weak. Blessed with an almost magical talent that keeps her alive, Kira struggles with ever broadening responsibilities in her quest for truth, discovering things that will change her life forever.

### **The Pigman** by Paul Zindel

When high school sophomores John and Lorraine made a prank phone call to an elderly stranger named Angelo Pignati, what starts as a practical joke quickly turns into a friendship that changes all of their lives forever. But when their friendship ends in tragedy, the only way for John and Lorraine to find peace is to write down their friend's story—the true story of the Pigman. Paul Zindel's classic, groundbreaking bestseller is the unforgettable tale of two disillusioned high school students who have their faith in humanity restored by lonely, eccentric Mr. Pignati, whom they dub, "The Pigman."

### **Notes from the Midnight Driver** by Jordan Sonnenblick

16 year old Alex Gregory finds himself sentenced to 100 hours of community service at a

nursing home with Solomon Lewis. Sol is a difficult, crotchety, eccentric old man with emphysema who lashes out at Alex in strange Yiddish phrases. Soon Alex grows fond of Sol, who teaches him something about the guitar, respecting the elderly, and taking responsibility for his actions.

**Rumble Fish** by S.E. Hinton

Rusty-James is the number one tough guy among the junior high kids who hang out and shoot pool at Benny's. He's proud of his reputation, but what he wants most of all is to be just like his older brother, the Motorcycle Boy. Whenever Rusty-James gets in over his head, the Motorcycle Boy has always been there to bail him out. Then one day Rusty-James' world comes apart, and the Motorcycle boy isn't around to pick up the pieces. What now? Like Hinton's groundbreaking classic *The Outsiders*, *Rumble Fish* remains as relevant as ever in its exploration of sibling relationships, the importance of role models, and the courage to think independently.

**Perfect** by Natasha Friend

Natasha Friend creates a character who will make readers cry and cheer as she struggles and then slowly faces her problems. These problems reflect her mother's inability to accept the father's death, her sister's desperate need to talk about him, a new relationship with the most popular girl at school, and most of all, her own sadness she's repressing in damaging ways. Readers may not have the same problems as Isabelle, but watching her ability to face them and move on will be inspiring.

**Just Under the Clouds** by Melissa Sarno

Always think in threes and you'll never fall, Cora's father told her when she was a little girl. Two feet, one hand. Two hands, one foot. That was all Cora needed to know to climb the trees of Brooklyn. But now Cora is a middle schooler, a big sister, and homeless. Her mother is trying to hold the family together after her father's death, and Cora must look after her sister, Adare, who's just different, their mother insists. Quick to smile, Adare hates wearing shoes, rarely speaks, and appears untroubled by the question Cora can't help but ask: How will she find a place to call home? After their room at the shelter is ransacked, Cora's mother looks to an old friend for help, and Cora finally finds what she has been looking for: *Ailanthus altissima*, the "tree of heaven," which can grow in even the worst conditions. It sets her on a path to discover a deeper truth about where she really belongs. *Just Under the Clouds* will take root in your heart and blossom long after you've turned the last page.

**\*The Wave** by Todd Strasser

*The Wave* is based on a true incident that occurred in a high school history class in Palo Alto, California, in 1969. The powerful forces of group pressure that pervaded many historic movements such as Nazism are recreated in the classroom when history teacher Burt Ross introduces a "new" system to his students. Before long *The Wave*, with its rules of *strength through discipline, community, and action*, "sweeps from the classroom through the entire school." And as most of the students join the movement, Laurie Saunders and David Collins recognize the frightening momentum of *The Wave* and realize they must stop it

before it's too late.

**\*I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban** by Malala Yousafzai

Malala begins her autobiography as a young girl who lives in Pakistan in modern times. As a teenager, Malala becomes very outspoken about the rights of girls to have an education. Her willingness to stand up for this belief makes her a target for the Taliban, a religious group that has very different ideas about the roles of women in Pakistan society. One day, on the way home from school, Malala is shot in the head, but the bullet does not kill her. A foreign doctor happens to be in the country at the time and she takes over Malala's treatment, later moving her to a British hospital for care and rehabilitation. While they remain in Pakistan, Malala's parents and younger brothers are also at risk but it takes time before the paperwork is in order and the government allows her family to join her in Britain. They remain there, knowing they will be targeted if they return to Pakistan. They dream of returning to their home.

**\*The Hate U Give** by Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death made a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr. But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

Thomas' first novel is about a teenage girl who grapples with racism, police brutality, and activism after witnessing her friend murdered by the police.

An \* has been placed next to the title of a text that is considered more challenging for this grade level.

*Parents, please note: Works of literature may contain mature language or content. However, these works have been recommended based on their literary merit and relevant themes. These selections have been included in summer reading assignments in well-regarded school districts across Long Island. Parents may wish to assist their children in making an appropriate selection. Students may confer with their current teacher in making a selection.*

## **8th Grade Summer Reading**

Directions for required activities:

- After reading your selected text, complete three (3) of the writing tasks below.

- Complete each task on a separate sheet of paper.
- Be sure to include the task number on top of each response.

**1. Record a “Contrasts & Contradictions” from the book.**

- This is when a character does something that contrasts with what you’d expect or contradicts his earlier acts or statements.
- *Explain in detail* how this was significant/important to the story.

**2. Record an “Again & Again” moment from the book.**

- This is when you notice a word, phrase, or situation that is mentioned over and over.
- *Explain in detail* how this was significant/important to the story.

**3. Record some “Words of the Wiser” from the book.**

- This is when a character (probably older and wiser) takes the protagonist aside and offers serious advice.
- *Explain in detail* how this was significant/important to the story.

**4. Record a “Memory Moment” from the book.**

- This is when the author interrupts the action (flashback) to reveal something significant.
- *Explain in detail* how this was significant/important to the story.

**5. Record an “Aha! Moment” from the book.**

- Remember that this is when a character realizes, understands, or finally figures out something.
- *Explain in detail* how this was significant/important to the story.

**6. Draw an important character from the book as you imagine him/her appearing.**

- Be sure to label specific characteristics (character traits) of the character that were important in the text.
- *Explain in detail* how this was significant/important to the story.

**7. Identify the central theme/message of the text**

- Explain how this lesson was learned and why it is important for

people to learn in real life.

- *Explain in detail* how this was significant/important to the story.

**8. Record three (3) important vocabulary words from the book that you didn't know before reading.**

- **Write each word as it appeared in the text** as well as the definition of the word.
- Then, write three new sentences using the words.

**9. Discuss the meaning of the book's title.**

- How does it support the theme(s)?
- *Explain in detail* how this was significant/important to the story.

**10. Describe how you can use what you learned from this book in your own life.**

- *Explain in detail* the relationship between scenes from the book and your own life.

**\*\* For extra credit, take a picture of yourself reading a book this summer and bring it in on the first day of school. #GETcaughtReading.**