Prior to commencing your English studies in Grade 8, you are required to read ONE book from the following list over the summer period, but we encourage you to read more! We hope that these choices will inspire you to continue reading throughout the year! Most are also available in ebook and audiobook formats. Other options for acquiring these books would include: public library, Kidsbooks, Chapters, and Amazon. Please read through the book titles and their plot summaries below to assist you in making your choices.

In Grade 8, we will be exploring the motif of **self-identity**. Each of the books on the list will help you to familiarize yourself with the motif before beginning our exploration of it in class. All students are required to **complete reading prior to the first day of class**. Enjoy your reading exploration this summer!

**Spud** by John van de Ruit  
**FICTION**  
It’s 1990. Apartheid is crumbling. Nelson Mandela has just been released from prison, and Spud Milton—thirteen year-old, prepubescent choirboy extraordinaire—is about to start his first year at an elite boys-only boarding school in South Africa. Cursed with embarrassingly dysfunctional parents, a senile granny named Wombat, and a wild obsession for Julia Roberts, Spud has his hands full trying to adapt to his new home. Armed with only his wits and his diary, Spud takes readers of all ages on a rowdy boarding school romp full of illegal midnight swims and catastrophic holidays that will leave the entire family in total hysterics and thirsty for more.

**The Hobbit** by J.R.R. Tolkien  
**FICTION**  
Written for J.R.R. Tolkien’s own children, *The Hobbit* met with instant critical acclaim when it was first published in 1937. Now recognized as a timeless classic, this introduction to the hobbit Bilbo Baggins, the wizard Gandalf, Gollum, and the spectacular world of Middle-earth recounts of the adventures of a reluctant hero, a powerful and dangerous ring, and the cruel dragon Smaug the Magnificent.

**47** by Walter Mosley  
**FICTION**  
Master storyteller Walter Mosley deftly mixes speculative and historical fiction in this daring *New York Times* bestselling novel, reminiscent of Colson Whitehead’s, *The Underground Railroad*. 47 is a young slave boy living under the watchful eye of a brutal slave master. His life seems doomed until he meets a mysterious runaway slave, Tall John. 47 finds himself swept up in a struggle for his own liberation.

**Outrun the Moon** by Stacey Lee  
**FICTION**  
Fifteen-year-old Mercy Wong is determined to break from the poverty of Chinatown, San Francisco in 1906, and an education at St. Clare’s School for Girls is her best hope. Although St. Clare’s is off-limits to all but the wealthiest white girls, Mercy gains admittance through a mix of cunning and a little bribery, only to discover that getting in was the easiest part. Not to be undone by a bunch of spoiled heiresses, Mercy stands strong—until disaster strikes. On April 18, a historic earthquake rocks San Francisco, destroying Mercy’s home and school. Now she’s forced to wait with her classmates for their families in a temporary park encampment. Though fires might rage, and the city may be in shambles, Mercy can’t sit by while they wait for the army to bring help—she still has the “bossy” cheeks that mark her as someone who gets things done. But what can one teenage girl do to heal so many suffering in her broken city?
A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah

What is war like through the eyes of a child soldier? How does one become a killer? How does one stop? Beah’s tale is a first-person account of someone who came through the hell of being a child soldier and survived. In A Long Way Gone, Beah, now twenty-five years old, tells a riveting story: how at the age of twelve, he fled attacking rebels and wandered a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. By thirteen, he’s been picked up by the government army, and Beah, at heart a gentle boy, found that he was capable of truly terrible acts. This is a rare and mesmerizing account, told with real literary force and heartbreaking honesty.