

**St. Ursula School**  
**English/Language Arts**  
**Summer Reading - 2026**  
**Entering 8th Grade**

**Tested Book:** *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* by James I Swanson

All students are required to read. They will be tested on the book *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* by James I Swanson. They will be tested on Thursday, September 3.

**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.

<b><i>Title of Book &amp; Author</i></b>	<b><i>Awards</i></b>	<b><i>Fountas &amp; Pinnell Reading Level</i></b>	<b><i>Lexile Level</i></b>
<b><i>Beyond the Bright Sea</i></b> 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

***Chains*** By: Laurie Halse Anderson      -ALA Notable Children's Book, 1989 -Finalist,      National Book Awards 2008 for Young People's Literature

Z 780 L

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Scott O'Dell Award, 2009</li> <li>-Pacific Northwest Young Reader's Choice Award</li> <li>-Booklist Editors' Choice</li> <li>-CBC/NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Book</li> <li>-ALA Best Books For Young Adults - +more</li> </ul>		
<p><b><i>Fever 1793</i></b> By: Laurie Halse Anderson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Scott O'Dell Award, 2009</li> <li>-ALA Best Book for Young Adults, 2010</li> <li>-ILA Teachers' Choices</li> <li>-California Young Reader Medal Nominee</li> <li>-Kentucky Bluegrass Award Master List</li> <li>-CBC/NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Book</li> <li>-Children's Literature Choice List</li> <li>-Bank Street Best Books of the Year</li> <li>-Young Hoosier Book Award Nominee (IN)</li> <li>- +more</li> </ul>	Z	580 L
<p><b><i>Girl in the Blue Coat</i></b> By: Monica Hesse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Edgar Award for Best Young Adult Mystery, 2017</li> <li>-Junior Library Guild Selection, 2016</li> <li>-Choice Book Honor Award, 2017</li> </ul>	Z+	720 L
<p><b><i>Soldier's Heart</i></b> By: Gary Paulsen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-ALA Best Books for Young Adults, 2010</li> <li>-ALA Quick Pick</li> </ul>	V	1,000 L
<p><b><i>When You Trap a Tiger</i></b> By: Tae Keller</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-ALA Newbery Award, 2021</li> <li>-APALA Asian/Pacific American Award for Children's Literature</li> <li>-Notable Children's Books</li> </ul>	O	590 L

<p><b><i>Where the Red Fern Grows</i></b> By: Wilson Rawls</p>	<p>-Top 100 Children's Novel, School Library Journal -Must Read for Kids 9-14 -NPR Great American Read's Selection (PBS) -New Hampshire Great Stone Face Award, 1988</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>700 L</p>
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<p><b><i>Island of the Blue Dolphins</i></b> By: Scott O'Dell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Newbery Medal (1961) - Recognized as an outstanding children's book.</li> <li>● Lewis Carroll Shelf Award (1970) - Honored for its literary merit.</li> <li>● ALA Notable Children's Books - Listed as a notable book by the American Library Association.</li> <li>● California Young Reader Medal (1972) - Awarded by young readers in California.</li> <li>● Selected for the National Education Association's "Teachers' Top 100 Books for Children" - Acknowledged for its educational value.</li> <li>● Included in the "Best of the Best" lists by various literary organizations.</li> </ul>		

**Summaries: 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.

## **Island of the Blue Dolphins**

Karana, a Ghalas-at Indian, lives peacefully on the island with her tribe until the arrival of a Russian otter-hunting ship. In spite of the deal the Aleutian hunters make with her father, the Ghalas-at chief, in the end they prove treacherous, killing most of the tribe. Karana's younger brother, Ramo, is all that is left of her family. Fearful of the Aleuts' return, the remaining Indians decide to move to another island, and are offered safe passage by some friendly ships. But as Karana boards the ship to leave the island forever, she is unable to find Ramo, and swims back to shore to search for him. Abandoned by the ships, Karana must draw on reserves of resourcefulness, and courage in order to survive.

Island of the Blue Dolphins is based on the true story of an Indian girl who lived for 18 years on an island off the coast of California.

Grade	College & Career Ready "Stretch" Lexile Bands
1	190L to 530L
2	420L to 650L
3	520L to 820L
4	740L to 940L
5	830L to 1010L
6	925L to 1070L
7	970L to 1120L
8	1010L to 1185L
9	1050L to 1260L
10	1080L to 1335L
11 and 12	1185L to 1385L

Common Core "Stretch" Text Measures	
Grade	2012 Common Core "Stretch" Text Measures
1	190L to 530L
2	420L to 650L
3	520L to 820L
4	740L to 940L
5	830L to 1010L
6	925L to 1070L
7	970L to 1120L
8	1010L to 1185L
9	1050L to 1260L
10	1080L to 1335L
11 & 12	1185L to 1385L