



Middle School for Girls
Grade 8 Summer 2026 Assignment

Dear Students,

Summer is a wonderful time to be with friends and family, but it is also a great time to experience the joy of reading. As you read, you should be thinking about what you are reading. The following reading assignments will guide our work at the beginning of the year. Choose from the provided list as indicated.

Required Reading for Grade 8:

1. *Unwind* by Neal Shusterman
2. One novel from the provided list (next page)
3. One (or more) personal choice novel(s)

Assignment for Grade 8:

For number one:

- Annotate each chapter on another paper. Refer to the included guide for help. Then answer the provided questions according to the assigned chapters for *Unwind*. Make sure to use complete sentences and answer each question completely. These will guide our discussion in September. You will also have a quiz on the book.

For numbers two and three:

- You are expected to take notes in the literature square format (see provided example). Divide your book into three sections. You should complete one square for each section. All work should be completed before school begins. You will hand in your written work on the first day of classes.

If you have any questions during your reading journey this summer, please do not hesitate to reach out- lnixon@ashmi.org

Happy reading!

Ms. Nixon

Required Reading List

Bitter Melon, Chow

And Then There Were None, Christie

**City of Bones*, Clare

The Skin I'm In, Flake

**If I Stay*, Forman

The Graveyard Book, Gaiman

Lord of the Flies, Golding

The Outsiders, Hinton

Under a Painted Sky, Lee

The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks, Lockhart

Shadowshaper, Older

**Jackaby*, Ritter

**Divergent*, Roth

The Hired Girl, Schlitz

Of Mice and Men, Steinbeck

**Code Name Verity*, Wein

The Book Thief, Zusak

*= a series

Assignment #1: Unwind Reading Response

**Annotate each chapter using a separate paper. Use the provided annotations guide to ensure your work is complete.*

Part 1: Chapters 1-8

How would you feel if you were in an accident or had a rare disease, and you could only be cured if your damaged organs were replaced by parts taken from unwound teens? What would you choose to do?

Part 2: Chapters 9-20

When do you think the story takes place? What societal norms can you point to that have changed or remained the same? What are the similarities between the world of Unwind and our own world? What are the differences?

Which of the three main characters, Connor, Risa, or Lev, do you most identify with? Why? What traits do you have in common? Which of their traits work for them, and which make their lives harder?

Part 3: Chapters 21-31

In the course of the book, Connor and Risa get separated from Lev, who travels for a time with another character. Why do you think the author chose to split the narrative into two distinct threads? What do you think this achieves?

Part 4: Chapters 32-50

Connor's anger and lack of impulse control are often a problem for him until he learns to control his emotions. Do you ever feel like your impulses are stronger than your will? What strategies do you use to control your feelings?

Part 5: Chapters 51-69

A euphemism is a word or phrase that's used to refer to something unpleasant or embarrassing. "Living in a divided state" is a euphemism officials use in place of "being unwound." Another euphemism is "harvest camps" in place of "unwinding facilities." Can you think of any commonly used euphemisms in real life?

Assignments #2-3

Literature Square Example:

How I Became a Ghost

(this should fill one complete page of college-ruled lined paper)

Put page numbers for each section with the work for that section.

New Vocabulary & Definitions [pgs 31-95] (look up in a dictionary) Write down new words that you come across in the text and then look up their definitions when you are done reading. Example: 1. Admonish (pg. 33): to warn or reprimand someone firmly 2. Formidable (pg. 68): inspiring fear or respect through being impressively large, powerful, intense, or capable. 3. Chronological (pg. 90) 4.	Connections [pgs 96-140] (make 2-4 connections with the text) Think about these questions when making your connections: 1. How does the text relate to you? 2. How does the text relate to the world/society? 3. How does this text relate to other texts (books) you have read or other things you have learned in or out of school?
Summary [pgs 1-30] (What are 3-5 main events that took place)? Think 5 W's, who, what, when, where, why.	

Annotating Text

What is annotating?

- ❖ Taking notes about what you are reading
- ❖ Helps you better understand what you read
- ❖ Helps you think about what you read and comment on important details

How to annotate:

- ❖ Write about the text on post-it notes or a separate paper (sample provided below)
- ❖ Look for the following things when you read and use the corresponding symbol
 - Important piece of information or thought that matters to the plot, character, or theme (★)
 - Strong feeling, shocking moment, or unexpected twist (!)
 - Confusing ideas, events, information, or something you want to know more about (?)
 - Something a character does that you agree with (✓)
 - Something a character does that you disagree with or makes you sad (☹)
- ❖ After the symbol, add a sentence or two to explain or clarify the annotation

Pay attention for the following to annotate:

- ❖ Character changes
 - Shift in their actions, thoughts, or relationships
- ❖ Conflicts
 - Problem or challenge appears or gets worse
- ❖ Symbolism
 - Object or image means more than it seems
- ❖ Author's craft
 - Foreshadowing, flashbacks, plot twists, cliff hangers
- ❖ Big ideas
 - Theme or message starts to show up

Annotating Text

You can print this out or create your own on a piece of paper.

Ch.	Pg. #	Symbol	Explanation