

Year 8 Suggested Reading List

Chinese Cinderella Adeline Yen Mah

Non-fiction. Jung-ling's family considers her bad luck because her mother died giving birth to her. They discriminate against her and make her feel unwanted yet she yearns and continuously strives for her parents' love.

Notes from a Small Island Bill Bryson

Non-fiction. After nearly two decades in Britain Bill Bryson decided it was time to return to America. But before leaving his much-loved home in North Yorkshire, Bryson insisted on taking one last trip around Britain, a sort of valedictory tour of the green and kindly island that had so long been his home, an experience he recorded in this book.

The Flame Trees of Thika Elspeth Huxley

Non-fiction. Autobiography of a girl growing up on a farm in Kenya before large scale European colonisation and who witnesses the disruption and chaos inflicted by WW1. The sequel is titled "The Mottled Lizard".

Raspberries on the Yangtze Karen Wallace

An initially simple seeming book featuring children in the backwoods of Quebec, Canada, it evolves into an extraordinary story with real characters.

The Very Bloody History of Britain Michael Foreman

A funny history of England which is also factually accurate and gives an overview of British history.

Gulf Robert Westall

A savage tale of a psychic child witnessing the terrors of the Gulf War through the eyes of Latif, a 13-year-old Iraqi soldier.

The Inheritance Cycle Christopher Paolini

The critically acclaimed fantasy series that begins with a simple farm boy discovering a dragon egg. Thrust suddenly into a world of powerful warriors and deep magic Eragon must fight to free the people of Alagaesia from the tyrannical rule of Galbatorix and restore the order of the Dragon Riders.

The Goalkeeper's Revenge B. Naughton

One of a series of top-quality fiction for schools, this is a collection of stories of a Lancashire childhood, of football in the streets, fishing, fighting and school, of growing up and looking for work, and of characters such as Spit Nolan the champion trolleyrider, and Sam Dalt the goalkeeper.

Tales of Redwall series Brian Jacques

A series of books featuring the epic adventures of gangs of mice and other animals.

Eyes of the Alien Pete Johnson

Sam and Freddie, both fostered by the same family, are best friends. But when Sam has an accident and knocks herself unconscious, she begins to have weird nightmares about a strange figure with alien eyes. Freddie jokes that the aliens must be after her. But it's just his imagination, isn't it?

Gatty's Tale Kevin Crossley Holland

In the year 1203, nine companions set out from Wales on a great pilgrimage across Europe to Jerusalem. Not all of them will come home. At the heart of this story is Gatty, the field-girl. Eager, bold and resolute, wide open to new experiences, she has an extraordinary journey of her own to make.

The Arpino Assignment Geoffrey Trease

Rick Weston is shoved unknowingly into a world of secrets, mysteries and danger. He meets many new people, and each of them play a major part in his life, whether good or bad, and all of it set against the backdrop of war.

Star Dancer Beth Webb

A great and terrible evil threatens the druids' future. Their only hope is the Star Dancer: a child who will be born under an untimely comet and who is destined to protect them. As the fated star-shower lights up the sky, the druids are watching. They believe the prophesied boy has arrived. But down in the village, the midwife has just delivered a perfect little girl. Her name is Tegen – and she is the Star Dancer.

I Am David Anna Holm

The story of a young boy's journey through Europe after escaping from the camp where he had lived all his life. Sea, mountains and flowers, the colours of Italy, the taste of fruit, people laughing and smiling, all are new to David. And David learns that his polite manner, his haunted eyes and his thin features are strange to other people.

Troll Trilogy Katherine Langrish

Books are Troll Fell, Troll Mill and Troll Blood.

The Viking-era story begins with the newly orphaned Peer who goes to live at the foot of Troll Fell, a strange place where nothing is as it seems.

The Boy in the Bubble Ian Strachan

A moving story of first love. Adam has lived most of his 15 years in an oxygen tent. Anne is forced to visit him with the rest of her class. She chooses him as "her school project", but she isn't sure why.

Skellig David Almond

Michael can feel his sick baby sister's heart beating inside him, and as long as he can feel it he knows she is alive. But as her condition becomes life-threatening and the family faces the nightmare of an operation to save her life, Michael turns to his new friend Mina and the strange being, Skellig, who has been living beneath the crumbling garage at the family's new home.

Here Lies Arthur Philip Reeve

Gwyna is just a small girl, a mouse, when she is bound in service to Myrddin the bard - a traveller and spinner of tales. But Myrddin transforms her - into a lady goddess, a boy warrior, and a spy. Without Gwyna, Myrddin will not be able to work the most glorious transformation of all - and turn the leader of a raggle-taggle war-band into King Arthur, the greatest hero of all time.

Refugee Boy Benjamin Zephaniah

Alem is on holiday with his father for a few days in London. He has never been out of Ethiopia before and is very excited. They have a great few days together until one morning when Alem wakes up in the bed and breakfast they are staying at to find the unthinkable. His father has left him so that he can find a better life as a lonely refugee in London.

Holes L. Sachar

Camp Greenlake is a place for bad boys, where the belief is: "if you take a bad boy and make him dig a hole every day in the hot sun, it will turn him into a good boy." When Stanley Yelnats, accused and found guilty of a crime he did not commit, is sent to Camp Greenlake he really doesn't think it can be so bad...

Sabriel Garth Nix

The first book of the Abhorsen Chronicles that tells the story of a teenage girl whose father, a necromancer, travels the lands putting the dead to rest who must take up his mantle when her father mysteriously disappears.

Books are Sabriel, Lirael, and Abhorsen.

Inkheart Cornelia Funke

Meggie loves books. So does her father, Mo, a bookbinder, although he has never read aloud to her since her mother mysteriously disappeared. They live quietly until the night a stranger knocks at their door. He has come with a warning that forces Mo to reveal an extraordinary secret - a storytelling secret that will change their lives forever.

First book of the Inkheart Trilogy, followed by "Inkspell" and "Inkdeath"

Dr. Franklin's Island A. Haslam

What's it like to see your friend transformed into a raven before your very eyes, and to know it's your turn next? How does it feel to morph into a manta ray or slide into the body of a snake? This is what happens to Miranda, Semi and Arnie, three friends who are the sole survivors of a plane crash on a bizarre island.

Shadowmancer G. P. Taylor

Shadowmancer takes you into a world of superstition, magic and witchcraft, where the ultimate sacrifice might even be life itself. Obadiah Demurral is a sorcerer who is seeking to control the highest power in the Universe. He will stop at nothing. The only people in his way are Raphah, Kate, Thomas and the mysterious Jacob Crane.

Lorna Doone R. D. Blackmore

Lorna Doone, a Romance of Exmoor is an historical novel of high adventure set in the South West of England during the turbulent time of Monmouth's rebellion (1685). It is also a moving love story told through the life of the young farmer John Ridd, as he grows to manhood determined to right the wrongs in his land, and to win the heart and hand of the beautiful Lorna Doone.

Kidnapped R. L. Stevenson

Set in Scotland in 1751, Kidnapped remains one of the most exciting stories ever written. Young David Balfour, orphaned then betrayed by his Uncle Ebenezer, his so-called guardian, falls in with Alan Breck, the unscrupulous but heroic champion of the Jacobite cause.

My Family and Other Animals Gerald Durrell

"Sometimes it's pretty hard to tell them apart... my family and the animals, that is. I don't know why my brothers and sisters complain so much. With snakes in the bath and scorpions on the lunch table, our house, on the island of Corfu, is a bit like a circus. So they should feel right at home..."

Animal Farm George Orwell

George Orwell's fable of a worker's revolution gone wrong. Both an engaging story and powerful allegory, "Animal Farm" remains one of Orwell's most celebrated works.

Treasure Island R. L. Stevenson

An absorbing tale of buccaneers, a map, a romantic quest for treasure, it is also the story of the brilliantly drawn Long John Silver.

The Starlight Conspiracy Steve Voake

Alone and on the run from Social Services, 14-year-old Berry has nowhere to go. Until she meets an old man who entrusts her with a package containing a mysterious item that has unbelievable powers. It is a meeting that will change her life, for other people also want the item and will stop at nothing to get it...

The Sword in the Stone T. H. White

The extraordinary story of a boy called Wart -- ignored by everyone except his tutor, Merlyn -- who goes on to become King Arthur.

Dagger in the Sky Alan Gibbons

The luddites are rioting. Everywhere there is talk of rebellion. When machinery is brought to the local mill Jem knows where his loyalties lie, and soon he finds himself caught up in a conflict which might destroy him and his family for ever.

Falconer's Knot Mary Hoffman

Silvano has been accused of a murder he did not commit. Chiara has been ousted out of her family as a young woman with no marriage prospects. For these two very different reasons they are forced to seek refuge in a convent and a friary. And when not just one murder - but another, and another, happens to both the friars and guests staying with them, Chiara and Silvano cling together within the terrifying spiral of murder as they and the friends they make attempt to solve the deadly mystery.

A Kid for Two Farthings W. Mankowitz

Six year-old Joe knows a unicorn when he sees one. His downstairs neighbour Mr Kandinsky has told him all about these mythical creatures, and there isn't anything in the world that this wise tailor doesn't know. So when Joe sees a little white goat amidst the singing birds, salted herrings and hokey-pokey ices of a Whitechapel market he has to have him. He knows it's just a matter of time before the tiny bump on the unicorn's head becomes the magic horn to grant his every wish.

The Frozen Waterfall Gaye Hicyilmaz

Selda feels completely uprooted when she moves with her mother and sisters from Turkey to live with her father in Switzerland. At school, she can neither understand the language nor the lifestyle of the people around her. But Selda is a fighter. Her independence and strength of spirit gain her an unlikely set of friends, and she finds herself forced to make a decision between her old life and a new beginning.

The Wheel of Surya trilogy Jamila Gavin

In the first book, an Indian brother and sister are separated from their mother and home. Their only hope of survival is to find their father in England. But England isn't the refuge they expect.

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Kit's Wilderness David Almond

When Kit moves to Stonegate--a once thriving mining village haunted by a long-ago tragedy which killed 117 children--he is befriended by the wretched, sullen John Askew, a boy whose very soul has been fractured by his violent upbringing. As Kit's grieving grandfather begins to lose his grip on life, Kit is irresistibly drawn into a treacherous game played for the highest of stakes.

The Thief Lord Cornelia Funke

Two orphaned children are on the run in Venice. Befriended by a gang of street children and their mysterious leader, the Thief Lord, they shelter in an old, disused cinema. On their trail is a bungling detective, obsessed with disguises and the health of his pet tortoises. But a greater threat to the boys' new-found freedom is something from a forgotten past - a beautiful magical treasure with the power to spin time itself.

Red Dog Louis de Bernieres

The true story of a dog who befriended a good part of Australia and who was memorialised with a bronze statue.

The Ballad of Lucy Whipple Karen Kuchman

California Whipple hates her name, but she hates the place she's named after even more. She never wanted to leave Massachusetts and travel to this rough land. Now California has only two aims in the world. To change her name, and to find her way home. Somehow, she will achieve both.

Plague Jean Ure

Almost overnight a plague has wiped out the population of England. The only survivors seem to be three very different teenagers. Together they must come to terms with the man-made devastation around them. Fran, Harriet and Shahid have the power to rebuild society, but do they have the courage?

Death on the Nile Agatha Christie

The tranquillity of a cruise along the Nile is shattered by the discovery that Linnet Ridgeway has been shot through the head. She was young, stylish and beautiful, a girl who had everything -- until she lost her life. Agatha Christie's most exotic murder mystery.

Coram Boy Jamila Gavin

Coram Boy is a glorious web of changing fortunes and subtle intrigues. There is tragedy and corruption, hope and evil. Sometimes brutal and sometimes unceasingly bleak, the genre of historical fiction has rarely been this good.

Thursday's Child Sonya Harnett

James Augustin Barnabas Flute was born on a Thursday and so fated to his wanderings...During the long, hungry years of the Great Depression, Harper Flute's family struggles to cope with life on the hot, dusty land. Her younger brother Tin seeks refuge in the contrast of an ancient subterranean world. A world that nurtures but - as disturbing events in the community reveal - can also kill.

War of the Worlds H. G. Wells

The night after a shooting star is seen streaking through the sky from Mars, a cylinder is discovered on Horsell Common in London. At first, naïve locals approach the cylinder armed just with a white flag – only to be quickly killed by an all-destroying heat-ray, as terrifying tentacled invaders emerge.

Travel on my Elephant Mark Shand

For Mark Shand, there is no better way to see India than from the howdah of an Indian elephant. Before he set off on his 1000 kilometre journey, Tara was a scrawny 33-year-old begging elephant and by the time they reached the Sonepur Mela (the world's oldest elephant market) she had been transformed through tender loving care into a star attraction...