

THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL
SUMMER READING LIST - GRADE 8
THE ALTAMONT SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT READING POLICY

- The Altamont School English Department requires every Altamont student to read **four books** during the summer months. For eighth graders, the four include ***one required*** novel, plus ***one novel in verse***, and ***one dystopian fiction novel***. Students should choose one non-required text from the list below. If you wish to read a book not found on the list, please email the teacher for permission.
- During the school year, every Altamont student is required to complete additional reading outside of class. Assignments will vary from month to month. If you are not assigned specific texts, the list below is a good starting point when looking for titles. If you have a question about the suitability of a book, please contact your teacher.
- **Rereading books for English credit is a violation of the Honor Code, excepting the *required titles*.** Likewise, students may not use any type of condensed source for summer reading (internet summaries, commentaries on the text, etc.) or during the school year. Using reading aids in place of reading the text is a violation of the Honor Code. Just read the book!

I. A Note from Ms. Cuellar

Welcome upcoming 8th graders! I hope you are having a wonderful summer! I look forward to having you in class and am confident the 2026-2027 school year will be an exciting one that is full of reflection, growth, and most of all fun.

As you read the required books over the summer, follow the instructions below. We will be writing on them during the first weeks of school. You will all read *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak, which is a Holocaust historical-fiction novel narrated from Death's viewpoint (**Part I** of this document). You will choose one dystopian novel from the list below (**Part II**) and one novel in verse from the list below (**Part III**). For your choice book, there is a separate list for you to choose from in **Part VI** of this document. All assignments are listed in **Part V**. All assignments are due Monday, August 17, 2026.

It is going to be a great year. Do not hesitate to email me with any questions. (tcuellar@altamontschool.org)

See you soon!
Ms. Cuellar

II. Required Text

The Book Thief—Markus Zusak

III. One required dystopian fiction novel from these choices:

Fahrenheit 451—Ray Bradbury

The Hunger Games Series (any of the titles)-- Suzanne Collins

Divergent; Insurgent; Allegiant—Veronica Roth

IV. One required novel in verse from these choices:

Enchanted Air, Two Cultures, Two Wings—Margarita Engle

Clap When You Land—Elizabeth Acevedo

Me (Moth)-- Amber McBride

Out of the Dust—Karen Hesse

Caminar—Skila Brown

V. Summer reading work

The Book Thief

As you read, take notes (either on a separate sheet of paper or directly in your book) of how the protagonist, Liesel, changes and grows. Think about the realizations she has about the world around her and the war, as well as the differences she sees between the world around her and her family. What events impact her understanding of herself and her family? How does she grow and how does her family impact this growth? How do different characters influence her growth and change? Identify at least three passages that illustrate her struggle or growth. **I will NOT accept digital notes for this assignment.** Be prepared to show me your notes, either on paper or in your book, on Monday, August 17, 2026.

Dystopian Fiction

As you read, take notes (either on a separate sheet of paper or directly in your book) of how the protagonist in your novel changes and grows. Think about how the government functions in the dystopian society and how the protagonist deals with the government. What causes the protagonist to realize that not all is well in the society? How does the society's structure influence the characters? Which other characters influence the protagonist (for good or bad) and how? How does the protagonist decide to take a stand against the controlling government? Identify at least three passages that illustrate this struggle or growth. **I will NOT accept digital notes for this assignment.** Be prepared to show me your notes, either on paper or in your book, on Monday, August 17, 2026.

Novel in verse

As you read, take notes (either on a separate sheet of paper or directly in your book) of how the protagonist of your novel changes and grows. Think about the realizations the character has about the world around him/her. Which other characters influence the protagonist (for good or bad) and how? How does the protagonist's family influence his/her growth and understanding of the world? Identify at least three passages that illustrate this struggle or growth. **I will NOT accept digital notes for this assignment.** Be prepared to show me your notes, either on paper or in your book, on Monday, August 17, 2026.

Choice book

For your choice book, choose **one** of the following questions to answer in an 8-10 sentence paragraph.

- 1.) Explain how reading this book changed the way you view something in your life—big or small.
- 2.) If you could have a conversation with one of the characters, who would it be? What questions would you ask him/her and why? What would you want him/her to know about you?
- 3.) What do you think is the most important scene or image in the book? Why?

VI. Suggested Reading List

FICTION

1. *Speak* – Laurie Halse Anderson
2. *Piecing Me Together* – Renee Watson
3. *Northanger Abbey* – Jane Austen
4. *Ender's Game series* – Orson Scott Card
5. *Summerland* – Michael Chabon
6. *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* – Erika L. Sanchez
7. *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* – Ernest J. Gaines
8. *The Princess Bride* – William Goldman
9. *Other Words for Home* – Jasmine Warga
10. *Dune* – Frank Herbert
11. *A Wizard of Earthsea* – Ursula LeGuin

12. *Go with the Flow* – Lily Williams and Karen Schneemann
13. *Life of Pi* – Yann Martel
14. *Long Way Down* – Jason Reynolds
15. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* – Sherman Alexie (semi-autobiographical)
16. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* – Betty Smith
17. *The Hate U Give* – Angie Thomas
18. *The Hobbit; The Lord of the Rings trilogy* – J.R.R. Tolkien
19. *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions* – Daniel Wallace
20. *Montana 1948* – Larry Watson
21. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* and later books—J.K. Rowling
22. *Shatter Me Series*—Tahereh Mafi

NONFICTION

1. *Just Mercy (Adapted for Young Adults): A True Story of the Fight for Justice* – Bryan Stevenson
2. *I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban* – Malala Yousafzai
3. *All Over but the Shoutin'* – Rick Bragg
4. *Into Thin Air* – John Krakauer
5. *Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White* – Lila Quintero Weaver
6. *Outcasts United* – Warren St. John
7. *I Remember Beirut* – Zeina Abirached
8. *The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime that Changed their Lives* – Dashka Slater

NOVELS IN VERSE

1. *The Poet X*—Elizabeth Acevedo
2. *Starfish*—Lisa Fipps
3. *Deer Run Home*—Ann Clare LeZotte
4. *(S)Kin--* Ibi Zoboi
5. *Bull*—David Elliott
6. *Punching the Air*—Ibi Zoboi and Dr. Yuself Salaam