

# MANDATORY Mount Olive Middle School 8th Grade ELA Summer Reading 2024

Summaries acquired from GoodReads.com

Welcome to 8th-grade! Please read below for the summer reading assignment. Be sure to get your parents/guardians' permission when you are choosing your book. Reach out to Ms. Margosiak at [lea.margosiak@motsd.org](mailto:lea.margosiak@motsd.org) if you have any questions. Have a wonderful summer!

## Directions:

1. Choose one book from the list below or a book of your choice. If you choose a book that is not on the list, be sure that it connects to the topic below.
2. As you are reading, consider the **traits that the character or subject of the book possess at the beginning of the piece as well as the events and relationships that shape the character throughout the book.** Consider how the character traits differ at the end of the book as a result of the events and relationships they experience.
3. Be prepared to complete a Double-Entry Journal to demonstrate your thinking **when we return to school as a graded assignment.**

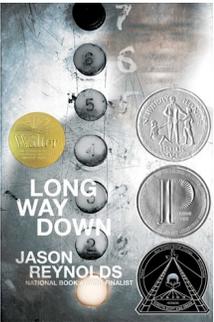
All of these titles are available at the Mount Olive Public Library. You may check out a hard copy or a digital copy using the [Libby App](#). Help with the Libby App is available [here](#).

## Fiction



*Scythe* by Neil Shusterman (available at the Mount Olive Public Library)

A world with no hunger, no disease, no war, no misery. Humanity has conquered all those things, and has even conquered death. Now scythes are the only ones who can end life—and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control. Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe—a role that neither wants. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own.



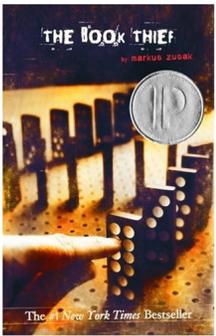
*Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds (available at the Mount Olive Public Library)

An ode to Put the Damn Guns Down, this is *New York Times* bestseller Jason Reynolds’s fiercely stunning novel that takes place in sixty potent seconds—the time it takes a kid to decide whether or not he’s going to murder the guy who killed his brother. A cannon. A strap. A piece. A biscuit. A burner. A heater. A chopper. A gat. A hammer. A tool. Or, you can call it a gun. That’s what fifteen-year-old Will has shoved in the back waistband of his jeans. See, his brother Shawn was just murdered. And Will knows the rules. No crying. No snitching. *Revenge*. That’s where Will’s now heading, with that gun shoved in the back waistband of his jeans, the gun that was his brother’s gun. He gets on the elevator, seventh floor, stoked. He knows who he’s after. Or does he? As the elevator stops on the sixth floor, on comes Buck. Buck, Will finds out, is who gave Shawn the gun before Will took the gun. Buck tells Will to check that the gun is even loaded. And that’s when Will sees that one bullet is missing. And the only one who could have fired Shawn’s gun was Shawn. Huh. Will didn’t know that Shawn had ever actually USED his gun. Bigger huh. BUCK IS DEAD. But Buck’s in the elevator? Just as Will’s trying to think this through, the door to the next floor opens. A teenage girl gets on, waves away the smoke from Dead Buck’s cigarette. Will doesn’t know her, but she knew him. Knew. When they were eight. And stray bullets had cut through the playground, and Will had tried to cover her, but she was hit anyway, and so what she wants to know, on that fifth floor elevator stop, is, what if Will, Will with the gun shoved in the back waistband of his jeans, MISSES. And so it goes, the whole long way down, as the elevator stops on each floor, and at each stop someone connected to his brother gets on to give Will a piece to a bigger story than the one he thinks he knows. A story that might never know an END...if WILL gets off that elevator.



*Solo* by Kwame Alexander with Mary Rand Hess (available at the Mount Olive Public Library)

Blade never asked for a life of the rich and famous. In fact, he'd give anything not to be the son of Rutherford Morrison, a washed-up rock star and drug addict with delusions of a comeback. Or to no longer be part of a family known most for lost potential, failure, and tragedy. The one true light is his girlfriend, Chapel, but her parents have forbidden their relationship, assuming—like many—that Blade will become just like his father. In reality, the only thing Blade has in common with Rutherford is the music that lives inside them. But not even the songs that flow through Blade's soul are enough when he's faced with two unimaginable realities: the threat of losing Chapel forever, and the revelation of a long-held family secret, one that leaves him questioning everything he thought was true. All that remains is a letter and a ticket to Ghana—both of which could bring Blade the freedom and love he's been searching for, or leave him feeling even more adrift.



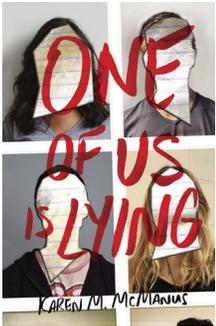
*The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak (available at the Mount Olive Public Library)

It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will be busier still. By her brother's graveside, Liesel's life is changed when she picks up a single object, partially hidden in the snow. It is *The Gravedigger's Handbook*, left behind there by accident, and it is her first act of book thievery. So begins a love affair with books and words, as Liesel, with the help of her accordion-playing foster father, learns to read. Soon she is stealing books from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library, wherever there are books to be found. But these are dangerous times. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jew in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened up, and closed down. In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time.



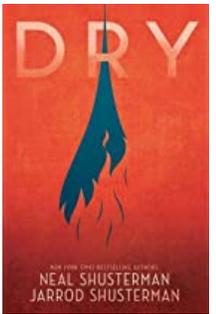
*The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo (available at the Mount Olive Public Library)

Xiomara Batista feels unheard and unable to hide in her Harlem neighborhood. Ever since her body grew into curves, she has learned to let her fists and her fierceness do the talking. But Xiomara has plenty she wants to say, and she pours all her frustration and passion onto the pages of a leather notebook, reciting the words to herself like prayers—especially after she catches feelings for a boy in her bio class named Aman, who her family can never know about. With Mami's determination to force her daughter to obey the laws of the church, Xiomara understands that her thoughts are best kept to herself. So when she is invited to join her school's slam poetry club, she doesn't know how she could ever attend without her mami finding out. But she still can't stop thinking about performing her poems. Because in the face of a world that may not want to hear her, Xiomara refuses to be silent.



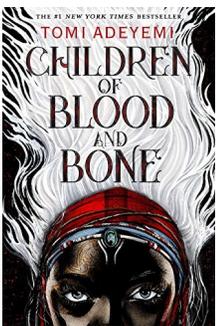
*One of Us Is Lying* by Karen McManus (available at the Mount Olive Public Library)

Pay close attention and you might solve this. On Monday afternoon, five students at Bayview High walk into detention. Bronwyn, the brain, is Yale-bound and never breaks a rule. Addy, the beauty, is the picture-perfect homecoming princess. Nate, the criminal, is already on probation for dealing. Cooper, the athlete, is the all-star baseball pitcher. And Simon, the outcast, is the creator of Bayview High's notorious gossip app. Only, Simon never makes it out of that classroom. Before the end of detention, Simon's dead. And according to investigators, his death wasn't an accident. On Monday, he died. But on Tuesday, he'd planned to post juicy reveals about all four of his high-profile classmates, which makes all four of them suspects in his murder. Or are they the perfect patsies for a killer who's still on the loose? Everyone has secrets, right? What really matters is how far you would go to protect them.



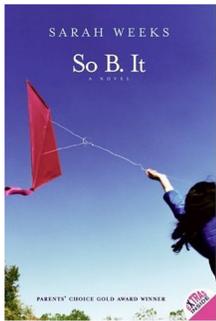
*Dry* by Neal Shusterman (available at the Mount Olive Public Library)

When the California drought escalates to catastrophic proportions, one teen is forced to make life and death decisions for her family in this harrowing story of survival. The drought—or the Tap-Out, as everyone calls it—has been going on for a while now. Everyone's lives have become an endless list of don'ts: don't water the lawn, don't fill up your pool, don't take long showers. Until the taps run dry. Suddenly, Alyssa's quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbors and families turned against each other on the hunt for water. And when her parents don't return and her life—and the life of her brother—is threatened, Alyssa has to make impossible choices if she's going to survive.



*Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi (available at the Mount Olive Public Library)

Zélie Adebola remembers when the soil of Orïsha hummed with magic. Burners ignited flames, Tiders beckoned waves, and Zélie's Reaper mother summoned forth souls. But everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, maji were killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope. Now Zélie has one chance to bring back magic and strike against the monarchy. With the help of a rogue princess, Zélie must outwit and outrun the crown prince, who is hell-bent on eradicating magic for good. Danger lurks in Orïsha, where snow leoponaires prowl and vengeful spirits wait in the waters. Yet the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to control her powers--and her growing feelings for an enemy.



*So B. It* by Sarah Weeks (available at the Mount Olive Public Library)

From acclaimed author Sarah Weeks comes a touching coming-of-age story about a young girl who goes on a cross-country journey to discover the truth about her parents, which the *New York Times* called "a remarkable novel." Perfect for fans of Rebecca Stead's *When You Reach Me* and Ali Benjamin's *The Thing About Jellyfish*. She doesn't know when her birthday is or who her father is. In fact, everything about Heidi and her mentally disabled mother's past is a mystery. When a strange word in her mother's vocabulary begins to haunt her, Heidi sets out on a cross-country journey in search of the secrets of her past. Far away from home, pieces of her puzzling history come together. But it isn't until she learns to accept not knowing that Heidi truly arrives.