



2019 -Entering 8th Grade
Summer Reading Annotations

Children of Blood & Bone by Tomi Adeyemi (fantasy)

Zélie Adebola remembers when the soil of Orísha hummed with magic. Burners ignited flames, Tiders beckoned waves, and Zélie's Reaper mother summoned forth souls. But everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, maji were killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope. Now Zélie has one chance to bring back magic and strike against the monarchy. With the help of a rogue princess, Zélie must outwit and outrun the crown prince, who is hell-bent on eradicating magic for good. Danger lurks in Orísha, where snow leoponaires prowl and vengeful spirits wait in the waters. Yet the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to control her powers—and her growing feelings for an enemy.

Every Falling Star: The True Story of How I Survived and Escaped North Korea by Sungju Lee (narrative nonfiction)

The son of a prominent military officer, Sungju Lee has plenty of food, loving parents, and a nice bed to sleep in. But when Sungju's father falls out of favor with the North Korean government, his family is booted from the capital city of Pyongyang. They move to a much poorer area, Gyeong-Seong. On their own, without government benefits, Sungju's parents leave to find food and do not return. At age 12, Sungju finds himself alone and homeless. Forming a gang of other homeless boys is the only way to survive.

Game Changer by Tommy Greenwald (sports)

Thirteen-year-old Teddy Youngblood is in a coma fighting for his life after an unspecified football injury at training camp. His family and friends flock to his bedside to support his recovery—and to discuss the events leading up to the tragic accident. Was this an inevitable result of playing a violent sport, or was something more sinister happening on the field that day? Told through dialog, texts, newspaper articles, transcripts, an online forum, and Teddy's inner thoughts.

Projekt 1065 by Alan Gratz (historical)

Infiltrate. Befriend. Sabotage.

World War II is raging. Michael O'Shaunessey, originally from Ireland, now lives in Nazi Germany with his parents. Like the other boys in his school, Michael is a member of the Hitler Youth. But Michael has a secret. He and his parents are spies.

Scythe** by Neal Shusterman (dystopian)

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 they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control. Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe—a role that neither wants. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own.

Speed of Life by Carol Weston (realistic)

Sofia wonders if 14 might be the worst possible age to lose your mom. And when she wants to talk about her mom, her friends don't know what to say and her dad gets sad. When Sofia discovers Dear Kate, an advice columnist from Fifteen magazine, she's grateful to have someone to confide in about everything from crushes to mourning - someone who is completely, wonderfully anonymous. It feels ideal - until Sofia's dad introduces her to his new girlfriend, Katherine Baird, a.k.a., Dear Kate.

Warcross by Marie Lu (science fiction)

As WARCROSS opens, bounty hunter Em Chen finds herself on the brink of eviction from her apartment and complete financial disaster. But when she impulsively hacks the opening ceremonies for the international Warcross Championship, she unintentionally reveals herself in front of a global online audience. She becomes a pop sensation overnight and is whisked off to Tokyo to be a wild card contestant in the tournament. On top of that, Warcross inventor Hideo Tanaka takes a personal interest in her, one that will threaten the entire championship and put Em directly in the path of danger.

Watched by Marina Budhos (realistic)

Naeem is far from the “model teen.” Moving fast in his immigrant neighborhood in Queens is the only way he can outrun the eyes of his hardworking Bangladeshi parents and their gossipy neighbors. Even worse, they're not the only ones watching. Cameras on poles. Mosques infiltrated. Everyone knows: Be careful what you say and who you say it to. Anyone might be a watcher. Naeem thinks he can charm his way through anything, until his mistakes catch up with him and the cops offer a dark deal.

** Rebecca Caudill 2020 Nominee - The Rebecca Caudill award is Illinois' annual readers choice award for students grades 4-8