

Rising 8th Grade ELA: 2025 Summer Reading

Students are encouraged to select a novel(s) based on their reading level and interests. Please feel free to select a teacher-recommended novel from the list provided. Choose ONE novel to read over the summer. Honors Students: Choose TWO novels.

***Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson (Lexile: 580L)**

Description: During the summer of 1793, Mattie Cook lived above the family coffee shop with her widowed mother and grandfather. But then the fever breaks out. At her feverish mother's insistence, Mattie flees the city with her grandfather. She soon discovers that the sickness is everywhere, and Mattie must learn quickly how to survive in a city turned frantic with disease.

***The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare (Lexile: 850L)**

Description: Sixteen-year-old Kit Tyler is marked by suspicion and disapproval from the moment she arrives on the unfamiliar shores of colonial Connecticut in 1687. Torn between her quest for belonging and her desire to be true to herself, Kit struggles to survive in a hostile place. Just when it seems she must give up, she finds a kindred spirit. But Kit's friendship with Hannah Tupper, believed by the colonists to be a witch, proves more taboo than she could have imagined and ultimately forces Kit to choose between her heart and her duty.

***Woods Runner* by Gary Paulsen (Lexile: 870L)**

Description: Samuel, 13, spends his days in the forest, hunting for food for his family. He grew up on the frontier of a British colony, America. Far from any town, or news of the war against the King that American patriots have begun near Boston. But the war comes to them. British soldiers and Iroquois attack. Samuel's parents are taken away as prisoners. Samuel follows, hiding, moving silently, determined to find a way to rescue them. Each day, he confronts the enemy and the tragedy and horror of this war. But he also discovers allies, men and women working secretly for the patriot cause.

***Resistance* by Jennifer Nielsen (Lexile: 810L)**

Description: Chaya Linder is a Jewish teenager living in Nazi-occupied Poland. After her little sister is taken away, her younger brother disappears, and her parents all but give up hope, Chaya is determined to make a difference. Using forged papers, Chaya becomes a courier and travels between the Jewish ghettos of Poland, smuggling food, papers, and even people. After a mission goes terribly wrong, Chaya's network shatters, until Esther, a member of her cell, finds her and delivers a message that sends Chaya on a journey toward an even larger uprising in the works--in the Warsaw Ghetto.

***Refugee/Refugiado* by Alan Gratz (Lexile: 800L)**

Description: Josef is a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world...Isabel is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety in America...Mahmoud is a Syrian boy in 2015. Wishing his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe... Although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, shocking connections will tie their stories together in the end. This action-packed novel tackles topics both timely and timeless: courage, survival, and the quest for home.

***Letters From Cuba/Cartas de Cuba* by Ruth Behar (Lexile: 850L)**

Description: The situation is getting dire for Jews in Poland on the eve of World War II. Esther's father has fled to Cuba, and she is the first one to join him. It's heartbreaking to be separated from her beloved sister, so Esther promises to write down everything that happens until they're reunited. And she does, recording both the good—the kindness of the Cuban people and her discovery of a valuable hidden talent—and the bad: the fact that Nazism has found a foothold even in Cuba. Esther's evocative letters are full of her appreciation for life and reveal a resourceful, determined girl with a rare ability to bring people together, all the while striving to get the rest of their family out of Poland before it's too late. Based on Ruth Behar's family history, this compelling story celebrates the resilience of the human spirit in the most challenging times.

***Ghost/Fantasma* by Jason Reynolds (Lexile: 730L)**

Description: Castle (Ghost) Crenshaw. Lu. Patina. Sunny. Four kids from wildly different backgrounds with personalities that are explosive when they clash. These four kids are chosen for an elite middle school track team—a team that could qualify them for the Junior Olympics if they can get their acts together. They all have a lot to lose, but they also have a lot to prove, not only to each other but to themselves.

***The Light Between Us* by Andrew Fukuda (Lexile: 830L)**

Description: Winner of the American Library Association's Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature. This WWII novel tells the story of two unlikely pen pals: a Japanese-American boy and a French Jewish girl. As the story unfolds, the characters navigate the devastating realities of war, from internment camps to Auschwitz. It's a powerful and moving story that offers rich discussions about history and human connection.

***The Fourth Stall* by Chris Rylander (Lexile: 760L)**

Description: A fast-paced, humorous tale set in a school environment with a Godfather-like story of crime and friendship. This book offers an engaging, cinematic reading experience and could be a great addition to our classroom discussions.

***The Partition Project* by Saadi Faruqi (Lexile: 780L)**

Description: Maha is a Pakistani-American seventh-grade girl living in Houston with her parents and brother. She is not excited when her grandmother, Dadi, comes from Pakistan to live with her family. Maha thinks of herself as an aspiring journalist interested only in facts. Still, she is disappointed when the big assignment in her new Media Studies class is a documentary film instead of writing actual stories. Struggling to find a topic for her documentary, Maha turns to her ongoing conversations with Dadi about the Partition of India in 1947. She is fascinated by Dadi's story of how she became a refugee as her family was forced to leave their home and resettle in the newly formed country of Pakistan. Maha interviews her grandmother and several seniors at the senior center they visit on Saturdays. Maha learns more about Pakistan from a new student at school, Ahmed, who has just immigrated from there. Maha can make a meaningful project honoring her family's past while learning to balance old and new friends.

Consider the questions below as you read.

- How did the setting impact the character's day-to-day life?
- What is the major conflict of this work?
- What unique challenges arise because of this time period?
- How has your character changed or grown from the beginning of the novel to the end?
- What theme or lesson did you learn from this novel?
- What is different about your life compared to that of the protagonist?
- If you were in the same position as the protagonist, what would your day-to-day life look like?
- How does your book connect to something you've learned in History (if applicable)?

**All novels on this list have been read and reviewed by the eighth-grade Language Arts teachers at BCMS, HBMS, and LTMS. Check availability as an audiobook and ebook on Destiny Discover and SORA.*

Parent/Student Resources:

Destinydiscover.com

<https://hub.lexile.com/>

Grade-Level Lexile Guide:

<i>8th</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>820L</i>	<i>970L</i>	<i>1125L</i>	<i>1280L</i>	<i>1435L</i>
	<i>Winter</i>	<i>835L</i>	<i>985L</i>	<i>1140L</i>	<i>1295L</i>	<i>1455L</i>
	<i>Spring</i>	<i>850L</i>	<i>1000L</i>	<i>1155L</i>	<i>1310L</i>	<i>1470L</i>