**8TH GRADE CHOICE READING**

Directions: You will be asked to select and read one of the books from the choice list during the first weeks of school. You may be asked to complete a project and/or quiz over this book as well.

**The Call of the Wild** by Jack London (1080 Lexile)

Buck is a large dog living the good life on a comfortable California estate in the late 1800s when he is kidnapped and transported to the Yukon to be a sled dog during the gold rush. At first he tries to rebel, but he is soon beaten into submission. As he passes through a succession of owners, he finds that ancient instincts from his wolf ancestors are awakening within him, enabling him to survive and prosper in the brutal wilderness of the North. It is a tale that is brutal at times but ultimately an uplifting story about inner dignity and what it takes to be a leader.

**Red Queen** by Victoria Aveyard (HL 740 Lexile)

Mare Barrow's world is divided by blood—those with common, Red blood serve the Silver-blooded elite, who are gifted with superhuman abilities. Mare is a Red, scraping by as a thief in a poor, rural village, until a twist of fate throws her in front of the Silver court. Before the king, princes, and all the nobles, she discovers she has an ability of her own. To cover up this impossibility, the king forces her to play the role of a lost Silver princess and betroths her to one of his own sons. As Mare is drawn further into the Silver world, she risks everything and uses her new position to help the Scarlet Guard—a growing Red rebellion—even as her heart tugs her in an impossible direction. One wrong move can lead to her death, but in the dangerous game she plays, the only certainty is betrayal.

**Scythe** by Neal Schusterman (830 Lexile)

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.

**Divergent** by Veronica Roth (700 Lexile)

One choice can transform you. Beatrice Prior’s society is divided into five factions—Candor (the honest), Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Amity (the peaceful), and Erudite (the intelligent). Beatrice must choose between staying with her Abnegation family and transferring factions. Her choice will shock her community and herself. But the newly christened Tris also has a secret, one she’s determined to keep hidden, because in this world...what makes you different makes you dangerous.

**Peak** by Roland Smith (760 Lexile)

When fourteen-year-old Peak Marcello’s long-lost father presents the opportunity for them to summit Everest together, Peak doesn’t even consider saying no—even though he suspects there are a few strings attached. And if he makes it to the top before his birthday, he'll be the youngest person ever to stand above 29,000 feet. It’s not a bad turn of events for a guy who’s been stuck in New York City with only skyscrapers to (illegally) scale. This story is told in Peak’s own words, showing the exhilarating, gut-wrenching story of what happened on that climb to the top of the world—a climb that changed everything. Welcome to Mount Everest.

**The Book Thief** by Markus Zusak (730 Lexile)

When Death tells a story, you pay attention. Liesel Meminger is a young girl growing up outside of Munich in Nazi Germany, and Death tells her story as "an attempt-a-flying jump of an attempt-to prove to me that you, and your human existence, are worth it." When her foster father helps her learn to read and she discovers the power of words, Liesel begins stealing books from Nazi book burnings and the mayor’s wife’s library. As she becomes a better reader, she becomes a writer, writing a book about her life in such a miserable time. Liesel’s experiences move Death to say, "I am haunted by humans." How could the human race be "so ugly and so glorious" at the same time? The writing is elegant, philosophical and moving.

**Copper Sun** by Sharon M. Draper (820 Lexile)

Copper Sun begins in the African countryside where 15-year-old Amari lives in a thriving village. Her dad is a weaver. Her mom makes her do chores. She has an annoying little brother, and there’s a very hot guy, Besa, around her age whom she hopes to marry. One day pale-faced men visit the village. The custom when any visitors arrive, even strange looking ones, is to welcome them with a feast. Amari is watching the dancing, and Besa playing his drum, when she hears a strange sound and sees a flash of light. The chief falls off his stool, dead, and the visitors begin to use knives and fire sticks on the rest of the villagers. Amari witnesses the murder and destruction and is taken captive. The world as she knew it is shattered forever. The oldest and the youngest members of the village have been killed. The strongest, those in their teens and twenties, are marched to a slave ship where Amari witnesses more atrocities. After the harrowing sea voyage Amari arrives in the Carolinas and is sold to a plantation owner who gives her to his 16-year-old son as a birthday gift.
All American Girl by Meg Cabot (880 Lexile)
What if— you get yourself in a little trouble, and your parents make you take an after school art class, and... you ditch the class one day, and... you just happen to be standing on the street in front of a great cookie store, and.... The President and his entourage drive by and they jump out of his car to get a cookie, and....you see a man lift his arm with a gun to try to kill the President, and... you jump the man, save the President’s life, and become an instant celebrity!!
Well, that’s just what happens to Samantha Madison in All-American Girl. Next thing she knows, the President has appointed her as the Teen Ambassador to the United Nations, in charge of selecting the winning painting for an international art show of teen art. That should be fun... BUT! Samantha’s sister’s boyfriend, Jack, who Samantha is secretly in love with, submits a painting, expecting her to choose it- and she does not like it. And! Samantha is also feeling “frisson” for the President’s son- but, she loves Jack. What to do?? Plus, she and the President do not see eye-to-eye about her duties as Teen Ambassador. Samantha’s over-the-top troubles will make yours.

Solo by Kwame Alexander, Mary Rand (Verse 640)
Solo tells the story of 17-year-old Blade Morrison, who knows the life of a rock star isn’t really about the glitz and glamour. All the new cars and money in the world can’t make up for the scathing tabloid covers or the fact that his father is struggling with just about every addiction under the sun—including a desperate desire to make a comeback and regain his former fame. Haunted by memories of his mother—who died when Blade was 9—and the ruin his father’s washed-up legacy and life have brought to the family, Blade is left to figure out life on his own. But, he’s not all alone: He’s got the friendship of a jazz-musician mentor, Robert; the secret love of a girlfriend, Chapel; and his music. All may not be well in the Morrison home, but things are looking up for Blade, until he discovers a deeply protected family secret—one that further threatens his relationship with his family and has him questioning his own identity. Thrown into a tailspin, Blade decides the only way he will understand his past and begin his future is to find out the truth behind the music and himself. He soon sets out on a journey that will change everything he thought to be true. His quest lands him in Ghana, stuck in a village just shy of where answers to the secret can be found. There, Blade discovers a friendship he couldn’t have imagined, a people founded in family and community, and a reconciliation he never expected.

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd (840 Lexile)  
Lily Owens, 14, is an emotionally abused white girl living with her cold, uncaring father on a peach farm in rural South Carolina. The memory of her mother, who was killed in Lily’s presence when she was four, haunts her constantly. She has one of her mother’s few possessions, a picture of a black Madonna (Virgin Mary) with the words, Tiburon, South Carolina, written on the back. Lily’s companion during her sad childhood has been Rosaleen, the black woman hired to care for her. Rosaleen, in a moment of strength after the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, goes to town to register to vote and insults one of the town’s most racist residents. After she is beaten up and hospitalized, Lily decides to rescue Rosaleen and head out to find Tiburon in search for memories of her mother, secrets of the past and the mystery behind the Black Madonna.

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott (950 Lexile)  
This timeless favorite follows the four March sisters—pretty Meg, tomboy Jo, shy Beth, and vain Amy—hev struggle to make ends meet during the Civil War, and give to those who had even less. Our main character, Jo struggles mightily to control her temper and battles to break out of the rigid restrictions society has imposed on women of the time. She never loses her spirit as she and all of her sisters, living with their mother in New England while their father is away serving as a chaplain in the Civil War, struggle to support themselves and keep their household running despite the fact that their family has lost everything.

Harriet Tubman: Secret Agent by Thomas B. Allen (1120 Lexile)  
This compelling biography tells the amazing tale of Harriet Tubman using details uncovered from military and intelligence archives, diaries and little-known memoirs from enslaved. In a compelling narrative, surprising new facts about Harriet’s story are brought to light: readers discover that the ex-slave who led hundreds to freedom along the Underground Railroad was also a spy for the Union Army! This book takes readers deep into the undercover world of African-American spies—enslaved and liberated—risking everything in the name of freedom. How were the Underground Railroad and slave songs used to pass secret messages? What were "contrabands" and "black dispatches?" What did Harriet share with the Secret Six and a maidservant in the home of Confederate President Jefferson Davis? The answers are revealed as history’s irresistible plot unfolds.

Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina by Misty Copeland (1040 Lexile)  
As the first African-American principal dancer at the American Ballet Theatre, Misty Copeland has been breaking down all kinds of barriers in the world of dance. But when she first started dancing—at the late age of 13—no one would have guessed the shy, underprivileged girl would one day make history in her field. Her road to excellence was not easy—a chaotic home life, with several siblings and a single mother, was a big contrast to the control and comfort she found on stage. And when her home life and incredible dance promise begin to clash, Misty had to learn to stand up for herself while pursuing her ballet dreams. 

Life in Motion is a story for all who dare to be different, dream bigger, and want to break stereotypes in whatever they do.