

# MSS 2025 | Grade 8 Summer Reading

Mr. Welch & Mrs. Mangiacotti

Your task over the summer is to read **TWO** books—*Gather* by Kenneth Cadow and another of your choice from the included list of the 2025-26 Golden Dome Award nominees. (Or you can email me with a book you would like to read.)

For *Gather*, please complete the attached writing assignment.

For your choice book, be prepared for a short writing assignment to be completed in class at the start of the year.

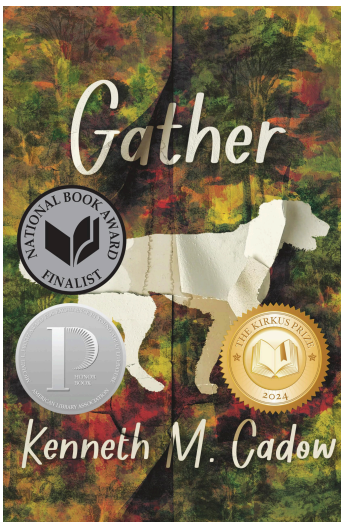
Copies of *Gather* are available at the school.

Most of the Golden Dome Nominees are available at the Manchester Community Library.

(Reminder that **all** Maple Street students are eligible for a library card at MCL if they do not have one already.)

## REQUIRED BOOK:

*Gather* by Kenneth Cadow



Rural Vermont 10th grader Ian is dealing with a lot as the big hairy dog he names GATHER wanders into his life on what's left of the farm that's been in his family for generations. Ian's father, irresponsible in the best of times, has deserted the family. His beloved grandfather, who shares his love of the land with Ian, has recently died; his grandmother has moved out of state for her health. This leaves Ian and his now-single mom devastated, and following a work injury she falls into drug use. They have no money, the roof leaks, the phone's cut off, the tires are bald, and they're living on soup from the food bank. Ian dreams of getting the ruined farm back to its former glory, but he's barely keeping it together day to day. "I was just goddam glad to have that dog," says Ian, as Gather becomes his friend, his protector, and his responsibility. The teen's determination to keep them together serves as a moral compass as forces beyond his control threaten to take away the land and heritage he loves -- and also brings people together to protect them both. Which is good, because they need it. (from *Common Sense Media*)

## Golden Dome List 2025-26

- [All the Ways to Go](#) - Jessie Janowitz. Grades 4 and up.
- [Averil Offline](#) - Amy Noelle Parks. Grades 4 and up.
- [The Bletchley Riddle](#) - Ruta Sepetys and Steve Sheinken. Grades 5 and up.
- [Coyote Lost and Found](#) - Dan Gemeinhart. Grade 5 and up.
- [The Creepening of Dogwood House](#) - Eden Royce. Grades 5 and up.
- [The Flicker](#) - H.E. Edgmon. Grades 6 and up.
- [Force of Nature: A Novel of Rachel Carson](#) - Ann E. Burg, illustrated by Sophie Blackall. Grades 4 and up.
- [A Game of Noctis](#) - Deva Fagan. Grade 5 and up.
- [How it All Ends](#) - Emma Hunsinger. Grades 6 and up.
- [Impossible Creatures](#) - Katherine Rundell, illustrated by Ashley Mackenzie. Grade 5 and up.
- [Kareem Between](#) - Shifa Saltagi Safadi. Grades 5 and up.
- [The Liars Society](#) - Alyson Gerber. Grades 7 and up.
- [Mountain of Fire: The Eruption and Survivors of Mount St. Helens](#) - Rebecca E.F. Barone. Grades 4 and up.
- [Murray Out of Water](#) - Taylor Tracy. Grades 6 and up.
- [The Mystery of Locked Rooms](#) - Lindsay Currie. Grades 4 and up.
- [The Night Librarian](#) - Christopher Lincoln. Grades 4 and up.
- [Olivetti](#) - by Allie Millington. Grades 4 and up.
- [Paper Dragons: The Fight for the Hidden Realm](#) - Siobhan McDermott. Grades 5 and up.
- [Plain Jane and the Mermaid](#) - Vera Brosgol. Grades 4 and up.
- [The Secret Library](#) - Kekla Magoon. Grades 4 and up.
- [The Sherlock Society](#) - James Ponti. Grades 4 and up.
- [A Strange Thing Happened in Cherry Hall](#) - Jasmine Warga, illustrated by Matt Rockefeller. Grades 4 and up.
- [Summer at Squee](#) - Andrea Wang. Grades 4 and up.
- [The Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman](#) - Gennifer Choldenko. Grades 6 and up.
- [The Wrong Way Home](#) - Kate O'Shaughnessy. Grades 6 and up.

## **Assignment for *Gather***

In a typed document, complete the following tasks:

1. In 200 words, write a brief summary of the plot, including the beginning, middle, and end. In your opening sentence, include the title (underlined or italicized), author, genre (realistic fiction, dystopian, fantasy, nonfiction, historical fiction, etc.), and setting.
2. In a paragraph, write about the significance of the title. Authors rarely choose a random title. Dig for symbolic meaning. The title may be a metaphor, or it may relate to one specific incident in the book. In any case, consider carefully the significance of the title and explain your thinking.
3. Write a paragraph that describes the most important trait (quality) of one of the main characters. Your topic sentence should clearly identify the character, the trait, and why this is the most important character trait. Make sure you use one quote to support your thinking. Cite the page number after the quote in parentheses. Analyze that quote in at least two sentences, which, in this case, means to explain the significance of the character trait to the character and/or the plot. Include a closing sentence that sums up your main point.
4. Write a paragraph explaining an important force that impacts a main character. Make sure you use a quote to support your thinking. Your topic sentence should clearly lay out the force and its impact on the character. Cite the page number after the quote in parentheses. Analyze that quote in at least two sentences, which, in this case, means to explain the significance of the force on the character and/or the plot. Include a closing sentence that sums up your main point.
4. Cite and note the page number of a certain passage from the book that you think is important or worth rereading. Maybe it explains something about the character, or it describes a very special event, or, perhaps, it holds a certain resonance or connection with you, the reader. You must explain why you chose this passage. Dig deep for a connection.