

## Possible Titles for Eighth Grade Summer Reading

Here are some books you may want to consider. ***If you'd rather read something else, that's fine with us as long as the book you choose has something to say about leadership.***

### The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens by Sean Covey

Imagine you had a roadmap—a step-by-step guide to help you get from where you are now, to where you want to be in the future. Your goals, your dreams, your plans...they are all within reach. You just need the tools to help you get there. The following paragraph was copied and pasted from Amazon:

“That’s what Sean Covey’s landmark book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, has been to millions of teens: a handbook to self-esteem and success. Now updated for the digital age, this classic book applies the timeless principles of the 7 Habits to the tough issues and life-changing decisions teens face. In an entertaining style, Covey provides a simple approach to help teens improve self image, build friendships, resist peer pressure, achieve their goals, and get along with their parents, as well as tackle the new challenges of our time, like cyberbullying and social media. In addition, this book is stuffed with cartoons, clever ideas, great quotes, and incredible stories about real teens from all over the world.”

### Gathering Blue by Lois Lowry (The Giver Quartet #2)

In her strongest work to date, Lois Lowry once again creates a mysterious but plausible future world. It is a society ruled by savagery and deceit that shuns and discards the weak. Left orphaned and physically flawed, young Kira faces a frightening, uncertain future. Blessed with an almost magical talent that keeps her alive, she struggles with ever broadening responsibilities in her quest for truth, discovering things that will change her life forever. [copied and pasted from somewhere]

### The Eye of Minds (Mortality Doctrine, Book One) by James Dashner.

‘Michael is a gamer. And like most gamers, he almost spends more time on the VirtNet than in the actual world. The VirtNet offers total mind and body immersion, and the more hacking skills you have, the more fun. Why bother following the rules when most of them are dumb, anyway? But some rules were made for a reason. Some technology is too dangerous to fool with. And one gamer has been doing exactly that, with murderous results.

The government knows that to catch a hacker, you need a hacker. And they’ve been watching Michael. If he accepts their challenge, Michael will need to go off the VirtNet grid to the back alleys and corners of the system human eyes have never seen—and there’s the possibility that the line between game and reality will be blurred forever.” [copied and pasted from Amazon]

### I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World (Young Readers’ Edition) by Malala Yousafzai and Patricia McCormick

Malala Yousafzai was only ten years old when the Taliban took control of her region. They said music was a crime. They said women weren’t allowed to go to the market. They said girls couldn’t go to school. Raised in a once peaceful area of Pakistan transformed by terrorism, Malala was taught to stand up for what she believes. So she fought for her right to be educated. And on October 9, 2012, she nearly

lost her life for the cause: She was shot point blank while riding the bus on her way home from school. No one expected her to survive.

[copied and pasted from Amazon]

Wheels of Change: How Women Rode the Bicycle to Freedom (With a Few Flat Tires Along the Way) by Sue Macy

Take a lively look at women's history from aboard a bicycle, which granted females the freedom of mobility and helped empower women's liberation. Through vintage photographs, advertisements, cartoons, and songs, *Wheels of Change* transports young readers to bygone eras to see how women used the bicycle to improve their lives. Witty in tone and scrapbook like in presentation, the book deftly covers early (and comical) objections, influence on fashion, and impact on social change inspired by the bicycle, which, according to Susan B. Anthony, "has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world."

[copied and pasted from Amazon]

Battle Heroes: Voices from Afghanistan (Ten True Tales) by Allan Zullo

In a remote Afghan village, Marine Lieutenant Stephen Boda picks up a chilling Taliban message on his radio scanner: "The Americans will never make it out alive." Can the outnumbered Marines fight their way out? Medic Mark DeCorte jumps from a chopper on a nighttime rescue mission. Can he save the life of a badly wounded soldier and escape from a deadly enemy? These and other American heroes risk their lives daily while serving their country in Afghanistan, and now young readers can read their unforgettable true stories first hand.

[copied and pasted from Amazon]

Pay It Forward Kids: Small Acts, Big Change by Nancy Runstadler

(It's hardcover, but on Amazon, copies can be bought for \$8 or \$9.)

Skipping Stones Honor Award book, 2014

2014 Information Book Award Honour Book

2015 Red Maple NonFiction nominee; 14 Kids...14 Stories...Countless Hearts Touched

In Pay It Forward Kids, readers will meet ordinary kids from across North America who have done extraordinary things, all on their own initiatives. They have set out to "pay it forward" to someone else, with astonishing results. The ripple effect of their deeds have inspired others to join their causes, and in some cases, to start missions of their own. These kids have raised both money and awareness for causes such as homelessness, human rights, orphans, and literacy. They've rescued child slaves, provided hope to the sick, and comfort for the dying.

They've also enabled others to enjoy pleasures that many people take for granted. These powerful stories demonstrate that you're never too young to make a difference or to improve the life of another. Kindness can be done by anyone...you just need to step up and start.

A percentage of all royalties from this project will be donated to the official Pay It Forward Foundation to continue to support this message and work. [copied and pasted from somewhere]

Dogs of War by Sheila Keenan and Nathan Fox

Dogs of War is a graphic novel that tells the stories of the canine military heroes of World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War. This collection of three fictional stories was inspired by historic battles and real military practice. Each story tells the remarkable adventures of a soldier and his service dog and is rendered with fascinating and beautiful detail, bringing to life the faithful dogs who braved bombs, barrages, and battles to save the lives of countless soldiers.

Based on the real-life roles of military dogs that served as Red Cross rescuers, messengers, scouts, search and rescue teams, sentries, and mascots. Dogs of War captures both the adventure and the devastation brought on by war, as well as the celebrations of life and friendship between boys and their dogs. [copied and pasted from Amazon]

#### Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart by Candace Fleming

In alternating chapters, Fleming deftly moves readers back and forth between Amelia's life (from childhood up until her last flight) and the exhaustive search for her and her missing plane. With incredible photos, maps, and handwritten notes from Amelia herself—plus informative sidebars tackling everything from the history of flight to what Amelia liked to eat while flying (tomato soup)—this unique nonfiction title is tailor-made for middle graders.

Amelia Lost received four starred reviews and Best Book of the Year accolades from School Library Journal , Kirkus Reviews , Horn Book Magazine , the Washington Post , and the New York Times . [copied and pasted from Amazon]

#### Dacey's Song by Cynthia Voigt

When Momma abandoned Dacey Tillerman and her three siblings in a mall parking lot and was later traced to an asylum where she lay unrecognizing, unknowing, she left her four children no choice but to get on by themselves. They set off alone on foot over hundreds of miles until they finally found someone to take them in. Gram's rundown farm isn't perfect, but they can stay together as a family—which is all Dacey really wanted. But after watching over the others for so long, it's hard for Dacey to know what to do now. Her own identity has been so wrapped up in being the caretaker, navigator, penny counter, and decision maker that she's not sure how to let go of some responsibilities while still keeping a sense of herself. But when the past comes back with devastating force, Dacey sees just how necessary—and painful—letting go can be.

[copied and pasted from Amazon]

#### Homecoming by Cynthia Voigt

"It's still true." That's the first thing James Tillerman says to his older sister, Dacey, every morning. It's still true that their mother has abandoned the four Tillermans in a mall parking lot somewhere in the middle of Connecticut. It's still true that they have to find their own way to Great-aunt Cilla's house in Bridgeport. It's still true that they need to spend as little as possible on food and seek shelter anywhere that is out of view of the authorities. It's still true that the only way they can hope to all stay together is to just keep moving forward. Deep down, Dacey hopes they can find someone to trust, someone who will take them in and love them.

But she's afraid it's just too much to hope for.... [copied and pasted from Amazon]

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade 8 Summer Reading

**The summer reading theme for students entering eighth grade is leadership.** Some people seem to be born leaders, but the rest of us can develop into leaders, and that is one of the goals your teachers this year have for you. Since you're now the oldest students in the school, eighth grade is the perfect opportunity to either improve upon your leadership skills or to develop some leadership skills.

**The first part** of your mission is to read a book that has something to do with leadership. We've made some book suggestions, but if you'd rather read something else, that's fine as long as the book you choose has something to say about leadership. **The second part** of your mission is to answer the TWO essential questions and the prompt that are written below and address ONE of the three essential tasks. Hopefully you are going to type your answers. If you do this as a google doc, you can share it with me. If your penmanship is neat and will be easy for your teacher to read, you may write your answers by hand in either pen or pencil. If you do this assignment by hand, you can just bring it with you to school. **The final part** of your mission is to be ready to participate in a discussion about leadership and the book you read.

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**Directions:** Answer both essential questions and the prompt.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION #1 [You have to do this one.]

What is leadership? In general, what skills, behaviors, and character traits does a leader demonstrate? You need to develop and discuss your ideas. We don't just want a list.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION #2 [You also have to do this one.]

How does a major character in the book you read show leadership? Identify specific skills shown by the character and tell how those skills impacted other characters or what happens in the story.

PROMPT [You have to do this also.] Think of someone in your own life who has shown leadership.

Identify specific skills shown by this person and tell how those skills impacted other people in his/her life.

**Directions:** Choose ONE of the following Essential Tasks below:

ESSENTIAL TASK #1 [There are three essential tasks. You have to do one of them.]

Evaluate your own leadership skills and potential. Do you see yourself as a leader? If you do, explain what makes you a leader. Can you give an example of a situation in which you were a leader?

ESSENTIAL TASK #2 [If you did essential task #1, you don't need to do this one.]

Evaluate your own leadership skills and potential. Do you see yourself as a leader? If you don't, identify several skills that you could practice this year that will help you to begin to see yourself as a leader. Finally, what types of things will you need to do in order to practice these skills? Try to be specific.

ESSENTIAL TASK #3 [If you didn't do essential tasks #1 or #2, you need to do this one.]

If you are someone who would prefer not to be a leader, think of some reasons why it would still be worthwhile to develop some leadership skills this year. Identify at least two leadership skills that you would be willing to work on. How might having these leadership skills make you more successful over the next year not just in school but in your life outside of school during the next 12 months?

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**Frequently Asked Questions:**

1. How long does this have to be? Answer: Most, if not all, teachers dislike this question. Your answers need to be long enough to be thoughtful and interesting to read. Quantity and quality are two different things. We're interested in quality.
2. Do I have to write in complete sentences? Yes, of course you do. We're your English teachers.
3. Do spelling, capitalization, and punctuation count? Yes, always. You've been using the English language for many years now, so we're expecting a certain level of literacy. Also, handing in work that is neatly and correctly done reflects well on you. Handing in work that is messy, thoughtless, uninteresting, and/or poorly written reflects badly on you. Perfection isn't expected, but effort is, and it counts. A lot.
4. Will this be graded? Not exactly, but here are some things that we will be noticing.
  - How neat and easy to read is this assignment? very/o.k./a chore to read/too much of a chore to read
  - Are both essential questions done? Yes/No
  - Is one of the three essential tasks done? Yes/No
  - The work you turned in is very interesting/ interesting/could be more interesting.
  - Overall your writing skills seem to be strong/pretty good/a little weak/worrisome
  - Participation in class discussion about leadership and the book you read:
    - excellent/satisfactory/unsatisfactory/nonexistent
5. When is this due? We begin school on a Thursday this year, so this assignment is due the following Monday.. If you're doing the assignment on computer, you can turn it in any time:  
[jsimmons@drregional.org](mailto:jsimmons@drregional.org) or [mbilentschuk@drregional.org](mailto:mbilentschuk@drregional.org).
6. What if I decide not to do any summer reading? You will be given a closely related assignment to be completed for homework or after school if that's easier.