

St. Ursula School
English/Language Arts
Summer Reading - 2025
Entering 8th Grade

Tested Book: *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* by Jameson L. Swanson

All students are required to read *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* by Jameson L. Swanson. They will be tested on the book the first week of September.

Summer Reading Project/Written Summary List: Students are to choose a book from the list below to read over the summer, and they are to complete the attached story map/graphic organizer with detailed information. Complete sentences are not required. The story map will then be used to write an in school book summary during the first week the students return.

Title of Book & Author	Awards	Fountas & Pinnell Reading Level	Lexile Level
<i>Beyond the Bright Sea</i> By: Lauren Wolk	-NPR Best Book of the Year - <i>Parents' Magazine</i> Best Book of the Year - <i>Booklist</i> Editors' Choice selection - <i>BookPage</i> Best Book of the Year - <i>Horn Book</i> Fanfare Selection - <i>Kirkus</i> Best Book of the Year - <i>School Library Journal</i> Best Book of the Year - <i>Charlotte Observer</i> Best Book of the Year - <i>Southern Living</i> Best Book of the Year -New York Public Library Best Book of the Year	Z	770 L

<i>Chains</i> By: Laurie Halse Anderson	-ALA Notable Children's Book, 1989 -Finalist, National Book Awards 2008 for Young People's Literature -Scott O'Dell Award, 2009 -Pacific Northwest Young Reader's Choice Award -Booklist Editors' Choice -CBC/NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Book -ALA Best Books For Young Adults - +more	Z	780 L
<i>Fever 1793</i> By: Laurie Halse Anderson	-Scott O'Dell Award, 2009 -ALA Best Book for Young Adults, 2010 -ILA Teachers' Choices -California Young Reader Medal Nominee -Kentucky Bluegrass Award Master List -CBC/NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Book -Children's Literature Choice List -Bank Street Best Books of the Year -Young Hoosier Book Award Nominee (IN) - +more	Z	580 L
<i>Girl in the Blue Coat</i> By: Monica Hesse	-Edgar Award for Best Young Adult Mystery, 2017 -Junior Library Guild Selection, 2016 -Choice Book Honor Award, 2017	Z+	720 L
<i>Soldier's Heart</i> By: Gary Paulsen	-ALA Best Books for Young Adults, 2010 -ALA Quick Pick	V	1,000 L
<i>When You Trap a Tiger</i> By: Tae Keller	-ALA Newbery Award, 2021 -APALA Asian/Pacific American Award for Children's Literature -Notable Children's Books	O	590 L
<i>Where the Red</i>	-Top 100 Children's Novel, School	Y	700 L

<i>Fern Grows</i> By: Wilson Rawls	Library Journal -Must Read for Kids 9-14 -NPR Great American Read's Selection (PBS) -New Hampshire Great Stone Face Award, 1988 -Winner of Multiple State Awards		
<i>The Witch of Blackbird Pond</i> By: Elizabeth George Speare	-ALA Newbery Medal, 1959 -Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children's Book Nominee, 1960	W	850 L

Summaries of 8th Grade Summer Books

Beyond the Bright Sea

Once an infant in a skiff washed up on the shore of a tiny piece of land among the Elizabeth Islands off the coast of Massachusetts. Osh, the only man who lived there, found the baby, named her Crow, and began to care for her with the help of Miss Maggie, his neighbor on the nearby island of Cuttyhunk. Now it is 1925, and twelve-year-old Crow is happy with her little family, but she wishes she knew more about where she came from. The Cuttyhunk locals are convinced she came from Penikese, an island which previously housed a leper colony, and they are wary of her, refusing to make physical contact with her, to handle objects which she has touched, or to allow her to attend school for fear of contracting leprosy. When a scientist comes to Penikese to study birds, Crow notices his fire burning across the water one night, and she feels a sudden urge to also visit the island to seek clues about her origin. From here, Crow sets into motion a series of surprising events that lead to the truth about her identity, both in the past, as a newborn baby and now, as a young girl.

Vivid and heart-wrenching, Lauren Wolk's *Beyond the Bright Sea* is a gorgeously crafted and tensely paced tale that explores questions of identity, belonging, and the true meaning of family.

Chains

As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel.

When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom.

Fever

During the summer of 1793, Mattie Cook lives above the family coffee shop with her widowed mother and grandfather. Mattie spends her days avoiding chores and making plans to turn the family business into the finest Philadelphia has ever seen. But then the fever breaks out.

Disease sweeps the streets, destroying everything in its path and turning Mattie's world upside down. At her feverish mother's insistence, Mattie flees the city with her grandfather. But she soon discovers that the sickness is everywhere, and Mattie must learn quickly how to survive in a city turned frantic with disease.

Girl in the Blue Coat

Amsterdam, 1943. Hanneke spends her days procuring and delivering sought-after black market goods to paying customers, her nights hiding the true nature of her work from her concerned parents, and every waking moment mourning her boyfriend, who was killed on the Dutch front lines when the Germans invaded. She likes to think of her illegal work as a small act of rebellion.

On a routine delivery, a client asks Hanneke for help. Expecting to hear that Mrs. Janssen wants meat or kerosene, Hanneke is shocked by the older woman's frantic plea to find a *person*--a Jewish teenager Mrs. Janssen had been hiding, who has vanished without a trace from a secret room. Hanneke initially wants nothing to do with such dangerous work, but is ultimately drawn into a web of mysteries and stunning revelations that lead her into the heart of the resistance, open her eyes to the horrors of the Nazi war machine, and compel her to take desperate action.

Beautifully written, intricately plotted, and meticulously researched, *Girl in the Blue Coat* is an extraordinary novel about bravery, grief, and love in impossible times.

Soldier's Heart

In June 1861, when the Civil War began, Charley Goddard enlisted in the First Minnesota Volunteers. He was 15. He didn't know what a "shooting war" meant or what he was fighting for. But he didn't want to miss out on a great adventure.

The "shooting war" turned out to be the horror of combat and the wild luck of survival; how it feels to cross a field toward the enemy, waiting for fire. When he entered the service he was a boy. When he came back he was different; he was only 19, but he was a man with "soldier's heart," later known as "battle fatigue."

When You Trap a Tiger

When Lily and her family move in with her sick grandmother, a magical tiger straight out of her halmoni's Korean folktales arrives, prompting Lily to unravel a secret family history. Long, long ago, Halmoni stole something from the tigers. Now they want it back. And when one of the tigers approaches Lily with a deal--return what her grandmother

stole in exchange for Halmoni's health--Lily is tempted to agree. But deals with tigers are never what they seem! With the help of her sister and her new friend Ricky, Lily must find her voice...and the courage to face a tiger.

Where the Red Fern Grows

Where the Red Fern Grows is the remarkable tale of a 10 year old boy named Billy Coleman who lives in the Ozark mountains with his family. Billy's dream is to purchase a redbone coonhound dog, and that's his ultimate goal. His family isn't wealthy so he has to save up the money himself. So when he's finally able to save up enough money for two pups to call his own—Old Dan and Little Ann—he's ecstatic. It's true that times are tough, but together they'll roam the hills of the Ozarks.

Soon, Billy and his hounds become the finest hunting team in the valley. Stories of their great achievements spread throughout the region, and the combination of Old Dan's brawn, Little Ann's brains, and Billy's sheer will seems unbeatable. But tragedy awaits these determined hunters—now friends—and Billy learns that hope can grow out of despair.

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

Orphaned 16 year old Kit Tyler knows, as she gazes for the first time at the cold, bleak shores of Connecticut Colony, that her new home will never be like the shimmering Caribbean island she left behind. In her relatives' stern Puritan community, she feels like a tropical bird that has flown to the wrong part of the world, a bird that is now caged and lonely. The only place where Kit feels completely free is in the meadows, where she enjoys the company of the old Quaker woman known as the Witch of Blackbird Pond, and on occasion, her young sailor friend Nat. But when Kit's friendship with the "witch" is discovered, Kit is faced with suspicion, fear, and anger. She herself is accused of witchcraft!

Story Mapping

Title: _____

Author: _____

Main Characters: Who?

Setting: When? (if not stated list past, present, or future)

Where?

Problem: What? Why?

Events Leading to Resolution

Resolution: How is the problem solved?
