

June, 2026

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As your children prepare to transition into the 8th grade, we want to ensure their minds stay engaged and curious over the summer months. To help them maintain their reading momentum without adding extra stress to your family's summer plans, I am excited to share this year's 8th Grade Summer Reading Assignment. Our goal this year is to foster a genuine love for reading by offering choice and flexibility.

Students are asked to select and read just one book from the list of six titles. To make this assignment entirely manageable, I recommend a consistent, low-stress pace: 15 to 20 minutes of reading, 4 days a week (or roughly 30 to 40 pages per week). This steady routine easily prevents the "late-August rush" and keeps reading enjoyable.

Instead of a traditional book report, students will complete one mini project from a choiceboard. These options are specifically designed to align with different student strengths and interests. The completed choiceboard project is due Wednesday, September 9th. It will count as a quiz grade for the first term, assessed using a 40 point rubric focused on effort, completion, and textual understanding. In addition, students will get (2) ELA homework passes that can be used during the school year for completing their summer work.

If you have any questions about the assignment, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at coleary@cclcs.info. Thank you for your partnership in supporting your child's literacy. I hope you have a wonderful, restful summer filled with great memories!

Sincerely,

Catherine O'Leary

Book Menu (please pick one)

This list spans multiple genres, formats, and reading levels to ensure every student finds a match.

Goal: Read one book from the selection below over the course of the summer.

Suggested Pace: 15–20 minutes a day, 4 days a week. Alternatively, aiming for roughly 30 - 40 pages per week will comfortably get most students through their book by August without having to cram.

1. **"All the Blues in the Sky" by Renée Watson** (Novel in Verse / Contemporary)
 - *The Vibe:* Deep, poetic, and emotional. It follows a 13-year-old navigating friendship, major life changes, and grief. It's a quick but deeply impactful read.
2. **"Impossible Creatures" by Katherine Rundell** (Fantasy / Adventure)
 - *The Vibe:* Epic and magical. A boy discovers a secret gateway to an archipelago where mythical creatures actually exist, and he must help save them from a dark force.
3. **"The First State of Being" by Erin Entrada Kelly** (Sci-Fi / Realistic Fiction)
 - *The Vibe:* Thought-provoking and suspenseful. Set in 1999, a regular kid's life is turned upside down when he meets a mysterious boy who claims to be a time-traveler from the future.
4. **"The Enigma Girls" by Candace Fleming** (Non-Fiction / History)
 - *The Vibe:* True spy thriller. The fascinating, true story of ten teenage girls who worked in secret to break military codes and help win World War II.
5. **"Nimona" by ND Stevenson** (Graphic Novel / Sci-Fi Fantasy)
 - *The Vibe:* Irreverent, funny, and visual. A subversive story about a shapeshifter, a villain with a heart of gold, and a corrupt kingdom. Great for visual learners and reluctant readers.
6. **"And Then, Boom!" by Lisa Fipps** (Contemporary / Realistic)
 - *The Vibe:* Powerful, raw, and hopeful. Written in verse, it tackles a boy dealing with sudden poverty, housing instability, and finding his inner strength.

Choiceboard Menu (please pick one)

Students should select **one** task from the grid below based on what they are interested in or want to try. Each option targets a distinct skillset.

<u>The Creator</u> Task: The Alternate Cover - Design a brand-new front and back cover for your book. You will create: A high-quality drawing or digital design (using Canva, etc.). The back cover must include a 5-sentence plot teaser and 3 fake "blurbs" (reviews) from characters in the book.	<u>The Traditionalist</u> Task: Letter to the Author - Write a formal, 3-paragraph letter to the book's author analyzing their choices. You will create: Paragraph 1: What you liked and why. Paragraph 2: Your analysis of the book's biggest turning point. Paragraph 3: Two lingering questions you have about the ending.	<u>The Broadcaster</u> Task: Podcast Mini-Episode - Record a 2-to-3 minute "audio review" or deep-dive discussion about your book. You will create: An audio file (using Flip, Voice Memos, etc.). You must state the title/author, summarize the conflict without spoilers, and give a "bungee-rating" (how fast it hooks you).
<u>The Performer</u> Task: The Missing Scene - Write an entirely new scene (approx. 300–400 words) that fits somewhere into the existing book. You will create: A written script or narrative passage. It must be written from the perspective of a secondary character, showing their secret thoughts during a major event.	<u>The Architect</u> Task: The Character Map - Create a visual web or timeline that tracks how the main character changed. You will create: A chart mapping 3 major choices the character made, what caused them to make those choices, and how those choices altered the plot's direction.	<u>The Marketer</u> Task: The Pitch Trailer - Act as a movie producer pitching this book to a Hollywood studio to be turned into a movie. You will create: A 60-second video or a structured "pitch deck" slide presentation detailing who you would cast as the leads, the setting aesthetics, and the target audience.

Choiceboard Rubric

This rubric evaluates the final project regardless of which choiceboard option your student selects. It emphasizes thorough execution, critical thinking, and effort.

40 : Exemplary - <i>Please remember that this means going <u>above and beyond</u> the required components of the assignment.</i>	30 : Proficient - <i>Please remember that this means meeting all the required components of the assignment.</i>	20 : Developing	10: Not Finished Just Yet
Your project is fully complete and includes all specific components requested. Your project demonstrates a deep understanding of the book's characters, plot, setting, and themes. Your work is exceptionally neat, creative, and shows high effort and care.	Your project is complete and meets all basic requirements. Your project demonstrates a clear understanding of the book, accurately referencing plot points or characters. Your work is organized, clear, and shows solid effort.	Your project is partially complete (missing one or two required elements). Your project demonstrates a basic understanding of the book, but details may be vague or slightly inaccurate. The final product appears rushed or incomplete in some areas.	Your project is incomplete or does not follow the choiceboard directions. Your project relies only on the back of the book summaries. Your project is difficult to understand.