

**Suggested Titles Strutting into Eighth: For students entering Grade 8**

Titles are coded for readability: C=challenging A=average E=easy

**Realistic Fiction:**

**Does My Head Look Big in This?** Randa Abdel-Fattah (360 pages – A)

Year Eleven at an exclusive prep school in the suburbs of Melbourne, Australia, would be tough enough, but it is further complicated for Amal when she decides to wear the hijab, the Muslim head scarf, full-time as a badge of her faith--without losing her identity or sense of style.

**Monster** by Walter Dean Myers (288 pages - C) Steve is accused of being an accomplice in the robbery and murder of a drug store owner. A teenager who dreams of being a filmmaker, he writes the story of his trial for felony murder in the form of a movie script, with journal entries after each day's action.

**A Raisin in the Sun** by Lorraine Hansberry (Play 176 pages - C) Hansberry's award-winning drama about the hopes and aspirations of a struggling, working-class family living on the South Side of Chicago connected profoundly with the psyche of black America--and changed American theater forever. The play's title comes from a line in Langston Hughes's poem "Harlem," which warns that a dream deferred might "dry up/like a raisin in the sun."

**The Running Dream** by Wendell Van Draanen (336 pages – A) When a school bus accident leaves sixteen-year-old Jessica an amputee, she returns to school with a prosthetic limb and her track team finds a wonderful way to help rekindle her dream of running again. *Winner of the 2012 Schneider Family Book Award.*

**Historical Fiction:**

**Al Capone Does My Shirts** by Jennifer Choldenko (228 pages - A) Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there, and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.

**Bull Run** by Paul Fleischman (104 pages – E) Northerners, Southerners, generals, couriers, dreaming boys, and worried sisters describe the glory, the horror, the thrill, and the disillusionment of the first battle of the Civil War.

**Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two** by Joseph Bruchac (240 pages - A) Throughout World War II, in the conflict fought against Japan, Navajo code talkers were a crucial part of the U.S. effort, sending messages back and forth in an unbreakable code that used their native language. Yet their story remained classified for more than twenty years. This book is based on that story.

**War Horse** by Michael Morpurgo (165 pages – A) Joey the horse recalls his experiences growing up on an English farm, his struggle for survival as a cavalry horse during World War I, and his reunion with his beloved master.

**Adventure:**

**Call of the Wild** by Jack London (208 pages - A) Taken from a kindly owner, Buck is forced into the perilous life of a sled dog in the treacherous Yukon Territory during the Klondike gold rush.

**Johnny Hangtime** by Dan Gutman (144 pages– E) Thirteen-year old Johnny Thyme is "Johnny Hangtime," a stunt kid who fills in for Ricky Corvette during dangerous stunts that are done in Ricky's action films. Johnny's father died doing a stunt and his mother wishes that he would quit the profession. A big surprise awaits him when he does a stunt at the site of his father's death.

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**Science Fiction/Fantasy:**

**Gathering Blue** by Lois Lowry (224 pages - A) Kira, an orphan with a twisted leg, lives in a world where the weak are cast aside. She fears for her future until she is spared by the all-powerful Council of Guardians. Kira is a gifted weaver and is given a task that no other community member can do. While her talent keeps her alive and brings certain privileges, Kira soon realizes she is surrounded by many mysteries and secrets. No one must know of her plans to uncover the truth.

**The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** by Douglas Adams (320 pages - C) Join Douglas Adams's hapless hero Arthur Dent as he travels the galaxy with his intrepid pal Ford Prefect, getting into horrible messes and generally wreaking hilarious havoc. Dent is grabbed from Earth moments before a cosmic construction team obliterates the planet to build a freeway.

**The Hobbit: Or There and Back Again** by J.R.R. Tolkien (320 pages - C) Bilbo Baggins was a hobbit who wanted to be left alone in quiet comfort. But the wizard Gandalf came along with a band of homeless dwarves. Soon Bilbo was drawn into their quest, facing evil orcs, savage wolves, giant spiders, and worse unknown dangers.

**Non-Fiction:**

**Chain Reaction: A Call to Compassionate Revolution**. By Darrell Scott (197 pages) Rachel Scott and her killer Eric Harris both talked about starting a "chain reaction." Eric used violence to kill and destroy at Columbine High School. But Rachel chose another path. In a personal creed she wrote before her death, she explained her conviction that if one person goes out of his or her way to show compassion, it will start a world-changing chain reaction of kindness.

**Chasing Lincoln's Killer by Swanson, James L.** (197 pages - A) A fast-paced thriller about the pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth: a wild twelve-day chase through the streets of Washington, D.C., across the swamps of Maryland, and into the forests of Virginia.

**The Greatest, Muhammad Ali** by Walter Dean Myers (192 pages– A) This book traces the life and career of Muhammad Ali, the only boxer to be the heavyweight champion of the world three times. Ali's life is placed in the context of historical events, such as the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and Watergate.

**Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow** by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (176 pages - C) What was it like to be a teenager in Germany under Hitler? The author draws on oral histories, diaries, letters, and her own extensive interviews with Holocaust survivors, Hitler Youth, resisters, and bystanders to tell the history from the viewpoints of people who were there. , college and NFL phenom, shares the behind-the-scenes details of his life, on and off the football field.

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