

Entering 8th Grade NMS Summer Reading: 2025

During the summer, incoming 8th Graders will read two books.

Students entering grade 8 should read *Ten Thousand Tries* by Amy Makenchnie and one other title from the Choice Read List.

All 8th Grade Students Are Required To Read:

Ten Thousand Tries by Amy Makechnie

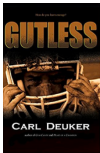
In September, students will complete an in class writing assignment on *Ten Thousand Tries*.
Students will also complete a project on their choice book.



Twelve-year-old Golden Maroni is determined to channel his hero, soccer superstar Lionel Messi, and become captain of his soccer team and master of his eighth grade universe...especially since his home universe is spiraling out of orbit. Off the field, Golden's dad, once a pro soccer player himself, is now battling ALS, a disease that attacks his muscles, leaving him less and less physically able to control his body every day. And while Mom says there's no cure, Golden is convinced that his dad can beat this, just like any opponent, they just have to try. Golden knows that if you want to perfect a skill you have to put ten thousand tries in, so he's convinced if he can put that much effort in, on and off the field, he can stop everything from changing.

Choice Read List:

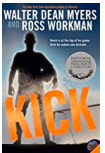
SPORTS



Gutless by Carl Deuker -- With both good speed and good hands, wide receiver Brock should be a natural for the varsity team, but he shies from physical contact. Now a target for bullying, Brock struggles to overcome his fears and discover that, in his own way, he is brave enough.



Hands by Torrey Maldonado -- Trev would do anything to protect his mom and sisters, especially from his stepdad. But his stepdad's return stresses Trev--because when he left, he threatened Trev's mom. Rather than live scared, Trev takes matters into his own hands, literally. He starts learning to box to handle his stepdad. But everyone isn't a fan of his plan, because Trev's a talented artist, and his hands could actually help him build a better future. And they're letting him know. But their advice for some distant future feels useless in his reality right now. Ultimately, Trev knows his future is in his hands, and his hands are his own, and *he* has to choose how to use them.



Kick by Walter Dean Myers -- Told in their separate voices, thirteen-year-old soccer star Kevin and police sergeant Brown, who knew his father, try to keep Kevin out of juvenile hall after he is arrested on very serious charges.



What About Will by Ellen Hopkins- Twelve-year-old Trace Reynolds has always looked up to his big brother, Will—his hero, mentor, and friend. But everything changed after a football injury left Will with a brain injury, a facial tic, and a temper he can't always control. Seventeen months later, their family is still reeling—now divided by divorce and held together by silence. As Will spirals into addiction, Trace tries to hold things together by covering for him. But when Will's behavior worsens, Trace must face a painful truth: some secrets need to be told if there's any hope of healing.

HISTORICAL FICTION



Girl in the Blue Coat by Monice Hesse—Amsterdam, 1943, Hanneke spends her days procuring and delivering black market goods to paying customers, her nights hiding the true nature of her work from her concerned parents, and every waking moment mourning her boyfriend, who was killed on the Dutch front lines when the Germans invaded. She likes to think of her illegal work as a small act of rebellion. On a routine delivery, a client asks Hanneke for help. Expecting to hear that Mrs. Janssen wants meat or kerosene, Hanneke is shocked by the older woman's frantic plea to find a *person*—a Jewish teenager Mrs. Janssen had been hiding, who has vanished without a trace from a secret room. Hanneke initially wants nothing to do with such dangerous work, but is ultimately drawn into a web of mysteries and stunning revelations that lead her into the heart of the resistance, open her eyes to the horrors of the Nazi war machine, and compel her to take desperate action.



The Librarian of Auschwitz by Antonio Iturbe-- Based on the experience of real-life Auschwitz prisoner Dita Kraus, this is the incredible story of a girl who risked her life to keep the magic of books alive during the Holocaust.. [See CommonSense Media for parent guide](#)



Max in the House of Spies duology by Adam Gidwitz Max Bretzfeld doesn't want to move to London. Leaving home is hard and Max is alone for the first time in his life. But not for long. Max is surprised to discover that he's been joined by two unexpected traveling companions, one on each shoulder, a kobold and a dybbuk named Berg and Stein. Germany is becoming more and more dangerous for Jewish families, but Max is determined to find a way back home, and back to his parents. He has a plan to return to Berlin. It merely involves accomplishing the impossible: becoming a British spy.



Once or another book in the series by Morris Gleitzman-- Felix, a Jewish boy in Poland in 1942, is hiding from the Nazis in a Catholic orphanage. The only problem is that he doesn't know anything about the war, and thinks he's only in the orphanage while his parents travel and try to salvage their bookselling business. And when he thinks his parents are in danger, Felix sets off to warn them--straight into the heart of Nazi-occupied Poland. To Felix, everything is a story: Why did he get a whole carrot in his soup? It must be a sign that his parents are coming to get him. Why are the Nazis burning books? They must be foreign librarians sent to clean out the orphanage's outdated library. But as Felix's journey gets increasingly dangerous, he begins to see horrors that not even stories can explain. Despite his grim surroundings, Felix never loses hope. Morris Gleitzman takes a painful subject and expertly turns it into a story filled with love, friendship, and even humor.



The Book Thief by Markus Zusak -- When Death has a story to tell, you listen. It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still. Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist--books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement.



The War I Finally Won by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley -- Ada's journey continues as World War II rages on and Ada and her brother move in with their guardian Susan. As the fallout from war intensifies, calamity creeps closer, and life during wartime grows even more complicated. Who will Ada decide to be? How can she keep fighting? And who will she struggle to save?



We Dream of Space by Erin Entrada Kelly – Cash, Fitch, and Bird Nelson Thomas are three siblings in Park, Delaware. In 1986, as the country waits expectantly for the launch of the space shuttle *Challenger*, they each struggle with their own personal anxieties. Cash, who loves basketball but has a newly broken wrist, is in danger of failing seventh grade for the second time. Fitch spends every afternoon playing *Major Havoc* at the arcade on Main and wrestles with an explosive temper that he doesn't understand. And Bird, his twelve-year-old twin, dreams of being NASA's first female shuttle commander, but feels like she's disappearing. The Nelson Thomas children exist in their own orbits, circling a tense and unpredictable household, with little in common except an enthusiastic science teacher named Ms. Salonga. As the launch of the *Challenger* approaches, Ms. Salonga gives her students a project—they are separated into spacecraft crews and must create and complete a mission. When the fated day finally arrives, it changes all of their lives and brings them together in unexpected ways.



Words On Fire by Jennifer Nielsen – Danger is never far from Audra's family farm in Lithuania. She always avoids the occupying Russian Cossack soldiers, who insist that everyone must become Russian -- they have banned Lithuanian books, religion, culture, and even the language. But Audra knows her parents are involved in something secret and perilous. When Cossacks arrive abruptly at their door, Audra's parents insist that she flee, taking with her an important package and instructions for where to deliver it. But escape means abandoning her parents to a terrible fate. As Audra embarks on a journey to deliver the mysterious package, she faces unimaginable risks, and soon she becomes caught up in a growing resistance movement. Can joining the underground network of book smugglers give Audra a chance to rescue her parents?



Yonder by Ali Standish– Danny Timmons has looked up to Jack Bailey ever since Jack saved two small children from drowning during the Great Flood of 1940. Now, with his father away fighting in World War II and his mother about to have a new baby, Danny relies on Jack's friendship and guidance more than ever. So when Jack goes missing without a trace from their small Appalachian town, Danny is determined to find him. He wonders if Jack's abusive father could be behind his disappearance, or if it has anything to do with Yonder—a hidden magical town Jack once spoke of, where flocks of rainbow birds fly through the sky and they've never heard of war. As answers elude him, Danny begins to fear that he didn't know Jack as well as he thought. Ultimately, Danny's investigation forces him to reckon with even larger questions: What is America fighting for in this war? What role do each of us play in stopping injustices, big and small? And is there such a thing as a true hero?

NONFICTION

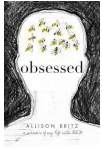


Alias Anna by Susan Hood– She wouldn't be Zhanna. She'd use an alias. A for Anna. A for alive.

When the Germans invade Ukraine, Zhanna, a young Jewish girl, must leave behind her friends, her freedom, and her promising musical future at the world's top conservatory. With no time to say goodbye, Zhanna, her sister Frina, and their entire family are removed from their home by the Nazis and forced on a long, cold, death march. When a guard turns a blind eye, Zhanna flees with nothing more than her musical talent, her beloved sheet music, and her father's final plea: "I don't care what you do. Just live."



Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team That Changed a Town by Warren St. John Based on the adult bestseller, *Outcasts United: An American Town, a Refugee Team, and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference*, this young people's edition is a complex and inspirational story about the Fugees, a youth soccer team made up of diverse refugees from around the world, and their formidable female coach, Luma Mufleh. Luma Mufleh, a young Jordanian woman educated in the United States and working as a coach for private youth soccer teams in Atlanta, was out for a drive one day and ended up in Clarkston, Georgia, where she was amazed and delighted to see young boys, black and brown and white, some barefoot, playing soccer on every flat surface they could find. Luma decided to quit her job, move to Clarkston, and start a soccer team that would soon defy the odds. Despite challenges to locate a practice field, minimal funding for uniforms and equipment, and zero fans on the sidelines, the Fugees practiced hard and demonstrated a team spirit that drew admiration from referees and competitors alike.



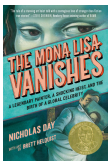
Obsessed: A Memoir of My Life With OCD by Allison Britz -- A brave teen recounts her debilitating struggle with obsessive-compulsive disorder—and brings readers through every painful step as she finds her way to the other side—in this powerful and inspiring memoir.



Caught! : Nabbing History's Most Wanted by Georgia Bragg —A humorous look at how famous people got caught, including Joan of Arc, Blackbeard, Al Capone, and more! . . . Outlaw, assassin, art thief, and spy, these fourteen troublemakers and crooks—including Blackbeard the pirate, Typhoid Mary, and gangster Al Capone--have given the good guys a run for their money throughout the ages. Some were crooked, some were deadly, and some were merely out of line--but they all got Caught! as detailed in this . . . study of crime, culture, and forensic science. Featuring history's most wanted: Joan of Arc, Sir Walter Raleigh, Caravaggio, Blackbeard, John Wilkes Booth, Jesse James, Billy the Kid, Mata Hari, Typhoid Mary, Rasputin, Vincenzo Peruggia (Mona Lisa thief), Bernard Kuehn (Pearl Harbor spy), Anna Anderson (Anastasia impersonator), and Al Capone.



Borden Murders by Sarah Miller—*Lizzie Borden took an axe, gave her mother forty whacks. When she saw what she had done, she gave her father forty-one.* In a compelling, linear narrative, Miller takes readers along as she investigates a brutal crime: the August 4, 1892, murders of wealthy and prominent Andrew and Abby Borden. The accused? Mild-mannered and highly respected Lizzie Borden, daughter of Andrew and stepdaughter of Abby. Most of what is known about Lizzie's arrest and subsequent trial (and acquittal) comes from sensationalized newspaper reports; as Miller sorts fact from fiction, and as a legal battle gets under way, a gripping portrait of a woman and a town emerges. With inserts featuring period photos and newspaper clippings—and, yes, images from the murder scene—readers will devour this nonfiction book that reads like fiction.

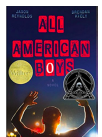


The Mona Lisa Vanishes by Nicholas Day—On a hot August day in Paris, just over a century ago, a desperate guard burst into the office of the director of the Louvre and shouted, *La Joconde, c'est partie!* The *Mona Lisa*, she's gone! No one knew who was behind the heist. Was it an international gang of thieves? Was it an art-hungry American millionaire? Was it the young Spanish painter Pablo Picasso, who was about to remake the very art of painting? Travel back to an extraordinary period of revolutionary change: turn-of-the-century Paris. Walk its backstreets. Meet the infamous thieves—and detectives—of the era. And then slip back further in time and follow Leonardo da Vinci, painter of the *Mona Lisa*, through his dazzling, wondrously weird life. Discover the secret at the heart of the *Mona Lisa*—the most famous painting in the world should never have existed at all.

REALISTIC FICTION



Summer of Brave by Amy Noelle Parks- Twelve-year-old Lilla Baxter-Willoughby doesn't lie. She's just a little bit...selective. So when Vivi dares Lilla to start telling the truth as part of their Summer of Brave, Lilla hesitates. Because if she says out loud what she really wants, her whole life might crash down around her. And she doesn't need that. Except maybe she does. A heartfelt coming-of-age story set in the time of academic pressure, divorce, and the #MeToo movement.



All American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely -- When 16-year-old Rashad is mistakenly accused of stealing and Quinn witnesses his brutal beating at the hands of the police, the boys' school, town, and country are affected. The plot contains profanity and violence.



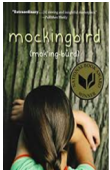
Candle Island by Lauren Wolk—Lucretia Sanderson has a secret. Lucretia and her mother have come to tiny Candle Island, Maine (Population: Summer, 986; Winter, 315) to escape—escape memories of the car accident that killed her father and escape the journalists that hound her mother, a famous and reclusive artist. The rocky coast and ocean breeze are a welcome respite for Lucretia, who dedicates her summer days to painting, exploring the island, and caring for an orphaned osprey chick. But Candle Island has secrets of its own—a hidden room in her new house, a mysterious boy with a beautiful voice—and just like the strong tides that surround the shores, they will catch Lucretia in their wake.



Every Shiny Thing by Cordelia Jensen and Laurie Morriosn—In this beautifully constructed middle-grade novel, told half in prose and half in verse, Lauren prides herself on being a good sister, and Sierra is used to taking care of her mom. When Lauren’s parents send her brother to a therapeutic boarding school for teens on the autism spectrum and Sierra moves to a foster home in Lauren’s wealthy neighborhood, both girls are lost until they find a deep bond with each other. But when Lauren recruits Sierra to help with a Robin Hood scheme to raise money for autistic kids who don’t have her family’s resources, Sierra has a lot to lose if the plan goes wrong. Lauren must learn that having good intentions isn’t all that matters when you battle injustice, and Sierra needs to realize that sometimes, the person you need to take care of is yourself.



Fill in Boyfriend by Kacey West –When Gia Montgomery's boyfriend, Bradley, dumps her in the parking lot of her high school prom, she has to think fast. After all, she'd been telling her friends about him for months now. This was supposed to be the night she proved he existed. So when she sees a cute guy waiting to pick up his sister, she enlists his help. The task is simple: be her fill-in boyfriend—two hours, zero commitment, a few white lies. After that, she can win back the real Bradley. The problem is that days after prom, it's not the real Bradley she's thinking about, but the stand-in. The one whose name she doesn't even know. But tracking him down doesn't mean they're done faking a relationship. Gia owes him a favor and his sister intends to see that he collects: his ex-girlfriend's graduation party—three hours, zero commitment, a few white lies.



Mockingbird by Kathryn Erskine -- Caitlin is an eleven-year-old girl with Asperger's who is grieving the loss of her brother, Devon. Caitlin wants to get over it, but she doesn't know how. When she reads the definition of closure, she realizes that is what she needs. In her search for it, Caitlin discovers that not everything is black and white--the world is full of colors--messy and beautiful.



Scrawl by Mark Shulman -- When eighth-grade school bully Tod and his friends get caught committing a crime on school property, his penalty--staying after school and writing in a journal under the eye of the school guidance counselor--reveals aspects of himself that he prefers to keep hidden.



Shark Girl by Kelly Bingham—On a sunny day in June, at the beach with her mom and brother, fifteen-year-old Jane Arrowood went for a swim. And then everything — absolutely everything — changed. Now she’s counting down the days until she returns to school with her fake arm, where she knows kids will whisper, "That’s her — that’s Shark Girl," as she passes. In the meantime there are only questions: Why did this happen? Why her? What about her art? What about her life? In this striking first novel, Kelly Bingham uses poems, letters, telephone conversations, and newspaper clippings to look unflinchingly at what it’s like to lose part of yourself — and to summon the courage it takes to find yourself again.

FANTASY/SCIENCE FICTION



The Visitors by Greg Howard—A lonely twelve-year-old boy is trapped at the abandoned Hollow Pines Plantation in Georgetown, South Carolina—with no memory of his name, how he died, or how to leave. Time is strange when you're dead, and nothing ever changes—until a group of living kids arrives. They're about his age, and they sense there's more to Hollow Pines than just ghost stories. As they uncover the plantation's dark history, the boy dares to hope they might help him remember who he was and finally move on. But Hollow Pines doesn't welcome visitors—and a malevolent spirit in the shadows may keep him trapped forever. (Note: This book contains elements of historical fiction, realistic fiction, fantasy, and mystery)



The Belles by Dhonielle Clayton -- Camellia Beauregard is a Belle. In the opulent world of Orleans, Belles are revered, for they control Beauty, and Beauty is a commodity coveted above all else. In Orleans, the people are born gray, they are born damned, and only with the help of a Belle and her talents can they transform and be made beautiful.**



Scythe by Neal Shusterman -- 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 keep the size of the population under control. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own. [See CommonSense Media for parent guide.](#)



Traitor's Game by Jennifer A. Nielsen -- In the kingdom of Antora, Kestra Dallisor has spent three years in exile, but that won't stop her from being drawn back into her father's palace politics. A group of rebels kidnap Kestra from her carriage as she reluctantly travels home. The kidnappers want Kestra to retrieve the lost Olden Blade, the only object that can destroy the immortal king, but Kestra is not the obedient captive they expected. As motives shift and secrets emerge, both will have to decide what—and who—it is they're fighting for.

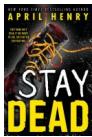
MYSTERY/ADVENTURE



96 Miles by J.L. Esplin— 21 days without power. Two brothers on a desperate trek. 72 hours before time runs out... The Lockwood brothers are supposed to be able to survive anything. Their dad, a hardcore believer in self-reliance, has stockpiled enough food and water at their isolated Nevada home to last for months. But when they are robbed of all their supplies during a massive blackout while their dad is out of town, John and Stew must walk 96 miles in the stark desert sun to get help. Along the way, they're forced to question their dad's insistence on self-reliance and ask just what it is that we owe to our neighbors, to our kin, and to ourselves.



The Northwind by Gary Paulsen— When a deadly plague reaches the small fish camp where he lives, an orphan named Leif is forced to take to the water in a cedar canoe. He flees northward, following a wild, fjord-riven shore, navigating from one danger to the next, unsure of his destination. Yet the deeper into his journey he paddles, the closer he comes to his truest self as he connects to “the heartbeat of the ocean . . . the pulse of the sea.”



Stay Dead by April Henry—In the aftermath of a car accident that claimed the life of her senator father, sixteen-year-old Milan finds herself adrift, expelled from her third boarding school. Milan's mother, who has assumed the senate seat, diverts her private plane to pick up her daughter. But on their way home, a bomb rips off a wing and the plane crashes in the mountains. In her final moments, Milan's mother entrusts her with a key. She reveals it will unlock the evidence that so many people have already died for—including Milan's father. The only way Milan can survive, her mom tells her, is to let everyone believe she died with the other passengers. Milan is forced to navigate a perilous descent in freezing conditions while outwitting everything from a drone to wild animals. With relentless assassins on her trail, she must untangle the web of deceit and save herself and countless others. Will she piece together the truth in time?



The Winterton Deception 1: The Final Word by Janet Sumner Johnson—Hope Smith can't stand rich people—the dictionary magnate family the Wintertons most of all. Not since she and her twin brother, Gordon, learned that their dad was one. So when Gordon enters the family into the Winterton's charity spelling bee, Hope wants nothing to do with it. But with their mom losing her job and the family facing eviction from the motel where they live, they desperately need the money, and it looks like Hope doesn't have much of a choice. After winning the preliminary round, the Smiths are whisked to Winterton Manor to compete in the official Winterton Bee against their long-lost relatives. Hope wants to get in and out, beat the snobbish family at their own game, and never see them again. But deceased matriarch Jane Winterton had other plans for this final family showdown. Before her death, she set up a clue hunt throughout the manor—an alternate way for Hope and Gordon to get the money that could change their lives. Still, others are on the trail, too. With tensions at an all-time high, a fortune at stake, and long-simmering family secrets about to boil to the surface, anything could happen.