**8th Grade Reading List**

**Brown Girl Dreaming**

**by Jacqueline Woodson**

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child’s soul as she searches for her place in the world. Woodson’s eloquent poetry also reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child. Her love of stories inspired her and stayed with her, creating the first sparks of the gifted writer she was to become.

**Ender’s Game**

**by Orson Scott Card**

The war with the Buggers has been raging for a hundred years, and the quest for the perfect general has been underway almost as long. Ender's two older siblings, Peter and Valentine, are every bit as unusual as he is, but in very different ways. While Peter was too uncontrollably violent, Valentine very nearly lacks the capability for violence altogether. Neither was found suitable for the military's purpose. But they are driven by their jealousy of Ender, and by their inbred drive for power. Peter seeks to control the political process, to become a ruler. Valentine's abilities turn more toward the subtle control of the beliefs of commoner and elite alike, through powerfully convincing essays. Hiding their youth and identities behind the anonymity of the computer networks, these two begin working together to shape the destiny of Earth-an Earth that has no future at all if their brother Ender fails.

**Fahrenheit 451**

**by Ray Bradbury**

Guy Montag is a fireman. In his world, where television rules and literature is on the brink of extinction, firemen start fires rather than put them out. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden.  
 Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television “family.” But then he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn’t live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television.  
 When Mildred attempts suicide and Clarisse suddenly disappears, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known. He starts hiding books in his home, and when his pilfering is discovered, the fireman has to run for his life.

The Greatest: Muhammad Ali

**The Greatest: Muhammad Ali**

**by Walter Dean Myers**

An award-winning author presents a riveting account of the extraordinary career and accomplishments of boxer Muhammad Ali. This biography chronicles Ali's impact on race relations inside and outside the sports world.

**The Hunger Games**

**by Suzanne Collins**

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. The Capitol is harsh and cruel and keeps the districts in line by forcing them all to send one boy and once girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live TV.

Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen regards it as a death sentence when she steps forward to take her sister's place in the Games. But Katniss has been close to dead before—and survival, for her, is second nature. Without really meaning to, she becomes a contender. But if she is to win, she will have to start making choices that weight survival against humanity and life against love.

**Inside Out & Back Again**

**by Thanhha Lai**

For all the ten years of her life, Hà has only known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, and the warmth of her friends close by. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. Hà and her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope. In America, Hà discovers the foreign world of Alabama: the coldness of its strangers, the dullness of its food . . . and the strength of her very own family.

**The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe**

**by C.S. Lewis**

Narnia...the land beyond the wardrobe door, a secret place frozen in eternal winter, a magical country waiting to be set free.  
 Lucy is the first to find the secret of the wardrobe in the professor's mysterious old house. At first her brothers and sister don't believe her when she tells of her visit to the land of Narnia. But soon Edmund, then Peter and Susan step through the wardrobe themselves. In Narnia they find a country buried under the evil enchantment of the White Witch. When they meet the Lion Aslan, they realize they've been called to a great adventure and bravely join the battle to free Narnia from the Witch's sinister spell.

**The Lions of Little Rock**

**by Kristin Levine**

Two girls separated by race form an unbreakable bond during the tumultuous integration of Little Rock schools in 1958  
 Twelve-year-old Marlee doesn't have many friends until she meets Liz, the new girl at school. Liz is bold and brave, and always knows the right thing to say, especially to Sally, the resident mean girl. Liz even helps Marlee overcome her greatest fear - speaking, which Marlee never does outside her family.  
 But then Liz is gone, replaced by the rumor that she was a Negro girl passing as white. But Marlee decides that doesn't matter. Liz is her best friend. And to stay friends, Marlee and Liz are willing to take on integration and the dangers their friendship could bring to both their families.

**Lord of the Flies**

**by William Golding**

At the dawn of the next world war, a plane crashes on an uncharted island, stranding a group of schoolboys. At first, with no adult supervision, their freedom is something to celebrate; this far from civilization the boys can do anything they want. Anything. They attempt to forge their own society, failing, however, in the face of terror, sin and evil. And as order collapses, as strange howls echo in the night, as terror begins its reign, the hope of adventure seems as far from reality as the hope of being rescued. Labeled a parable, an allegory, a myth, a morality tale, a parody, a political treatise, even a vision of the apocalypse, Lord of the Flies is perhaps our most memorable novel about “the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart.”

**Treasure Island**

**by Robert Louis Stevenson**

From the moment young Jim Hawkins first encounters the sinister Blind Pew at the Admiral Benbow Inn until the climactic battle for treasure on a tropic isle, the novel creates scenes and characters that have fired the imaginations of generations of readers. The story centers upon the conflict between good and evil - but in this case a particularly engaging form of evil. It is the villainy of that most ambiguous rogue Long John Silver that sets the tempo of this tale of treachery, greed, and daring. Designed to forever kindle a dream of high romance and distant horizons, *Treasure Island* is, in the words of G. K. Chesterton, 'the realization of an ideal, that which is promised in its provocative and beckoning map; a vision not only of white skeletons but also green palm trees and sapphire seas.' G. S. Fraser terms it 'an utterly original book' and goes on to write: 'There will always be a place for stories like *Treasure Island* that can keep boys and old men happy.'

**A Wizard of Earthsea**

**Ursula K. LeGuin**

Ged, the greatest sorcerer in all Earthsea, was called Sparrowhawk in his reckless youth. Hungry for power and knowledge, Sparrowhawk tampered with long-held secrets and loosed a terrible shadow upon the world. This is the tale of his testing, how he mastered the mighty words of power, tamed an ancient dragon, and crossed death's threshold to restore the balance.

**Wonder**

**by R.J. Palacio**

August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can’t get past Auggie’s extraordinary face. WONDER, now a #1 New York Times bestseller and included on the Texas Bluebonnet Award master list, begins from Auggie’s point of view, but soon switches to include his classmates, his sister, her boyfriend, and others. These perspectives converge in a portrait of one community’s struggle with empathy, compassion, and acceptance.