

**8th grade Language Arts**  
**MCC Summer Reading Assignment 2020**  
**Directions: Begin by reading this policy!**

Muskegon Catholic Central English department provides a solid college preparation program for all its students, taking great measures to ensure that each student has multiple opportunities to spend time reading independently from the course they are registered for. As a department we are ever changing in order to better fit the needs of our students, and the more rigorous expectations they will have from year to year.

All students, grades 7 -12, will be required to complete an independent reading assignment.

This year, each student will have the opportunity to read a book of their choice off of the list below according to grade level; this "choice" will vary depending on the level of the course (see instructions on grade appropriate extended reading assignment). The book *may not* be one that has already been read by the student.

All assignments are due on **Friday, August 21, 2020**. The assignment will be posted on the Muskegon Catholic website. [www.muskegoncatholic.org](http://www.muskegoncatholic.org) under the heading "Summer Reading/Extended Reading."

If you have any questions you may email: Mrs. Lee [alee@muskegoncatholic.org](mailto:alee@muskegoncatholic.org)

## 8th grade Summer Reading Choices (2020)

**Required Reading- Choose ONE (1) of the following books to read and complete the assignment that follows.**

***A Night Divided***, Jennifer Nielsen (Historical Fiction)

From NYT bestselling author Jennifer A. Nielsen comes a stunning thriller about a girl who must escape to freedom after the Berlin Wall divides her family between east and west. With the rise of the Berlin Wall, twelve-year-old Gerta finds her family suddenly divided. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. Gerta knows it is dangerous to watch the wall, to think forbidden thoughts of freedom, yet she can't help herself. She sees the East German soldiers with their guns trained on their own citizens; she, her family, her neighbors and friends are prisoners in their own city. But one day, while on her way to school, Gerta spots her father on a viewing platform on the western side, pantomiming a peculiar dance. Then, when she receives a mysterious drawing, Gerta puts two and two together and concludes that her father wants Gerta and Fritz to tunnel beneath the wall, out of East Berlin. However, if they are caught, the consequences will be deadly. No one can be trusted. Will Gerta and her family find their way to freedom?

***Between Shades of Gray***, Ruta Sepetys (Historical Fiction)

Lina is just like any other fifteen-year-old Lithuanian girl in 1941. She paints, she draws, she gets crushes on boys. Until one night when Soviet officers barge into her home, tearing her family from the comfortable life they've known. Separated from her father, forced onto a crowded and dirty train car, Lina, her mother, and her young brother slowly make their way north, crossing the Arctic Circle, to a work camp in the coldest reaches of Siberia. Here they are forced, under Stalin's orders, to dig for beets and fight for their lives under the cruelest of conditions. Lina finds solace in her art, meticulously--and at great risk--documenting events by drawing, hoping these messages will make their way to her father's prison camp to let him know they are still alive. It is a long and harrowing journey, spanning years and covering 6,500 miles, but it is through incredible strength, love, and hope that Lina ultimately survives.

***Bruiser***, Neal Shusterman (Realistic Fiction)

Tennyson: Don't get me started on the Bruiser. He was voted "Most Likely to Get the Death Penalty" by the entire school. He's the kid no one knows, no one talks to, and everyone hears disturbing rumors about. So why is my sister, Brontë, dating him? One of these days she's going to take in the wrong stray dog, and it's not going to end well.

Brontë: My brother has no right to talk about Brewster that way—no right to threaten him. There's a reason why Brewster can't have friends—why he can't care about too many people. Because when he cares about you, things start to happen. Impossible things that can't be explained. I know, because they're happening to me.

***Faceless***, Alyssa Sheinme (Realistic Fiction)

When Maisie Winters wakes up, she's in the hospital. The last thing she remembers is running through the hills of her neighborhood one misty morning. Slowly, she puts the pieces together.

Before she could make it home, a storm gathered. Lightning hit a power line and sparks rained down, the hot-burning electrical fire consuming her. Destroying her face. Where her nose, cheeks, and chin used to be, now there is...*nothing*. Maisie's lucky enough to qualify for a rare medical treatment: a face transplant. At least, everyone says she's lucky. But with someone else's features staring back at her in the mirror, Maisie looks—and feels—like a stranger. The doctors promised that the transplant was her chance to live a normal life again, but nothing feels normal anymore. Before, she knew who she was—a regular girl who ran track and got good grades, who loved her boyfriend and her best friend. Now, she can't even recognize herself. New York Times bestselling author Alyssa Sheinmel has created a gripping and gorgeously written tale of identity and love. This is a story of losing yourself and the long, hard fight to find your way back.

***Ghost Boys*, Jewell Parker Rhodes (Realistic Fiction)**

Twelve-year-old Jerome is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat. As a ghost, he observes the devastation that's been unleashed on his family and community in the wake of what they see as an unjust and brutal killing. Soon Jerome meets another ghost: Emmett Till, a boy from a very different time but similar circumstances. Emmett helps Jerome process what has happened, on a journey towards recognizing how historical racism may have led to the events that ended his life. Jerome also meets Sarah, the daughter of the police officer, who grapples with her father's actions. Once again Jewell Parker Rhodes deftly weaves historical and socio-political layers into a gripping and poignant story about how children and families face the complexities of today's world, and how one boy grows to understand American blackness in the aftermath of his own death.

***In the Shadow of the Sun*, Anne O'Brien (Adventure, Fiction)**

North Korea is known as the most repressive country on Earth, with a dictatorial leader, a starving population, and harsh punishment for rebellion. Not the best place for a family vacation. Yet that's exactly where Mia Andrews finds herself, on a tour with her aid-worker father and fractious older brother, Simon. Mia was adopted from South Korea as a baby, and the trip raises tough questions about where she really belongs. Then her dad is arrested for spying, just as forbidden photographs of North Korean slave-labor camps fall into Mia's hands. The only way to save Dad: get the pictures out of the country. Thus Mia and Simon set off on a harrowing journey to the border, without food, money, or shelter, in a land where anyone who sees them might turn them in, and getting caught could mean prison -- or worse. It's an exciting adventure that offers a rare glimpse into a compelling, complicated nation. It's also an unforgettable novel of courage and survival.

***The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, Brian Selznick (Historical Fiction, Mystery)**

Orphan, clock keeper, and thief, Hugo lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station, where his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. But when his world suddenly interlocks with an eccentric, bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy booth in the station, Hugo's undercover life, and his most precious secret, are put in jeopardy. A cryptic drawing, a treasured notebook, a stolen key, a mechanical man, and a hidden message from Hugo's dead father form the backbone of this intricate, tender, and spellbinding mystery.

***Monster*, Walter Dean Myers (Realistic Fiction)**

Sixteen-year-old Steve is on trial for murder and could face the death penalty. During the trial, Steve, an amateur filmmaker, pictures all the events as if he were directing a movie.

***Refugee*, Alan Gratz (Historical Fiction)**

Three different kids. One mission in common: ESCAPE. Josef is a Jewish boy in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world... Isabel is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety and freedom in America... Mahmoud is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe...

All three young people will go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers—from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But for each of them, there is always the hope of tomorrow. And although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, surprising connections will tie their stories together in the end.

***Scythe*, Neal Shusterman (Thriller/ Science Fiction)**

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. *Scythe* is the first novel of a thrilling new series by National Book Award–winning author Neal Shusterman in which Citra and Rowan learn that a perfect world comes only with a heavy price.

***The Selection*, Kiera Cass (Fiction, Dystopia)**

For thirty-five girls, the Selection is the chance of a lifetime. The opportunity to escape the life laid out for them since birth. To be swept up in a world of glittering gowns and priceless jewels. To live in a palace and compete for the heart of gorgeous Prince Maxon. But for America Singer, being Selected is a nightmare. It means turning her back on her secret love with Aspen, who is a caste below her. Leaving her home to enter a fierce competition for a crown she doesn't want. Living in a palace that is constantly threatened by violent rebel attacks. Then America meets Prince Maxon. Gradually, she starts to question all the plans she's made for herself—and realizes that the life she's always dreamed of may not compare to a future she never imagined.

***The Story of Owen*, E.K Johnston (Fantasy)**

Listen! For I sing of Owen Thorskard: valiant of heart, hopeless at algebra, last in a long line of legendary dragon slayers. Though he had few years and was not built for football, he stood between the town of Trondheim and creatures that threatened its survival. There have always been dragons. As far back as history is told, men and women have fought them, loyally defending their villages. Dragon slaying was a proud tradition. But dragons and humans have one thing in common: an insatiable appetite for fossil fuels. From the moment Henry Ford hired his first dragon slayer, no small town was safe. Dragon slayers flocked to cities, leaving more remote areas unprotected. Such was Trondheim's fate until Owen Thorskard arrived. At sixteen,

with dragons advancing and his grades plummeting, Owen faced impossible odds armed only with a sword, his legacy, and the classmate who agreed to be his bard. Listen! I am Siobhan McQuaid. I alone know the story of Owen, the story that changes everything. Listen!

***Towers Falling***, Jewel Parker Rhodes (Historical Fiction)

**A powerful novel set fifteen years after the 9/11 attacks.**

When her fifth-grade teacher hints that a series of lessons about home and community will culminate with one big answer about two tall towers once visible outside their classroom window, Deja can't help but feel confused. She sets off on a journey of discovery, with new friends Ben and Sabeen by her side. But just as she gets closer to answering big questions about who she is, what America means, and how communities can grow (and heal), she uncovers new questions, too. Like, why does Pop get so angry when she brings up anything about the towers?

***The Unteachables***, Gordon Korman (Fiction)

The Unteachables are a notorious class of misfits, delinquents, and academic train wrecks. Aldo has anger management issues; Parker can't read; Kiana, who doesn't even belong in the class—or any class; and Elaine (rhymes with pain). The Unteachables have been removed from the student body and isolated in room 117. Their teacher is Mr. Kermit, the most burned-out teacher in all of Greenwich. He was once a rising star, but his career was shattered by a cheating scandal that still haunts him. He is finally one year away from early retirement. But the superintendent has his own plans to torpedo that idea—and it involves assigning Mr. Kermit to the Unteachables. The Unteachables never thought they'd find a teacher who had a worse attitude than they did. Mr. Kermit never thought he would actually care about teaching again. Over the course of a school year, room 117 will experience mayhem, destruction—and maybe even a shot at redemption.

***Red Kayak***, Priscilla Cummings (Mystery/Suspense)

Brady loves life on the Chesapeake Bay with his friends J.T. and Digger. But developers and rich families are moving into the area, and while Brady befriends some of them, like the DiAngelos, his parents and friends are bitter about the changes. Tragedy strikes when the DiAngelos' kayak overturns in the bay, and Brady wonders if it was more than an accident. Soon, Brady discovers the terrible truth behind the kayak's sinking, and it will change the lives of those he loves forever.

## Required Reading Assignment

Directions: Enter the following information in the heading- your name, book title and author. Finally, give your book a rating based on 1-5. (1 being horrible 5 being the best book you've ever read) Also, explain why you give that rating. Next, type your responses to the questions below. Be sure to **number each question with the number you are responding to.**

Complete the following sections to show your understanding of the book you chose to read. Be sure to be thorough and complete in your responses. Make sure each response is different and doesn't simply repeat plot elements or characters that other responses include. Notice how you'll be completing questions of your choice from each of the sections for a total of 4 responses. (Do NOT do all of the questions. Choose 1 from each category) Each response must be a minimum of 5 sentences each. Use examples and details to support your answers. Be sure to label each response with the category and question number. Lastly, write a final paragraph giving your overall opinion of the novel and why you feel that way. Be ready to discuss your novel with the class when school begins.

Do your best and take your time. *Be sure to proofread when you are finished.*

**Type your responses in 12 point Times New Roman single-space.**

Characters: Answer any 1 question from this section

1. What conflict do the characters in your book experience and what are you learning about them through this conflict?
2. What are the problems the main character faces and how are they solved?
3. How do two characters in your book differ from each other?
4. Which character has gone through the biggest change in your book and why?
5. Which character can you connect with the most in your book? Why?
6. What decision has a character made in your book that you totally disagree with?

Plot: Answer any 1 question from this section

7. Which part of your book did you have the most difficulty understanding or connecting with? Why?
8. How would you solve the problem that the main character has?
9. What part of the story caused the most intense feelings for you?
10. How realistic is the plot of your book? Why?
11. What historical event is mentioned in your book and why? How was it important to the story?
12. Which part of your story would you like to go back to and reread? Why?

Theme: Answer 1 question from this section

13. What kind of message does the author want the reader to get from this book?
14. How has the story changed your thinking?
15. How has the story supported your thinking? Who did the characters remind you of and why?
16. What other events, people, or situations has this book caused you to think about and why?

Miscellaneous: Answer 1 question from this section

17. What hints did the title give you as to what this book was going to be about? How and why is the title important to the story?
18. Why do you think the author wrote this book?
19. What information or knowledge did you already have that helps you to understand this but better?
20. What has been the most difficult part of this book and why do you think that is so?

**Due Date: Friday, August 21, 2020**