

To qualify for **Honors Language Arts 9** or **Honors Geography**, students must meet the following criteria:

- Maintain grades of B or higher in **US History 8** and **Language Arts 8**.
- At least ONE essay score on Utah Compose (Score of 24 or higher)/or example of an essay if transferring to SCMS from a different district or charter school.
- 3.75 GPA or Higher

9th Grade honors students are required to read four books before the end of 8th grade and complete a literature log for each title. The required literature logs can be submitted [HERE](#) from the first day of 4th quarter through the first Friday in May. **The final deadline for book logs is the end of school on the first Friday in May.**

These reading pages **can** count toward your 8th grade language arts class's required reading.

Book #1: *Never Fall Down* by Patricia McCormick

[Literature Log](#)

This National Book Award nominee from two-time finalist Patricia McCormick is the unforgettable story of Arn Chorn-Pond, who defied the odds to survive the Cambodian genocide of 1975-1979 and the labor camps of the Khmer Rouge.

Based on the true story of Cambodian advocate Arn Chorn-Pond, and authentically told from his point of view as a young boy, this is an achingly raw and powerful historical novel about a child of war who becomes a man of peace. It includes an author's note and acknowledgements from Arn Chorn-Pond himself.

When soldiers arrive in his hometown, Arn is just a normal little boy. But after the soldiers march the entire population into the countryside, his life is changed forever.

Arn is separated from his family and assigned to a labor camp: working in the rice paddies under a blazing sun, he sees the other children dying before his eyes. One day, the soldiers ask if any of the kids can play an instrument. Arn's never played a note in his life, but he volunteers.

This decision will save his life, but it will pull him into the very center of what we know today as the Killing Fields. And just as the country is about to be liberated, Arn is handed a gun and forced to become a soldier.

Book #2: *The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion & the Fall of Imperial Russia* by Candace Fleming

[Literature Log](#)

Here is the tumultuous, heartrending, true story of the Romanovs—at once an intimate portrait of Russia's last royal family and a gripping account of its undoing. Using captivating photos and compelling first person accounts, award-winning author Candace Fleming (*Amelia Lost*; *The Lincolns*) deftly maneuvers between the imperial family's extravagant lives and the plight of Russia's poor masses, making this an utterly mesmerizing read as well as a perfect resource for meeting Common Core standards.

Book #3: *Crossing the Wire* by Will Hobbs

[Literature Log](#)

In this riveting, action-packed novel from award-winning author Will Hobbs, a teenage boy hoping to help his loved ones must fight for his life as he makes the dangerous journey across the Mexican border into the United States.

When falling crop prices threaten his family with starvation, fifteen-year-old Victor Flores heads north in an attempt to "cross the wire" from Mexico into America so he can find work and help ease the finances at home.

But with no coyote money to pay the smugglers who sneak illegal workers across the border, Victor struggles to survive as he jumps trains, stows away on trucks, and hikes grueling miles through the Arizona desert.

Victor's passage is fraught with freezing cold, scorching heat, hunger, and dead ends. It's a gauntlet run by many attempting to cross the border, but few make it. Through Victor's desperate perseverance, Will Hobbs brings to life a story that is true for many, polarizing for some, but life-changing for all who read it.

Book #4: High Lexile Student Choice

[Literature Log](#)

Students are welcome to pick their own novel for the fourth book. Your book must meet a Lexile rating of 960L or higher. [This tool](#) is helpful for checking the Lexile level of your selected title.

**** Disclaimer:** You may **NOT** choose a *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book even though it rates as "high lexile" on the website. Keep in mind that your choice of book should reflect your desire to take a 9th grade, honors-level course. Your book selection will be a direct representation of your academic ability and commitment. Pick wisely.