

### **KMS Grade 8 Suggested Summer Reading**

The following list offers **suggestions, not requirements**, for **incoming eighth graders** looking for great books to read during the summer months. All students are encouraged to read at least two books over the vacation.

**Piecing Me Together** by Renée Watson - realistic fiction - Newbery Honor and Coretta Scott King Author Award Winner

Jade believes she must get out of her poor neighborhood if she's ever going to succeed. Her mother tells her to take advantage of every opportunity that comes her way. And Jade has: every day she rides the bus away from her friends and to the private school where she feels like an outsider, but where she has plenty of opportunities. But some opportunities she doesn't really welcome, like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for "at-risk" girls. Just because her mentor is black and graduated from the same high school doesn't mean she understands where Jade is coming from. She's tired of being singled out as someone who needs help, someone people want to fix. Jade wants to speak, to create, to express her joys and sorrows, her pain and her hope. Maybe there are some things she could show other women about understanding the world and finding ways to be real, to make a difference.

**Dry** by Neal Shusterman - survival, adventure fiction

When the California drought escalates to catastrophic proportions, one teen is forced to make life and death decisions for her family in this harrowing story of survival. The drought--or the Tap-Out, as everyone calls it--has been going on for a while now. Everyone's lives have become an endless list of don'ts: don't water the lawn, don't fill up your pool, don't take long showers.

Until the taps run dry.

Suddenly, Alyssa's quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbors and families turned against each other on the hunt for water. And when her parents don't return and her life--and the life of her brother--is threatened, Alyssa has to make impossible choices if she's going to survive.

**Hey, Kiddo** by Jarrett Krosoczka - graphic non-fiction, memoir - A National Book Award Finalist

In kindergarten, Jarrett Krosoczka's teacher asks him to draw his family, with a mommy and a daddy. But Jarrett's family is much more complicated than that. His mom is an addict, in and out of rehab, and in and out of Jarrett's life. His father is a mystery -- Jarrett doesn't know where to find him, or even what his name is. Jarrett lives with his grandparents -- two very loud, very loving, very opinionated people who had thought they were through with raising children until Jarrett came along. Jarrett goes through his childhood trying to make his non-normal life as normal as possible, finding a way to express himself through drawing even as so little is being said to him about what's going on. Only as a teenager can Jarrett begin to piece together the truth of his family, reckoning with his mother and tracking down his father. Hey, Kiddo is a profoundly important memoir about growing up in a family grappling with addiction, and finding the art that helps you survive.

**The 57 Bus** by Dashka Slater - non-fiction - YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist, Isinglass Award 2020 Nominee

One teenager in a skirt. One teenager with a lighter. One moment that changes both of their lives forever. If it weren't for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Both were high school students from Oakland, California, one of the most diverse cities in the country, but they inhabited different worlds. Sasha, a white teen, lived in the middle-class foothills and attended a small private school. Richard, a black teen, lived in the crime-plagued flatlands and attended a large public one. Each day, their paths

overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned, and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.

***Harbor Me*** by Jacqueline Woodson - realistic fiction

It all starts when six kids have to meet for a weekly chat--by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, in the room they soon dub the ARTT Room (short for "A Room to Talk"), they discover it's safe to talk about what's bothering them--everything from Esteban's father's deportation and Haley's father's incarceration to Amari's fears of racial profiling and Ashton's adjustment to his changing family fortunes. When the six are together, they can express the feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. And together, they can grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives.

***Long Way Down*** by Jason Reynolds - realistic fiction, novel in verse - Isinglass Award 2020 Nominee, Winner of the Walter Dean Myers Award, Parents' Choice Gold Award Winner

Spanning a mere one minute and seven seconds, Reynolds' new free-verse novel is an intense snapshot of the chain reaction caused by pulling a trigger. First, 15-year-old Will Holloman sets the scene by relating his brother Shawn's murder two days prior—gunned down while buying soap for their mother. Next, he lays out The Rules: don't cry, don't snitch, always get revenge. Now that the reader is up to speed, Will tucks Shawn's gun into his waistband and steps into an elevator, steeled to execute rule number three and shoot his brother's killer. Yet, the simple seven-floor descent becomes a revelatory trip. At each floor, the doors open to admit someone killed by the same cycle of violence that Will's about to enter. He's properly freaked out, but as the seconds tick by and floors countdown, each new occupant drops some knowledge and pushes Will to examine his plans for that gun. Reynolds' concise verses echo like shots against the white space of the page, their impact resounding. He peels back the individual stories that led to this moment in the elevator and exposes a culture inured to violence because poverty, gang life, or injustice has left them with no other option. In this all-too-real portrait of survival, Reynolds goes toe-to-toe with where, or even if, love and choice are allowed to exist. - *from booklist*

***Everything, Everything*** by Nicola Yoon - realistic fiction, romance - 2017 Isinglass Award Winner

What if you couldn't touch anything in the outside world? Never breathe in the fresh air, feel the sun warm your face . . . or kiss the boy next door? In *Everything, Everything*, Maddy is a girl who's literally allergic to the outside world, and Olly is the boy who moves in next door . . . and becomes the greatest risk she's ever taken. My disease is as rare as it is famous. Basically, I'm allergic to the world. I don't leave my house, have not left my house in seventeen years. The only people I ever see are my mom and my nurse, Carla. But then one day, a moving truck arrives next door. I look out my window, and I see him. He's tall, lean and wearing all black--black T-shirt, black jeans, black sneakers, and a black knit cap that covers his hair completely. He catches me looking and stares at me. I stare right back. His name is Olly. Maybe we can't predict the future, but we can predict some things. For example, I am certainly going to fall in love with Olly. It's almost certainly going to be a disaster.

***The Crossover*** by Kwame Alexander- sports fiction, realistic fiction, novel in verse - Newbery Medal Winner 2015. Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health. Thanks to their dad, he and his twin brother, Jordan, are kings on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood--he's got mad beats, too, which help him find his rhythm when it's all on the line. As their winning season unfolds, things begin to

change. When Jordan meets a girl, the twins' bond unravels. Told in dynamic verse, this fast and furious middle grade novel that started it all absolutely bounces with rhythm and bursts with heart.