

## 8th Grade Summer Requirements

*Seriously? But WHY?!?!?*

The purpose of summer reading is to broaden your perspective on the world, practice reading fluency (speed and understanding), and increase your vocabulary. According to the Colorado Department of Education, reading just 4 to 6 books over the summer has the potential to prevent what we call “the summer slide.” The “summer slide” is a decline in reading achievement scores and abilities, including reading comprehension, from the spring to the fall. So, even small steps you take over the summer can make a difference in your reading abilities and achievement in the next school year.

Mx. Valadez and Mr. Amend would like for each student to read as much as possible this summer (4-6 books), but we will be requiring three books. This includes the requirements for both Social Studies and English. This number also includes whole-class novels as well as student choices. You do NOT need to purchase these books. We encourage you to check them out from your local library if possible. However, please have access to Books 1 and 2 during the first few weeks of school.

You are welcome to read a physical book, read on a device, or listen to an audiobook.

a.) **Book 1:** Everyone must read *The Giver* for English 8. Students must also complete the attached questions (see directions on the questions) as **they'll be participating in a Socratic Seminar and writing a 5-paragraph essay the first full week back to school.** We recommend reading this novel and completing the questions right before school starts so the details will be fresh in your mind.

b.) **Book 2:** *Copper Sun* by Sharon Draper. This book will serve as an intro to our first unit of study in Social Studies 8 (Causes of the Civil War).

c.) **Book 3:** A non-fiction book that explores a topic from US or World History between 1800 - 1975. Obviously, this should not be a picture book but one with some “meat on the bones”. (However, it does not need to be a 700-page autobiography of Abraham Lincoln). For reference, some units of study next year include:

- The Civil War
- The Jim Crow Era
- Reconstruction
- Imperialism/Colonialism

- The 1920s & The Great Depression Era
- World Wars 1 & 2
- The Cold War
- The 1960s & Vietnam Era

Some sample nonfiction books for 8th graders:

*Chasing Lincoln's Killer* (James L. Swanson)  
*Bomb* (Steve Sheinkin)  
*Night* (Elie Weisel)  
*The 57 Bus* (Dashka Slater)  
*Guns, Germs, and Steel* (Jared Diamond)  
*The Diary of Ann Frank* (Ann Frank)  
*I Am Malala* (Malala Yousafzai & Christina Lamb)  
*Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* (Phillip Hoose)  
*Farwell to Manzanar* (Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston)

- d.) We'd also encourage you to read *at least* one other piece of fiction.

Please don't choose a book you've already read.

The list below are some suggested books. Note the grade level, and don't be afraid to push yourself. Feel free to choose other books if you'd like, but again, mix up the genres! If you're stuck choosing, ask a salesperson or a librarian; don't hesitate to shoot me an email.

[Contemporary Fiction Book Recommendation List](#)

- e.) Finally, we're asking students to **continue their vocabulary work on Membean**. These word lists are individually tailored to meet your student at their level. By continuing to learn new words over the coming months, we're hoping to avoid the dreaded "summer slump" in reading levels.

We know this may be challenging due to travel, camps, etc., but we do feel it is an important "muscle" to exercise. The important thing is to do these sessions on separate days - cramming is an inefficient study method.

- Membean works on phones, tablets, and desktop computers.
- Assignments: Three (3) 15-min sessions per week.

Please email Mr. Amend at [ramend@st-annes.org](mailto:ramend@st-annes.org) with any questions over the summer. Enjoy!