

Briarcliff Middle School  
444 Pleasantville Road  
Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510

June, 2020

Dear Students,

Welcome to 8<sup>th</sup> Grade! You are required to read two books from the list below.

As you read your required books, you should take notes on the key characters and events and how each contributed to what happened. When we get back to school in September, we will be working with these notes to write our first essay, so make sure they are legible and thorough.

There are many different types of books on this list, graphic novels, action, sports, realistic, romantic, historical fiction – a little something for everyone. If you have another age-appropriate book you want to read in addition to one book from this list, that is fine.

We highly recommend you read more than just 2 books and hope you find many books you enjoy from this list! You will need to purchase copies of these books. If you cannot get a physical copy of the books you choose, you can look for them in an electronic format from the Briarcliff Public Library or the New York Public Library. You can find instructions on how to access those here: <https://bit.ly/PublicLibraryHowTo>

Have a wonderful summer and happy reading!

The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts Department  
Ms. Teka McCabe, Library Media Specialist

## Briarcliff Middle School

### Grade 8 Summer Reading 2020

**Reading over the summer will help you improve your comprehension and writing skills. There are many types of books on this list, some short, some long, some serious, some funny, true stories and fiction. Find a few you're interested in and enjoy them on vacation!**

- Alexander, Kwame     **SOLO:** Blade never asked for a life of the rich and famous. In fact, he'd give anything not to be the son of Rutherford Morrison, a washed-up rock star and drug addict. His one light is his girlfriend, Chapel, but her parents have forbidden their relationship. In reality, the only thing Blade and his dad have in common is the music that lives inside them. When a family secret comes to light, the music disappears. In its place is a letter that could bring Blade the freedom and love he's been searching for.
- Anderson, M.T.     **ASSASSINATION OF BRANGWAIN SPURGE:** Uptight elfin historian Brangwain Spurge is on a mission: survive being catapulted across the mountains into goblin territory, deliver a priceless peace offering, and spy on the goblin kingdom - from which no elf has returned alive in more than a hundred years. Brangwain's host, the goblin archivist Werfel, is delighted to show Brangwain around. They should be the best of friends, but a series of double crosses, blunders, and cultural misunderstandings throws these two bumbling scholars into the middle of an international crisis.
- Anderson, Natalie     **CITY OF SAINTS AND THIEVES:** Sixteen-year-old Tina and two friends leave Kenya and slip into the Congo, from where she and her mother fled years before, seeking revenge for her mother's murder but uncovering startling secrets.
- Austen, Jane     **MANSFIELD PARK:** Fanny Price, a teenaged girl of low social rank brought up on her wealthy relatives' countryside estate feels the sharp sting of rejection when her cousin Edmund, the only person who treats her as an equal, is won over by a flirtatious, exciting--and unprincipled--London girl.
- Bacigalupi, Paolo     **SHIP BREAKER:** In a futuristic world, teenaged Nailer scavenges copper wiring from grounded oil tankers for a living, but when he finds a beached clipper ship with a girl in the wreckage, he has to decide if he should strip the ship for its wealth or rescue the girl. **Printz Award, 2011**
- Bolden, Tonya     **CROSSING EBENEZER CREEK:** Freed from slavery, Mariah and her young brother Zeke join Sherman's march through Georgia, where Mariah meets a free black named Caleb and dares to imagine the possibility of true love, but hope can come at a cost.

- Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker **THE WAR I FINALLY WON:** When Ada's clubfoot is surgically fixed at last, she knows for certain that she's not what her mother said she was--damaged, deranged, crippled mentally as well as physically. She's not a daughter anymore, either. Who is she now? World War II rages on and Ada & Jamie, move with Susan, into a cottage with Lady Thorton and Maggie. Life in the crowded home is tense. Then Ruth moves in. Ruth, a Jewish girl, from *Germany*. Could Ruth be a spy?
- Cashore, Kristin **GRACELING:** In a world where some people are born with extreme and often-feared skills called Graces, Katsa struggles for redemption from her own horrifying Grace of killing and teams up with another young fighter to save their land from a corrupt king. *Sequels:* **FIRE, BITTERBLUE**
- Deuker, Carl **GUTLESS:** Falling short of varsity qualifications because of his tendency to avoid physical aggression, talented football player Brock Ripley struggles to face his fears when his team's star quarterback begins bullying Brock's best friend.
- Gephart, Donna **LILY AND DUNKIN:** Lily Jo McGrother, born Timothy McGrother, is a girl. But being a girl is not so easy when you look like a boy. Especially when you're in the eighth-grade. Norbert Dorfman, nicknamed Dunkin Dorfman, is bipolar and has just moved from the New Jersey town he's called home for the past thirteen years. This would be hard enough, but the fact that he is also hiding from a painful secret makes it even worse. One summer morning, Lily Jo McGrother meets Dunkin Dorfman, and their lives forever change
- Glaser, Mechthild **BOOK JUMPER:** A teen girl discovers she is a book jumper--she can leap directly into books, meet the characters, and experience the world of the book
- Gleitzman, Morris **ONCE:** After living in a Catholic orphanage for nearly four years, a naïve Jewish boy runs away and embarks on a journey across Nazi-occupied Poland to find his parents. *Sequels:* **THEN, NOW**
- Green, Tim **FOOTBALL GENIUS:** Troy has an unusual gift for predicting football plays before they occur. He attempts to use his ability to help his favorite team, the Atlanta Falcons, but he must first prove himself to the coach and players.
- Green, Tim **BASEBALL GREAT:** All Josh wants to do is play baseball but when his father, a minor league pitcher, signs him up for a youth championship team, Josh finds himself embroiled in a situation with potentially illegal consequences.

- Hardinge, Frances     **A FACE LIKE GLASS:** When Neverfell, who has no memory, arrives in Caverna, her facial expressions make her very dangerous to the people who live with blank faces or pay dearly to learn to simulate emotions.
- Jackson, Tiffany D.     **LET ME HEAR A RHYME:** Brooklyn, 1998. Biggie Smalls was right: Things done changed. But that doesn't mean that Quadir and Jarrell are cool letting their best friend Steph's music lie forgotten under his bed after he's murdered--not when his rhymes could turn any Bed Stuy corner into a party. With the help of Steph's younger sister Jasmine, they come up with a plan to promote Steph's music under a new rap name: the Architect. Soon, everyone wants a piece of him. When his demo catches the attention of a hotheaded music label rep, the trio must prove Steph's talent from beyond the grave.
- Jewell, Tiffany     **THIS BOOK IS ANTIRACIST:** Who are you? What is racism? Where does it come from? Why does it exist? What can you do to disrupt it? Learn about social identities, the history of racism and resistance against it, and how you can use your anti-racist lens and voice to move the world toward equity and liberation.
- Johnson, Angela     **FIRST PART LAST:** Bobby's carefree teenage life changes forever when he becomes a father and must care for his adored baby daughter. *Companion novel:* **HEAVEN.**
- Kinsella, W.P.     **SHOELESS JOE:** Ray Kinsella's fanatic love of baseball drives him to build a baseball stadium in his corn field and kidnap the author, J.D. Salinger, and bring him to a baseball game.
- Krosoczka, Jarrett     **HEY KIDDO:** In his graphic novel style memoir, Jarrett Krosoczka describes how in kindergarten his 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 - Jarrett's life. His father is a mystery. Jarrett lives with his loud, opinionated, but loving grandparents. Only as a teenager can Jarrett begin to piece together the truth of his family, reckoning with his mother and tracking down his father.
- Lockheart, E.     **THE DISREPUTABLE HISTORY OF FRANKIE LANDAU-BANKS:** Frankie Landau-Banks attempts to take over a secret, all-male society at her exclusive prep school, and her antics with the group soon draw some unlikely attention and have unexpected consequences that could change her life forever. **Prinz Honor Book, 2009**

- Lupica, Mike      **THE BIG FIELD:** When fourteen-year-old baseball player Hutch feels threatened by the arrival of a new teammate named Darryl, he tries to work through his insecurities about both Darryl and his remote and silent father, who was once a great ballplayer too.
- Medina, Tony      **I AM ALFONSO JONES:** The ghost of fifteen-year-old Alfonso Jones travels in a New York subway car full of the living and the dead, watching his family and friends fight for justice after he is killed by an off-duty police officer while buying a suit in a Midtown department store.
- Myers, Walter Dean      **HOOPS:** Seventeen-year-old Lonnie Jackson sees the city-wide basketball Tournament of Champions as a possible escape from Harlem but fears the pressures that have sidelined his coach, Cal.
- Neilson, Jennifer      **A NIGHT DIVIDED:** When the Berlin Wall went up, Gerta, her mother, and her brother Fritz were trapped on the eastern side where they were living, while her father, and her other brother Dominic were in the West--four years later, now twelve, Gerta sees her father on a viewing platform on the western side and realizes he wants her to risk her life trying to tunnel to freedom.
- Ness, Patrick      **A MONSTER CALLS:** Thirteen-year-old Conor awakens one night to find a monster outside his bedroom window, but not the one from the recurring nightmare that began when his mother became ill--an ancient, wild creature that wants him to face truth and loss.
- Pratchett, Terry      **NATION:** A tsunami destroys everything leaving Mau, an island boy, Daphne, an aristocratic English girl, and a small group of refugees responsible for rebuilding their village and their lives. **Printz Honor Book, 2009**
- Reeve, Philip      **FEVER CRUMB:** Foundling Fever Crumb has been raised as an engineer although females in the future London, England, are not believed capable of rational thought, but at age fourteen she leaves her sheltered world and begins to learn startling truths about her past while facing danger in the present. Sequels: **WEB OF AIR, SCRIVENER'S MOON**
- Reynolds, Jason      **ALL AMERICAN BOYS:** 16-year-old Rashad is accused of stealing and is brutally beaten by the police officer. There were witnesses: Quinn—a varsity basketball player and Rashad's classmate—and a video camera. The officer, Quinn's best friend's brother, is accused of prejudice and racial brutality. Quinn refuses to believe the man he knows could be guilty. But then Rashad is absent. Tensions threaten to explode as Rashad and Quinn are forced to face decisions and consequences they had never considered before.

- Richards, Jame      **THREE RIVERS RISING: A NOVEL OF THE JOHNSTOWN FLOOD:** Sixteen-year-old Celestia is a wealthy member of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club, where she meets and falls in love with Peter, a hired hand who lives in the valley below, and by the time of the torrential rains that lead to the disastrous Johnstown flood of 1889, she has been disowned by her family and is staying with him in Johnstown. *A novel in verse.*
- Saenz, Benjamin Alire      **ARISTOTLE AND DANTE DISCOVER THE UNIVERSE:** Fifteen-year-old Ari Mendoza is an angry loner with a brother in prison, but when he meets Dante and they become friends, Ari starts to ask questions about himself, his parents, and his family that he has never asked before.
- Savit, Gavriel      **ANNA AND THE SWALLOW MAN:** When her university professor father is sent by the Gestapo to a concentration camp, seven-year-old Anna travels the Polish countryside with the mysterious Swallow Man during World War II.
- Schmidt, Gary D      **ORBITING JUPITER:** The shattering story of Joseph, a father at thirteen, who has never seen his daughter, Jupiter. After spending time in a juvenile facility, he's placed with a foster family on a farm in rural Maine. Here Joseph, damaged and withdrawn, meets twelve-year-old Jack, who narrates the account of the troubled teen who wants to find his baby at any cost. In the time they're together the two boys discover the true meaning of family and the sacrifices it requires.
- Scieszka, Jon, editor      **SPORTS PAGES:** the third volume in Jon Scieszka's Guys Read Library of Great Reading, features ten short stories guaranteed to put you in the ring, under the basket, and right behind home plate. From fiction to nonfiction, from baseball to mixed martial arts and everything in between, these are a collection of stories about the rush of victory and the crush of defeat on and off the field.
- Stamper, Vesper      **WHAT THE NIGHT SINGS:** After losing her family and everything she knew in the Nazi concentration camps, Gerta is finally liberated, only to find herself completely alone. Without her papa, her music, or even her true identity, she must move past the task of surviving and on to living her life. In the displaced persons camp, Gerta meets Lev, a fellow teen survivor who she just might be falling for, despite her feelings for someone else. With a newfound Jewish identity she never knew she had, and a return to the life of music she thought she lost forever, Gerta must choose how to build a new future.

- Stone, Nic **DEAR MARTIN:** Justyce McAllister is a good kid, an honor student, and always there to help a friend--but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs. Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers. But do they hold up anymore? He starts a journal to Dr. King to find out. One day Justyce goes driving with his best friend, Manny, windows rolled down, music turned way up, sparking the fury of a white off-duty cop beside them. Words fly. Shots are fired. In the media fallout, it's Justyce who is under attack.
- Timberlake, Amy **ONE CAME HOME:** Georgie Burkhardt is known for two things: her uncanny aim with a rifle and her habit of speaking her mind plainly. But when Georgie blurts out something she shouldn't, her older sister Agatha runs off with a pack of "pigeoners" trailing the passenger pigeon migration. When the sheriff returns to town with an unidentifiable body--wearing Agatha's dress --everyone assumes the worst. Refusing to believe the facts that are laid down before her, Georgie sets out to find her sister. **Newbery Honor Book, 2014**
- Wang, Jen **THE PRINCE AND THE DRESSMAKER:** In this graphic novel, Prince Sebastian is looking for a bride--or rather, his parents are looking for one for him. Sebastian is too busy hiding his secret life from everyone. At night he puts on daring dresses and takes Paris by storm as the fabulous Lady Crystallia! Sebastian's secret weapon (and best friend) is the brilliant dressmaker Frances—the only other person who knows the truth: sometimes this boy wears dresses. But Frances dreams of greatness and being someone's secret weapon means being a *secret*. How long can Frances defer her dreams to protect a friend?
- Watson, Renee **PIECING ME TOGETHER:** Tired of being singled out at her mostly-white private school as someone who needs support, high school junior Jade would rather participate in the school's amazing Study Abroad program than join Women to Women, a mentorship program for at-risk girls.
- Yoon, Nicola **THE SUN IS ALSO A STAR:** Natasha is a girl who believes in science and facts. Daniel has always been a good son and good student. But when he sees Natasha he forgets all that and believes there is something extraordinary in store for both of them. **Printz Honor Book, 2017**

### NON-FICTION

- Alexander, Kwame **THE PLAYBOOK: 52 RULES TO AIM, SHOOT, AND SCORE IN THIS GAME CALLED LIFE** Kwame Alexander shares poetry and inspiring lessons about the rules of life, as well as uplifting quotes from athletes such as Stephen Curry and Venus Williams and other exemplars like Sonia Sotomayor and Michelle Obama in this motivational and

inspirational book just right for graduates of any age and anyone needing a little encouragement.

Anderson, Carol

**WE ARE NOT YET EQUAL: UNDERSTANDING OUR RACIAL DIVIDE:** When America achieves milestones of progress toward full and equal black participation in democracy, the systemic response is a consistent racist backlash that rolls back those wins - The end of the Civil War and Reconstruction was greeted with Jim Crow laws; the promise of new opportunities in the North during the Great Migration was limited when blacks were blocked from moving away from the South; the Supreme Court's landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* was met with the shutting down of public schools; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 led to laws that disenfranchised millions of African American voters and a War on Drugs that disproportionately targeted blacks; and the election of President Obama led to an outburst of violence including the death of black teen Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

Bascomb, Neal

**THE NAZI HUNTERS: HOW A TEAM OF SPIES AND SURVIVORS CAPTURED THE WORLDS MOST NOTORIOUS NAZI:** In 1945 at the end of World War II, Adolf Eichmann, the head of operations for the Nazi's Final Solution, walked into the mountains of Germany and vanished from view. Sixteen years later, an elite team of spies captured him at a bus stop in Argentina and smuggled him to Israel, resulting in one of the century's most important trials – one that cemented the Holocaust in the public imagination.

Bausum, Ann

**WITH COURAGE AND WITH CLOTH: WINNING THE FIGHT FOR A WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE:** The long, arduous and sometimes violent struggle for a woman's right to vote is told in an engaging narrative. The roots of the movement as well as the other efforts it spawned are well told.

Beals, Melba Pattillo

**MARCH FORWARD, GIRL:** Long before she was one of the Little Rock Nine, Melba Pattillo Beals was a warrior. Frustrated by the laws that kept African-Americans separate but very much unequal to whites, she had questions. Why couldn't she drink from a "whites only" fountain? Why couldn't she feel safe beyond home--or even within the walls of church? Adults told her: Hold your tongue. Be patient. Know your place. But Beals had the heart of a fighter--and the knowledge that her true place was a free one.

Blumenthal, Karen

**BOOTLEG: MURDER, MOONSHINE, AND THE LAWLESS YEARS OF PROHIBITION:** It began with the best of intentions. Worried about the effects of alcohol on American families, mothers and civic leaders started a movement to outlaw drinking in public places. Over time, their protests, petitions, and activism paid off with a Constitutional

Amendment banning the sale and consumption of alcohol. Instead, it began a decade of lawlessness, when the most upright citizens casually broke the law, and a host of notorious gangsters entered the public eye.

- Brimner, Larry Dane **BLACK & WHITE: THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN REVEREND FRED L. SHUTTLESWORTH AND EUGENE "BULL" CONNOR:** In the 1950s and early 60s, Birmingham, Alabama, became known as Bombingham. At the center of this violent time in the fight for civil rights, and standing at opposite ends, were Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth and Eugene Bull Connor. From his pulpit, Shuttlesworth agitated for racial equality, while Commissioner Connor fought for the status quo. **Sibert Informational Book Honor Medal, 2012**
- Freedman, Russell **THE VOICE THAT CHALLENGED A NATION: MARIAN ANDERSON AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS:** A biography of the great singer Marian Anderson and her role in bringing the injustice of segregation in the arts to national awareness. **Newbery Honor Book, 2005**
- Gates, Henry Louis & Bolden, Tonya **DARK SKY RISING: RECONSTRUCTION AND THE DAWN OF JIM CROW:** A much-needed examination of Reconstruction and the Jim Crow era, this should supplement all middle school history textbooks. Gates and Bolden look back at historical perspectives while drawing parallels to current issues of inequity and racism, illustrating how we got where we are, and emphasizing that change is imperative.
- Hartfield, Claire **A FEW RED DROPS: THE CHICAGO RACE RIOT OF 1919:** On a hot day in July 1919, five black youths went swimming in Lake Michigan, unintentionally floating close to the "white" beach. An angry white man began throwing stones at the boys, striking and killing one. Racial conflict on the beach erupted into days of urban violence that shook the city of Chicago to its foundations. This mesmerizing narrative draws on contemporary accounts as it traces the roots of the explosion that had been building for decades in race relations, politics, business, and clashes of culture
- Hoose, Phillip M. **CLAUDETTE COLVIN: TWICE TOWARD JUSTICE:** The story of fifteen-year-old Claudette Colvin, an African-American girl who refused to give up her seat to a white woman on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, nine months before Rosa Parks, and covers her role in a crucial civil rights case. **Newbery Honor Book 2010, National Book Award, 2009**

Reynolds, Jason

**STAMPED: RACISM, ANTIRACISM AND YOU:** *This is NOT a history book.*  
*This is a book about the here and now.*  
*A book to help us better understand why we are where we are.*  
*A book about race.*

Seiple, Samantha

**LINCOLN'S SPYMASTER: ALLAN PINKERTON, AMERICA'S FIRST PRIVATE EYE:** Pinkerton was just a poor immigrant barrel-maker in Illinois when he stumbled across his first case just miles from his home. His reputation grew and people began approaching Pinkerton with their cases, he assembled a team of undercover agents, and together they caught train robbers, counterfeiters, and other outlaws. Seeing firsthand the value of Pinkerton's service, President Lincoln, seeing how useful Pinkerton's team was, funded Pinkerton's spy network, a precursor to the Secret Service.

Stone, Tanya Lee

**THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE BARBIE: A DOLL'S HISTORY AND HER IMPACT ON US:** Is Barbie a blond Chucky slashing away at little girls' self-esteem? Or is she My First Feminist, with her lab coats, astronaut helmets, and high-fashion gowns, encouraging girls to imagine themselves in whatever roles they choose? This book explores how Barbie has influenced generations of girls, discussing criticisms of the doll, her role in fashion, and her surprising popularity during her first fifty years.

Turner, Pamela

**SAMURAI RISING: THE EPIC LIFE OF MINAMOTO YOSHITSUNE:** Minamoto Yoshitsune should not have been a samurai. But his story is legend in this real-life saga. This epic warrior tale reads like a novel, but this is the true story of the greatest samurai in Japanese history. When Yoshitsune was a baby, his father went to war with a rival samurai family--and lost. Yoshitsune was sent away to live in a monastery. Skinny, small, and unskilled in the warrior arts, he nevertheless escaped and learned the ways of the samurai. His daring feats and impossible bravery earned him immortality.