

Top Schools Think 7th and 8th Graders Should Be Able to Read These Books

Schools that use a classical curriculum have a reputation as being more rigorous than their peers.

To see if this reputation is deserved, we conducted a survey of over 100 classical schools (both secular and religious) across the country to see what students were reading at each grade level. We were hoping our audiences could help us with the subsequent comparison portion.

Below are the 25 most common books assigned to 7th and 8th-graders at schools with a classical curriculum. Are these indeed more rigorous than the books you or your child read in middle school? Do you think middle school students *should* be able to read these texts?

1. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain
2. *Julius Caesar*, William Shakespeare
3. *Animal Farm*, George Orwell
4. *Beowulf*, Rosemary Sutcliff/Seamus Heaney
5. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, J.R.R. Tolkien
6. *Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer
7. *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee
8. *The Red Badge of Courage*, Stephen Crane
9. *The Call of the Wild*, Jack London
10. *Macbeth*, William Shakespeare

11. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, William Shakespeare
12. *Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare
13. *The Odyssey*, Homer
14. *Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis
15. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson
16. *The Divine Comedy*, Dante Alighieri
17. *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens
18. *The Aeneid*, Virgil/Penelope Lively
19. *Across Five Aprils*, Irene Hunt
20. *King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table*, Roger Lancelyn Green/Howard Pyle
21. *The Hobbit*, J.R.R. Tolkien
22. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain
23. *Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens
24. *Johnny Tremain*, Esther Forbes
25. *Diary of Anne Frank*, Anne Frank