

## 8th Grade S.S.R. Suggested Reading List

The following list provides suggestions for S.S.R. books that are great choices for eighth grade readers. It is highly encouraged, but not required, for students to choose a book from this list for S.S.R. Students are required to select at least one U.S History-aligned book from this list to read over the course of the school year.

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**The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** / Mark Twain

Tells the adventures of a boy and a runaway slave as they travel down the Mississippi River on a raft.

**Al Capone Does My Shirts** / Gennifer Chaldenko - A twelve-year-old boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there, and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.

**Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, & Through the Looking Glass** / Lewis Carroll

By falling down a rabbit hole and stepping through a mirror, Alice experiences unusual adventures.

**The Amah** / Laurence Yep

Twelve-year-old Amy finds her family responsibilities growing and interfering with her ballet practice when her mother takes a job outside the home.

**An American Plague: the True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793\*** / by Jim Murphy

Provides an account of the yellow fever epidemic that swept through Philadelphia in 1793, discussing the chaos that erupted when people began evacuating in droves, leaving the city without government, goods, or services, and examining efforts by physicians, the Free African Society, and others to cure and care for the sick.

**Among Friends** / Caroline B. Cooney

Six high school juniors discover surprising, often painful, things about themselves and their relationships with the people around them in the diaries they are asked to keep as a three-month English assignment.

**And in the Morning\*** / John Wilson

Canadian Jim Hay joins the army in World War I and is sent to France where he meets a tragic end.

**Angel on the Square** / Gloria Whelan

In 1913 Russia, twelve-year-old Katya eagerly anticipates leaving her St. Petersburg home, though not her older cousin Misha, to join her mother, a lady in waiting in the household of Tsar Nicholas II, but the ensuing years bring world war, revolution, and undreamed of changes to her life.

**Anne of Avonlea** / L.M. Montgomery

Sixteen-year-old Anne, mischievous and spirited as ever, returns to Avonlea to teach in the village school where she herself was taught.

**April Morning\*** / by Howard Fast

Adam Cooper signs up on the muster roll of the Lexington Militia on April 19th, 1775, and then lives through the first day of conflict with the British, during which his father is killed.

**The Arm of the Starfish** / Madeleine L'Engle

A marine biology student reporting to his summer job on an island off Portugal finds himself at the center of a power struggle between his boss and another group of Americans.

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**The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman** / Ernest J. Gaines

A 110-year-old African-American woman reminisces about her life, which has stretched from the days of slavery to the black militancy and civil rights movements of the 1960s.

**Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good Gentleman's Life\*** / Candace Fleming

Brings together eighteenth century etchings, artifacts, and quotations to create the effect of a scrapbook of the life of Benjamin Franklin.

**Black Hearts in Battersea** / Joan Aiken

An orphan arrives in London and becomes embroiled in a plot against the king

**The Blue Sword** / Robin McKinley

Harry, bored with her sheltered life in the remote orange-growing colony of Daria, discovers magic in herself when she is kidnapped by a native king with mysterious powers.

**Bodies From the Ash: Life and Death in Ancient Pompeii** / James M. Deem - Describes the archaeological excavations

that began on the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum which had been buried by the eruption of Mt.

Vesuvius in AD 79.

**Boston Jane: an Adventure\*** / Jennifer L. Holm

Schooled in the lessons of etiquette for young ladies of 1854, Miss Jane Peck of Philadelphia finds little use for

manners during her long sea voyage to the Pacific Northwest and while living among the American traders and

Chinook Indians of Washington Territory.

**A Boy at War: a Novel of Pearl Harbor\*** / Harry Mazer

While fishing with his friends off Honolulu on December 7, 1941, teenaged Adam is caught in the midst of the

Japanese attack, and through the chaos of the subsequent days, tries to find his father, a naval officer who was

serving on the U.S.S. Arizona when the bombs fell.

**The Buffalo Soldiers\*** / Tracy Barnett

Chronicles the histories of the 9th and 10th Cavalries, troops of African-American soldiers who fought with

pride and honor in the Civil War and the Indian Wars, earning them the nickname Buffalo Soldiers. Includes photographs,

a glossary, a time line, and resources.

**Bull's Eye: A Photobiography of Annie Oakley\*** / Sue Macy - A photographic biography of Annie Oakley, discussing

her early life, her prowess with a gun, her stint with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, and her enduring image in

movies, books, television shows, and plays.

**The Canning Season** / Polly Horvath

Thirteen-year-old Ratchet spends a summer in Maine with her eccentric great-aunts Tilly and Penpen, hearing

strange stories from the past and encountering a variety of unusual and colorful characters.

**Carver, a Life in Poems\*** / Marilyn Nelson - A collection of poems that combine to provide a portrait of the life of

nineteenth-century African-American botanist and inventor George Washington Carver.

**The Cheat** / Amy Goldman Koss

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When Sarah gets her hands on the answers to the eighth-grade geography midterm and decides to share them with some other students, the consequences are far-ranging.

**A Christmas Carol** / Charles Dickens

A miser learns the true meaning of Christmas when three ghostly visitors review his past and foretell his future.

**Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two\*** / Joseph Bruchac - After being taught in a boarding school run by whites that Navajo is a useless language, Ned Begay and other Navajo men are recruited by the Marines to become Code Talkers, sending messages during World War II in their native tongue.

**Colibri** / Ann Cameron

Kidnapped when she was very young by an unscrupulous man who has forced her to lie and beg to get money, a twelve-year-old Mayan girl endures an abusive life, always wishing she could return to the parents she can hardly remember.

**Coraline** / Neil Gaiman

Looking for excitement, Coraline ventures through a mysterious door into a world that is similar yet disturbingly different from her own, where she must challenge a gruesome entity in order to save herself, her parents, and the souls of three others.

**Criss Cross** / Lynne Rae Perkins - Teenagers in a small town in the 1960s experience new thoughts and feelings, question their identities, connect, and disconnect as they search for the meaning of life and love.

**Day of Tears: A Novel in Dialogue\*** / Julius Lester - Presents an historical fiction written in first-person format that follows Emma, the slave of Pierce Butler, through a series of events in her life as her master hosts the largest slave auction in American history in Savannah, Georgia in 1859 in order to pay off his mounting gambling debts.

**Escape from Saigon** / Andrea Warren - Chronicles the experiences of an orphaned Amerasian boy from his birth and early childhood in Saigon through his departure from Vietnam in the 1975 Operation Babylift and his subsequent life as the adopted son of an American family in Ohio.

**Fallen Angels** / Walter Dean Myers

Seventeen-year-old Richie Perry, just out of his Harlem high school, enlists in the Army in the summer of 1967 and spends a devastating year on active duty in Vietnam.\*

**A Family Apart** / Joan Lowery Nixon

When their mother can no longer support them, six siblings are sent by the Children's Aid Society of New York City to live with farm families in Missouri in 1860.

**Far Traveler** / Rebecca Tingle - After the death of her mother, Aethelflaed of Mercia, seventeen-year-old Aelfwyn flees imprisonment by her uncle King Edward and, in the guise of a youthful bard, plays her part in the resolution of the tangled political enmities of tenth century Britain.

\*denotes a title that aligns with the U.S. History curriculum

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**A Farewell to Arms\*** / Ernest Hemingway

An American ambulance driver serving on the Austro-Italian front in World War I becomes entangled with an English nurse and deserts to join her after the retreat of Caporetto.

**The Forbidden Schoolhouse: The True and Dramatic Story of Prudence Crandall and Her Students\*** / Suzanne Jurmain

Chronicles the life and struggles of Prudence Crandall who, in the 1830s closed her all-white boarding school for girls in Canterbury, Connecticut, and began admitting African-American students; and describes the intense opposition from the townspeople.

**The Gift of the Magi and Other Stories** / O. Henry

A collection of fourteen short stories that reflects various aspects of American life at the turn of the nineteenth century.

**Girl of Kosovo** / Alice Mead

Although Zana, an eleven-year-old Albanian girl, experiences the turmoil and violence of the 1999 conflict in her native Kosovo, she remembers her father's admonition not to let her heart become filled with hate.

**Good Brother, Bad Brother: The Story of Edwin Booth and John Wilkes Booth\*** / James Cross Giblin - Tells the life

stories of nineteenth-century actor Edwin Booth and his actor brother John Wilkes Booth, describing the differences between the two men, chronicling John's assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and examining the impact of

John's crime on the Booth family for decades afterward.

**Gulliver's Travels** / Jonathan Swift

The voyages of an Englishman carry him to a land of people six inches high, a land of giants, an island of sorcerers, and a land where horses are masters of human-like creatures.

**Gypsy Rizka** / Lloyd Alexander

Living alone in her wagon on the outskirts of a small town while waiting for her father's return, Rizka, a Gypsy and a trickster, exposes the ridiculous foibles of some of the townspeople.

**Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets** / J.K. Rowling

Harry Potter, a second-year student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, finds himself in danger from a dark power that has once more been released on the school with the opening of the Chamber of Secrets.

**The Heart of a Chief\*** / Joseph Bruchac - An eleven-year-old Penacook Indian boy living on a reservation faces his father's alcoholism, a controversy surrounding plans for a casino on a tribal island, and insensitivity toward Native Americans in his school and nearby town.

**Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow\*** / Susan Campbell Bartoletti - A photo-illustrated look at the youth

organizations Adolf Hitler founded and used to meet his sociopolitical and military ends; includes profiles of individual

Hitler Youth members as well as young people who opposed the Nazis, such as Hans and Sophie Scholl.

**The Hobbit, or, There and Back Again** / J.R.R. Tolkien

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The adventure of Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit, in a land inhabited by dwarfs, elves, goblins, dragons, and humans. He sets off to recover a stolen treasure from a dragon hidden in the Lonely Mountain.

**Inkheart** / Cornelia Funke

Twelve-year-old Meggie learns that her father Mo, a bookbinder, can "read" fictional characters to life when an evil ruler named Capricorn, freed from the novel "Inkheart" years earlier, tries to force Mo to release an immortal monster from the story.

**Jane Eyre** / Charlotte Bronte

A young governess who suffered a violently abusive childhood finds love unexpectedly with her new employer, but secrets from his past--involving madness and old passions--may prove to destroy her happiness.

**John Lennon: All I want Is the Truth** / Elizabeth Partridge - Presents a biography of musician John Lennon, chronicling his life and times from his troubled childhood in Liverpool, England, through his career writing, recording, and performing as a member of the Beatles. Includes 140 black-and-white photographs.

**The Jumping Tree: A Novel** / Rene Saldana, Jr.

Rey, a Mexican American living with his close-knit family in a Texas town near the Mexican border, describes his transition from boy to young man. Rey's humorous and honest story follows him from sixth grade through eighth grade in Texas.

**Keeper of the Night** / Kimberly Willis Holt.

Isabel, a thirteen-year-old girl living on the island of Guam, and her family try to cope with the death of Isabel's mother who committed suicide.

**Kidnapped** / Robert Louis Stevenson

In 1751, David Balfour, a Scottish boy, is cheated out of his inheritance by his uncle, who has him kidnapped, sold as a slave, and thrown onto a ship--but with the help of a fugitive, David fights his captors, makes a daring escape amidst a shipwreck, and hopes to survive a treacherous journey home.

**King of Shadows** / Susan Cooper

While in London as part of an all-boy acting company preparing to perform in a replica of the famous Globe Theatre, Nat Field suddenly finds himself transported back to 1599 and performing in the original theater under the tutelage of Shakespeare himself.

**Kira-Kira** / Cynthia Kadohata - Chronicles the close friendship between two Japanese-American sisters growing up in rural Georgia during the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the despair when one sister becomes terminally ill.

**The Land\*** / Mildred D. Taylor.

Paul-Edward, the son of a part-Indian, part-African slave mother and a White plantation owner father, finds himself caught between the two worlds of his parents as he pursues his dream of owning land in the aftermath of the Civil War.

**The Last Silk Dress\*** / Ann Rinaldi.

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During the Civil War, Susan finds a way to help the Confederate Army and uncovers a series of mysterious family secrets.

**Little Women** / Louisa May Alcott

Chronicles the joys and sorrows of the four March sisters as they grow into young women in nineteenth-century

New England.

**Locked in Time\*** / Lois Duncan.

Nore arrives at her stepmother's Louisiana plantation to find her new family odd and an aura of evil and mystery about the place.

**The Man Without a Face** / Isabelle Holland

A fatherless fourteen-year-old boy develops an unusual relationship with the man living near his summer home

who helps him prepare his entrance exams to boarding school.

**Maritcha: a Nineteenth Century American Girl\*** / Tonya Bolden – Presents the personal memoirs of Maritcha Remond

Lyons who was born in nineteenth-century New York City and describes how she and her family escaped to

Rhode Island during the 1863 Draft riots and how she overcame prejudice to become the first African-American

person to graduate from Providence High School.

**Milkweed\*** / Jerry Spinelli

A street child, known to himself only as Stopthief, finds community when he is taken in by a band of orphans in

Warsaw ghetto which helps him weather the horrors of the Nazi regime.

**The Misfits** / James Howe.

Four students who do not fit in at their small-town middle school decide to create a third party for the student

council elections to represent all students who have ever been called names.

**Mud City** / Deborah Ellis - The story of fourteen-year-old Shauzia, who escaped from Kabul, Afghanistan and

who is unhappy with her life as a refugee in a camp in Pakistan.

**Mystery of the Night Raiders** / Nancy Garden

How would Holmes solve the mystery of the dying cows on Grandpop's farm? Brian's on the case, using his

hero's razor sharp reasoning.

**Off the Road** / Nina Bawden

In 2035, eleven-year-old Tom follows his grandfather through the Wall and into the forbidden Wild, where they

seek to find his grandfather's boyhood home.

**Olive's Ocean** / Kevin Henkes

On a summer visit to her grandmother's cottage by the ocean, twelve-year-old Martha gains perspective on the

death of a classmate, on her relationship with her grandmother, on her feelings for an older boy, and on her plans to

be a writer.

**The Orphan of Ellis Island** / Elvira Woodruff

During a school trip to Ellis Island, Dominick Avaro, a ten-year-old foster child, travels back in time to 1908 Italy

and accompanies two young emigrants to America.

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**Our Eleanor: A Scrapbook Look at Eleanor Roosevelt's Remarkable Life\*** / Candace Fleming - Presents a collection of illustrated photographs and stories representing the life and career of Eleanor Roosevelt, and examines her

White House years, her years as a delegate to the United Nations, and more.

**Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam\*** / Walter Dean Myers - A frightened American soldier faces combat in the lush forests of Vietnam.

**Phineas Gage: a Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science** / John Fleischman - The true story of Phineas Gage, whose brain had been pierced by an iron rod in 1848, and who survived and became a case study in how the brain functions.

**The Rag and Bone Shop** / Robert Cormier

Trent, an ace interrogator from Vermont, works to procure a confession from an introverted twelve-year-old accused of murdering his seven-year-old friend in Monument, Massachusetts.

**Rifles for Watie\*** / by Harold Keith

Sixteen-year-old Jefferson Davis Bussey cannot wait to join the Army and defend the Union against the dreaded

Colonel Watie, but when he is assigned to infiltrate the enemy camp as a spy, he discovers the rebels are boys and

men just like him, and he must then decide whether to betray his enemies or join them.

**The River Between Us\*** / Richard Peck

During the early days of the Civil War, the Pruitt family takes in two mysterious young ladies who have fled New

Orleans to come north to Illinois.

**Robinson Crusoe** / Daniel Defoe

During one of his several adventurous voyages in the seventeenth century, an Englishman becomes the sole survivor

of a shipwreck and lives for nearly thirty years on a desert island.

**Safe at Second** / Scott Johnson

Paulie Lockwood's best friend Todd Bannister is destined for the major leagues until a line drive to the head causes

him to lose an eye, and they both must find a new future for themselves.

**Saratoga Secret\*** / Betsy Sterman

In 1777, as General Burgoyne and his British troops invade the Upper Hudson River Valley, sixteen-year-old

Amity must carry a secret message to the Continental army to give warning of an impending attack.

**The Sea Wolf** / by Jack London

Relates the story of a wealthy young man who is rescued after a shipwreck by the brutal, ruthless captain of a tramp steamer.

**Silver** / Norma Fox Mazer

Despite their different backgrounds, Sarabeth, a teenager living with her mother in a trailer and transferring to a

new school, makes friends with Grant and her affluent friends, including troubled Patty who shares a painful secret

about her uncle.

**The Star of Kazan** / Eva Ibbotson - Annika, a twelve-year-old foundling in late nineteenth-century Vienna, inherits



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a trunk of costume jewelry, and soon afterwards a woman claiming to be her aristocratic mother arrives and takes her to live in a strangely decrepit mansion in Germany.

**Stop the Train!: A Novel** / Geraldine McCaughrean

Despite the opposition of the owner of the Red Rock Runner Railroad in 1893, the new settlers of Florence, Oklahoma, are determined to build a real town.

**Summer of My German Soldier\*** / Bette Greene

When German prisoners of war are brought to her Arkansas town during World War II, twelve-year-old Patty, a

Jewish girl, befriends one of them and must deal with the consequences of that friendship.

**The Swiss Family Robinson** / J.D. Wyss

Relates the fortunes of a shipwrecked family as they adapt to life on an island with abundant animal and plant life.

**The Sword in the Stone** / T.H. White

Wart, as young Arthur is called, becomes a wiser, more thoughtful person and a worthy king as a result of Merlin's lessons.

**A Tale of Two Cities** / Charles Dickens

Relates the adventures of a young Englishman who gives his life during the French Revolution to save the husband of the woman he loves.

**Tales of Mystery and Terror** / Edgar Allan Poe

A collection of thirteen mystery and horror tales written by the American author

**Tangerine** / Edward Bloor

Paul Fisher, a stellar soccer player despite being legally blind, finally comes into his own when his family moves

to the strange town of Tangerine, Florida.

**Tex** / S.E. Hinton

The love between two teen-age brothers helps to alleviate the harshness of their usually parentless life as they struggle to grow up.

**Tomboy of the Air: Daredevil Pilot Blanche Stuart Scott** / Julie Cummins - A celebration of an aviation pioneer

whose spunky, courageous personality helped her successors' dreams take flight.

**Trickster's Choice** / Tamora Pierce

Alianne must call forth her mother's courage and her father's wit in order to survive on the Copper Isles in a royal court rife with political intrigue and murderous conspiracy.

**The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle\*** / Avi

Thirteen-year-old Charlotte Doyle, the only passenger on a voyage from England to America in 1832, must take

serious matters into her own hands when she learns that the captain is murderous.

**The Truth about Sparrows** / Marian Hale - Twelve-year-old Sadie promises that she will always be Wilma's best

friend when their families leave drought-stricken Missouri in 1933, but once in Texas, Sadie learns that she must

try to make a new home--and new friends, too.

**The Turn of the Screw** / Henry James

Two children are haunted by the evil spirits of two former servants.

**Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea** / Jules Verne



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The classic novel in which a French professor and his companions, trapped aboard a fantastic submarine with the mad Captain Nemo, come face to face with exotic ocean creatures and strange sights hidden from the world above.

**Vanishing** / Bruce Brooks

Eleven-year-old Alice is unwilling to return to live with her alcoholic mother and her stern stepfather, so she refuses to eat to the point of slowly starving herself in order to remain in the hospital.

**Whale Talk** / Chris Crutcher

Intellectually and athletically gifted, T.J., a multiracial, adopted teenager, shuns organized sports and the gung-ho athletes at his high school until he agrees to form a swimming team and recruits some of the school's less popular students.

**When My Name Was Keoko\*** / Nancy Osa - With national pride and occasional fear, a brother and sister face the increasingly oppressive occupation of Korea by Japan during World War II, which threatens to suppress Korean culture entirely.

**Wild Man Island** / Will Hobbs

After fourteen-year-old Andy slips away from his kayaking group to visit the wilderness site of his archaeologist father's death, a storm strands him on Admiralty Island, Alaska, where he manages to survive, encounters unexpected animal and human inhabitants, and looks for traces of the earliest prehistoric immigrants to America.

**Wizards of the Game** / David Lubar

Eighth grader Mercer, whose passion is the fantasy role-playing game Wizards of the Warrior World, hopes to use a fund raiser to bring a gaming convention to his middle school, but instead he attracts four genuine wizards who are trapped on Earth and want his help in returning to their own world.

**Wuthering Heights** / Emily Bronte

Forced by a storm to spend the night at the home of Heathcliff, Mr. Lockwood uncovers a tale of terror and hatred on the Yorkshire moors.