

BRENTWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL
SUMMER READING, 2009
8TH GRADE

The books listed below have been chosen for Brentwood Middle School's Eighth Grade Summer Reading. **Students will complete an activity or project about their book during the first week of school.**

1. *Ender's Game*, Orson Scott Card (science fiction)
2. *Rocket Boys*, (also named *October Sky*), Homer Hickam (memoir)

***My Sister's Keeper*, Jodi Piccolt (realistic fiction) * - Due to strong adult content this book has been pulled from the reading list.**

Ender's Game - Amazon.com Review In order to develop a secure defense against a hostile alien race's next attack, government agencies breed child geniuses and train them as soldiers. A brilliant young boy, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin lives with his kind but distant parents, his sadistic brother Peter, and the person he loves more than anyone else, his sister Valentine. Peter and Valentine were candidates for the soldier-training program but didn't make the cut--young Ender is the Wiggin drafted to the orbiting Battle School for rigorous military training.

Ender's skills make him a leader in school and respected in the Battle Room, where children play at mock battles in zero gravity. Yet growing up in an artificial community of young soldiers Ender suffers greatly from isolation, rivalry from his peers, pressure from the adult teachers, and an unsettling fear of the alien invaders. His psychological battles include loneliness, fear that he is becoming like the cruel brother he remembers, and fanning the flames of devotion to his beloved sister. Back on Earth, Peter and Valentine forge an intellectual alliance and attempt to change the course of history.

This futuristic tale involves aliens, political discourse on the Internet, sophisticated computer games, and an orbiting battle station. Yet the reason it rings true for so many is that it is first and foremost a tale of humanity; a tale of a boy struggling to grow up into someone he can respect while living in an environment stripped of choices. *Ender's Game* is a must-read book for science fiction lovers, and a key conversion read for their friends who "don't read science fiction."

Ender's Game won both the [Hugo](#) and the [Nebula](#) the year it came out. Writer Orson Scott Card followed up this honor with the first-time feat of winning both awards again the next year for the sequel, [Speaker for the Dead](#). --Bonnie Bouman --This text refers to the [Paperback](#) edition.

October Sky - From Amazon.Com Inspired by Werner von Braun and his Cape Canaveral team, 14-year-old Homer Hickam decided in 1957 to build his own rockets. They were his ticket out of Coalwood, West Virginia, a mining town that everyone knew was dying--everyone except Sonny's father, the mine superintendent and a company man so dedicated that his family rarely saw him. Hickam's smart, iconoclastic mother wanted her son to become something more than a miner and, along with a female science teacher, encouraged the efforts of his grandiosely named Big Creek Missile Agency. He grew up to be a NASA engineer and his memoir of the bumpy ride toward a gold medal at the National Science Fair in 1960--an unprecedented honor for a miner's kid--is rich in humor as well as warm sentiment. Hickam vividly evokes a world of close communal ties in which a storekeeper who sold him

saltpeter warned, "Listen, rocket boy. This stuff can blow you to kingdom come." Hickam is candid about the deep disagreements and tensions in his parents' marriage, even as he movingly depicts their quiet loyalty to each other. The portrait of his ultimately successful campaign to win his aloof father's respect is equally affecting. --Wendy Smith.