



“Reading is the most important way to prepare for life.” -Lois Lowry

Whether we read to learn or read for enjoyment, the process of reading broadens our understanding of the world and those around us. The act of reading can take us places that we are unable to access at the present moment. Reading can also relieve stress, stimulate your brain, expand your vocabulary, and even improve your memory. The list of reading benefits is a long one!

Students entering 6th,7th, or 8th grade should read at least **ONE book** from this list or they may select another book that appeals to them. Families are encouraged to discuss the available options with their student(s).

FICTION TITLES

<i>Brotherhood</i> , A.B. Westrick	<i>Prisoner B-3087</i> , Alan Gratz
<i>The Thing About Jellyfish</i> , Ali Benjamin	<i>On the Day I Died</i> , Candace Fleming
<i>Scar Island</i> , Dan Gemeinhart	<i>The Eighth Day</i> , Dianne K. Salerni
<i>Orbiting Jupiter</i> , Gary D. Schmidt	<i>Ungifted</i> , Gordon Korman
<i>Counting by 7s</i> , Holly Sloan	<i>The Thicket: A Path Begins</i> , J.A. White
<i>Ghost</i> , Jason Reynolds	<i>Patina</i> , Jason Reynolds
<i>A Night Divided</i> , Jennifer A. Nielsen	<i>March I, II, III</i> , John Lewis
<i>The Screaming Staircase</i> , Jonathan Stroud	<i>House Arrest</i> , K.A. Holt
<i>All the Answers</i> , Kate Messner	<i>The War That Saved My Life</i> , Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
<i>Booked</i> , Kwame Alexander	<i>The Crossover</i> , Kwame Alexander
<i>Wolf Hollow</i> , Lauren Wolk	<i>The Hired Girl</i> , Laura Amy Schlitz
<i>Chains</i> , Laurie Halse Anderson	<i>Fish in a Tree</i> , Lynda Mullaly Hunt
<i>Cinder</i> , Marissa Meyer	<i>Twerp</i> , Mark Goldblatt
<i>It's the End of the World As I Know It</i> , Matthew Landis	<i>The Other Boy</i> , M.G. Hennessey
<i>Shadow</i> , Michael Morpurgo	<i>Garvey's Choice</i> , Nikki Grimes

<i>When Friendship Followed Me Home</i> , Paul Griffin	<i>Drama</i> , Raina Telgmeier
<i>Prisoner of Cell 25</i> , Richard Paul Evans	<i>The Big Dark</i> , Rodman Philbrick
<i>The Seventh Most Important Thing</i> , Shelley Pearsall	<i>Space Case</i> , Stuart Gibbs
<i>Spy School</i> , Stuart Gibbs	<i>Out and Back Again</i> , Thanha Lai
<i>Fuzzy</i> , Tom Angleberger and Paul Dellinger	<i>All's Faire in Middle School</i> , Victoria Jamieson
<i>Roller Girl</i> , Victoria Jamieson	<i>Hideout</i> , Watt Key
<i>Punching the Air</i> , Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam	<i>King and the Dragonflies</i> , Kacen Callendar

NONFICTION TITLES

<i>The Boy Who Carried Bricks</i> , Alton Carter	<i>Dreams from My Father</i> , Barack Obama
<i>The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia</i> , Candace Fleming	<i>Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food</i> , Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson
<i>How They Croaked</i> , Georgia Bragg	<i>The President Has Been Shot!: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy</i> , James L. Swanson
<i>In the Shadow of Liberty: The Hidden History of Slavery, Four Presidents, and Five Black Lives</i> , Kenneth C. Davis	<i>The Boy on the Wooden Box</i> , Leon Leyson
<i>Relish: My Life in the Kitchen</i> , Lucy Knisley	<i>I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban (Young Readers Ed.)</i> , Malala Yousafzai
<i>Hidden Figures: The Untold Story of Four African-American Women Who Helped Launch Our Nation into Space</i> , Margot Lee Shetterly	<i>The Boys Who Challenged Hitler</i> , Phillip Hoose
<i>Because They Marched: The People's Campaign for Voting Rights that Changed America</i> , Russell Freedman	<i>Bomb-The Race to Build and Steal the World's Most Dangerous Weapon</i> , Steve Sheinkin
<i>Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight for Civil Rights</i> , Steve Sheinkin	<i>Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream</i> , Tanya Lee Stone

FAVORITE AUTHORS AND SERIES

***Click on the links below to find out more about the authors and their works!**

Alan Gratz	Carl Hiaasen
Dyan Sheldon	J.R.R. Tolkien
Jacqueline Woodson	Jerry Spinelli
Kekla Magoon	Kristin Levine

Laurence Pringle	Lois Lowry
Marc Aronson	Margaret Peterson Haddix
Matt de la Peña	Milton Meltzer
Rick Riordan	S.E. Hinton
Sharon Creech	Sharon Draper
Sharon Flake	Susan Campbell Bartoletti
Tim Green	Walter Dean Myers
Wendy Mass	<i>Fablehaven</i> , Brandon Mull
<i>Mortal Instruments</i> , Cassandra Clare	<i>Infernal Devices</i> , Cassandra Clare
<i>Middle School, The Worst Years of My Life</i> James Patterson	<i>The Selection</i> , Kiera Cass
<i>Seeds of America</i> , Laurie Halse Anderson	<i>Unwind Dystology</i> , Neal Schusterman
<i>I Am Number Four</i> , Pittacus Lore	<i>Percy Jackson and the Olympians</i> , Rick Riordan
<i>Origami Yoda</i> , Tom Angleberger	<i>Divergent</i> , Veronica Roth
<i>Red Queen</i> , Victoria Aveyard	

Students can access Summer Reading books in a variety of ways:

1. **SORA app:** <https://soraapp.com/library/nnpsva>

2. **Newport News Libraries:**

- Students enrolled in Newport News Public Schools automatically have a Newport News Public Library Student Membership with access to NNPL resources.
- NNPS students can check out 5 books using their student IDs at any NNPL branch!
- Current students can use their school ID number to check out books from our branch libraries (up to 5 juvenile or young adult titles), utilize digital resources, or log onto the public computers at our locations.
- Most of NNPL's e-resources are accessible with NNPS Student Memberships, including digital books, audio books, magazines, streaming video and downloadable music, along with most of our digital research & educational resources.
- Find out more about these free student accounts on our website: <https://library.nnva.gov/294/Student-Membership>
- Check out the QR code to find out more about the NNPL Summer Reading Challenge, and be sure to sign up!



Below are summaries for the **NNPS Middle School Summer Reading** titles listed above.

Credit for summaries to Amazon, Shmoop, Cliffs Notes, Spark Notes, and Good Reads

Brotherhood, A.B. Westrick

The year is 1867, and Richmond, Virginia, lies in ruins. By day fourteen year-old Shadrach apprentices with a tailor and sneaks off for reading lessons from Rachel, a formerly enslaved teenager, at her school for African-American children. By night he follows his older brother to the meetings of a brotherhood, newly formed to support Confederate widows and grieving families like his. As the true murderous mission of the brotherhood—now known as the Ku Klux Klan—emerges, Shad is trapped between his pledge to them and what he knows is right. In this unflinching view of the bitter animosity that stemmed from economic and social upheaval in the South during the period of Reconstruction, it's clear that the Civil War has ended, but the conflict isn't over.

Prisoner B-3087, Alan Gratz

Yanek Gruener is a Jewish boy in 1930s Poland when the Nazis invade. Everything he has and everyone he loves is brutally taken from him. And then Yanek himself is taken prisoner, his arm tattooed with the number B-3087. Forced from one nightmarish concentration camp to another as World War II rages around him, Yanek encounters evil he could never have imagined—and yet finds surprising glimpses of hope amid the horror. 10 different concentration camps. 10 different encounters with death. Can Yanek make it through the terror without losing his hope, his will, and, most of all, his identity? Based on the astonishing true story of one extraordinary boy.

The Thing About Jellyfish, Ali Benjamin

After her best friend dies in a drowning accident, Suzy is convinced that the true cause of the tragedy must have been a rare jellyfish sting--things don't just happen for no reason. Retreating into a silent world of imagination, she crafts a plan to prove her theory--even if it means traveling the globe, alone. Suzy's achingly heartfelt journey explores life, death, the astonishing wonder of the universe...and the potential for love and hope right next door.

On the Day I Died, Candace Fleming

Ten ghost stories for teen and older tween readers that are sure to send chills up their spines. Set in White Cemetery, an actual graveyard outside Chicago, each story takes place during a different

time period from the 1860's to the present, and each one ends with the narrator's death. Some teens die heroically, others ironically, but all due to supernatural causes. Readers will meet walking corpses and witness demonic possession, all against the backdrop of Chicago's rich history—the Great Depression, the World's Fair, Al Capone and his fellow gangsters.

Scar Island, Dan Gemeinhart

Jonathan Grisby is the newest arrival at the Slabhenge Reformatory School for Troubled Boys—an ancient, crumbling fortress of gray stone rising up from the ocean. It is dark, damp, and dismal. And it is just the place Jonathan figures he deserves. Because Jonathan has done something terrible. And he's willing to accept whatever punishment he has coming. Just as he's getting used to his new situation, however, a freak accident leaves the troubled boys of Slabhenge without any adult supervision. Suddenly the kids are free, with an entire island to themselves. But freedom brings unexpected danger. And if Jonathan can't come to terms with the sins of his past and lead his new friends to safety... then every boy on the island is doomed.

The Eighth Day, Dianne K. Salerni

When Jax wakes up to a world without any people in it, he assumes it's the zombie apocalypse. But when he runs into his eighteen-year-old guardian, Riley Pendare, he learns that he's really in the eighth day—an extra day sandwiched between Wednesday and Thursday. Some people—like Jax and Riley—are Transitioners, able to live in all eight days, while others, including Evangeline, the elusive teenage girl who's been hiding in the house next door, exist only on this special day. And there's a reason Evangeline's hiding. She is a descendant of the powerful wizard Merlin, and there is a group of people who wish to use her in order to destroy the normal seven-day world and all who live in it. Torn between protecting his new friend and saving the entire human race from complete destruction, Jax is faced with an impossible choice. Even with an eighth day, time is running out.

Orbiting Jupiter, Gary D. Schmidt

The two-time Newbery Honor winner Gary D. Schmidt delivers the shattering story of Joseph, a father at thirteen, who has never seen his daughter, Jupiter. After spending time in a juvenile facility, he's placed with a foster family on a farm in rural Maine. Here Joseph, damaged and withdrawn, meets twelve-year-old Jack, who narrates the account of the troubled, passionate teen who wants to find his baby at any cost. In this riveting novel, two boys discover the true meaning of family and the sacrifices it requires.

Ungifted, Gordon Korman

When Donovan Curtis pulls a major prank at his middle school, he thinks he's finally gone too far. But thanks to a mix-up by one of the administrators, instead of getting in trouble, Donovan is sent to the Academy of Scholastic Distinction, a special program for gifted and talented students. Although it wasn't exactly what Donovan had intended, the ASD couldn't be a more perfectly unexpected hideout for someone like him. But as the students and teachers of ASD grow to realize that Donovan may not be good at math or science (or just about anything), he shows that his gifts may be exactly what the ASD students never knew they needed.

Counting by 7s, Holly Sloan

Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, but that hasn't kept her from leading a quietly happy life . . . until now. Suddenly Willow's world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car

crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world. The triumph of this book is that it is not a tragedy. This extraordinarily odd, but extraordinarily endearing, girl manages to push through her grief.

***The Thickety: A Path Begins*, J.A. White**

When Kara Westfall was five years old, her mother was convicted of the worst of all crimes: witchcraft. Years later, Kara and her little brother, Taff, are still shunned by the people of their village, who believe that nothing is more evil than magic...except, perhaps, the mysterious forest that covers nearly the entire island. It has many names, this place. Sometimes it is called the Dark Wood, or Sordyr's Realm. But mostly it's called the Thickety. The villagers live in fear of the Thickety and the terrible creatures that live there. But when an unusual bird lures Kara into the forbidden forest, she discovers a strange book with unspeakable powers. A book that might have belonged to her mother.

***Ghost*, Jason Reynolds**

Ghost. Lu. Patina. Sunny. Four kids from wildly different backgrounds with personalities that are explosive when they clash. But they are also four kids chosen for an elite middle school track team—a team that could qualify them for the Junior Olympics if they can get their acts together. They all have a lot to lose, but they also have a lot to prove, not only to each other, but to themselves. Running. That's all Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. But Ghost has been running for the wrong reasons—it all started with running away from his father, who, when Ghost was a very little boy, chased him and his mother through their apartment, then down the street, with a loaded gun, aiming to kill. Since then, Ghost has been the one causing problems—and running away from them—until he meets Coach, an ex-Olympic Medalist who sees something in Ghost: crazy natural talent. If Ghost can stay on track, literally and figuratively, he could be the best sprinter in the city. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed, or will his past finally catch up to him?

***Patina*, Jason Reynolds**

Ghost. Lu. Patina. Sunny. Four kids from wildly different backgrounds with personalities that are explosive when they clash. But they are also four kids chosen for an elite middle school track team—a team that could qualify them for the Junior Olympics if they can get their acts together. They all have a lot to lose, but they also have a lot to prove, not only to each other, but to themselves. Patina, or Patty, runs like a flash. She runs for many reasons—to escape the taunts from the kids at the fancy-schmancy new school she's been sent to ever since she and her little sister had to stop living with their mom. She runs from the reason WHY she's not able to live with her "real" mom any more: her mom has The Sugar, and Patty is terrified that the disease that took her mom's legs will one day take her away forever. And so Patty's also running for her mom, who can't. But can you ever really run away from any of this? As the stress builds, it's building up a pretty bad attitude as well. Coach won't tolerate a bad attitude. No day, no way. And now he wants Patty to run relay...where you have to depend on other people? How's she going to do THAT?

***A Night Divided*, Jennifer A. Nielsen**

With the rise of the Berlin Wall, twelve-year-old Gerta finds her family suddenly divided. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. Gerta knows it is dangerous to watch the wall, to think forbidden thoughts of freedom, yet she can't help herself. She sees the East German soldiers with their guns trained on their own citizens; she, her family, her neighbors and friends are prisoners in their own city. But one day, while on her way to school,

Gerta spots her father on a viewing platform on the western side, pantomiming a peculiar dance. Then, when she receives a mysterious drawing, Gerta puts two and two together and concludes that her father wants Gerta and Fritz to tunnel beneath the wall, out of East Berlin.

March I, II, III, John Lewis

Congressman John Lewis is an American icon, one of the key figures of the civil rights movement. His commitment to justice and nonviolence has taken him from an Alabama sharecropper's farm to the halls of Congress, from a segregated schoolroom to the 1963 March on Washington, and from receiving beatings from state troopers to receiving the Medal of Freedom from the first African-American president. Now, to share his remarkable story with new generations, Lewis presents *March*, a graphic novel trilogy, in collaboration with co-writer Andrew Aydin and New York Times best-selling artist Nate Powell.

The Screaming Staircase, Kate Messner

Lucy Carlyle, a talented young agent, arrives in London hoping for a notable career. Instead she finds herself joining the smallest, most ramshackle agency in the city, run by the charismatic Anthony Lockwood. When one of their cases goes horribly wrong, Lockwood & Co. have one last chance of redemption. Unfortunately this involves spending the night in one of the most haunted houses in England, and trying to escape alive.

House Arrest, K.A. Holt

Timothy is a good kid who did a bad thing. Now he's under house arrest for a whole year. He has to check in weekly with a probation officer and a therapist, keep a journal, and stay out of trouble. But when he must take drastic measures to help his struggling family, staying out of trouble proves more difficult than Timothy ever thought it would be.

All the Answers, Kate Messner

What if your pencil had all the answers? Would you ace every test? Would you know what your teachers were thinking? When Ava Anderson finds a scratched up pencil she doodles like she would with any other pencil. But when she writes a question in the margin of her math quiz, she hears a clear answer in a voice no one else seems to hear. With the help of her friend Sophie, Ava figures out that the pencil will answer factual questions only – those with definite right or wrong answers – but won't predict the future. Ava and Sophie discover all kinds of uses for the pencil, and Ava's confidence grows with each answer. But it's getting shorter with every sharpening, and when the pencil reveals a scary truth about Ava's family, she realizes that sometimes the bravest people are the ones who live without all the answers...

The War That Saved My Life, Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

Ten-year-old Ada has never left her one-room apartment. Her mother is too humiliated by Ada's twisted foot to let her outside. So when her little brother Jamie is shipped out of London to escape the war, Ada doesn't waste a minute—she sneaks out to join him. So begins a new adventure for Ada, and for Susan Smith, the woman who is forced to take the two kids in. As Ada teaches herself to ride a pony, learns to read, and watches for German spies, she begins to trust Susan—and Susan begins to love Ada and Jamie. But in the end, will their bond be enough to hold them together through wartime? Or will Ada and her brother fall back into the cruel hands of their mother?

Booked, Kwame Alexander

In this follow-up to the Newbery-winning novel *THE CROSSOVER*, soccer, family, love, and friendship take center stage as twelve-year-old Nick learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams. Helping him along are his best friend and sometimes teammate Coby, and The Mac, a rapping librarian who gives Nick inspiring books to read.

The Crossover, Kwame Alexander

"With a bolt of lightning on my kicks . . . The court is SIZZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. Cuz tonight I'm delivering," announces dread-locked, 12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood from Kwame Alexander. Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

Wolf Hollow, Lauren Wolk

Despite growing up in the shadows cast by two world wars, Annabelle has lived a mostly quiet, steady life in her small Pennsylvania town. Until the day new student Betty Glengarry walks into her class. Betty quickly reveals herself to be cruel and manipulative, and though her bullying seems isolated at first, it quickly escalates. Toby, a reclusive World War I veteran, soon becomes the target of Betty's attacks. While others see Toby's strangeness, Annabelle knows only kindness. And as tensions mount in their small community, Annabelle must find the courage to stand as a lone voice for justice.

The Hired Girl, Amy Schlitz

Fourteen-year-old Joan Skraggs, just like the heroines in her beloved novels, yearns for real life and true love. But what hope is there for adventure, beauty, or art on a hardscrabble farm in Pennsylvania where the work never ends? Over the summer of 1911, Joan pours her heart out into her diary as she seeks a new, better life for herself—because maybe, just maybe, a hired girl cleaning and cooking for six dollars a week can become what a farm girl could only dream of—a woman with a future. Newbery Medalist Laura Amy Schlitz relates Joan's journey from the muck of the chicken coop to the comforts of a society household in Baltimore (Electricity! Carpet sweepers! Sending out the laundry!), taking readers on an exploration of feminism and housework; religion and literature; love and loyalty; cats, hats, and bunions.

Chains, Larie Halse Anderson

As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom.

Fish in a Tree, Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees

the bright, creative kid underneath the trouble maker. With his help, Ally learns not to be so hard on herself and that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. As her confidence grows, Ally feels free to be herself and the world starts opening up with possibilities. She discovers that there's a lot more to her—and to everyone—than a label, and that great minds don't always think alike.

Cinder, Marissa Meyer

Humans and androids crowd the raucous streets of New Beijing. A deadly plague ravages the population. From space, a ruthless lunar people watch, waiting to make their move. No one knows that Earth's fate hinges on one girl. . . . Cinder, a gifted mechanic, is a cyborg. She's a second-class citizen with a mysterious past, reviled by her stepmother and blamed for her stepsister's illness. But when her life becomes intertwined with the handsome Prince Kai's, she suddenly finds herself at the center of an intergalactic struggle, and a forbidden attraction. Caught between duty and freedom, loyalty and betrayal, she must uncover secrets about her past in order to protect her world's future.

Twerp, Mark Goldblatt

Julian Twerski isn't a bully. He's just made a big mistake. So when he returns to school after a weeklong suspension, his English teacher offers him a deal: if he keeps a journal and writes about the terrible incident that got him and his friends suspended, he can get out of writing a report on Shakespeare. Julian jumps at the chance. And so begins his account of life in sixth grade--blowing up homemade fireworks, writing a love letter for his best friend (with disastrous results), and worrying whether he's still the fastest kid in school. Lurking in the background, though, is the one story he can't bring himself to tell, the one story his teacher most wants to hear.

It's the End of the World As I Know It, Matthew Landis

Ever since his mother was killed in the line of duty in Iraq, Derrick has been absolutely certain that the apocalypse is coming. And he's prepared: he's got plenty of canned goods, he's fully outfitted with HAZMAT suits, and he's building himself a sturdy fallout shelter. When his neighbor Misty insists on helping with the shelter, Derrick doesn't think it's such a good idea. Misty just had a kidney transplant, and her reaction to her brush with death is the opposite of Derrick's: where Derrick wants to hide, Misty wants to see and do everything. But as confident as Misty is, Derrick's doomsday fears just keep getting worse. And Derrick's promised apocalypse day begins with a very strange disaster, Derrick and Misty have to figure out a way to survive—especially when the end of the world as they know it looks nothing like they expected.

The Other Boy, M.G. Hennessey

Twelve-year-old Shane Woods is just a regular boy. He loves pitching for his baseball team, working on his graphic novel, and hanging out with his best friend, Josh. But Shane is keeping something private, something that might make a difference to his teammates, to Josh, and to his new crush, Madeline. And when a classmate threatens to reveal his secret, Shane's whole world comes crashing down. It will take a lot of courage for Shane to ignore the hate and show the world that he's still the same boy he was before. And in the end, those who stand beside him may surprise everyone, including Shane.

Shadow, Michael Morpurgo

With the horrors of war bearing down on them, Aman and his mother are barely surviving in an Afghan cave, and staying there any longer will end horribly. The only comfort Aman has is Shadow, the loyal spaniel that shows up from places unknown, it seems, just when Aman needs him most. Aman, his mother, and Shadow finally leave the destroyed cave in hopes of escaping

to England, but are held at a checkpoint, and Shadow runs away after being shot at by the police. Aman and his mother escape—without Shadow. Aman is heart-broken.

Just as they are getting settled as free citizens in England, they are imprisoned in a camp with locked doors and a barbed wire fence. Their only hope is Aman's classmate Matt, his grandpa, and the dream of finding his lost dog. After all, you never lose your shadow.

Garvey's Choice, Nikki Grimes

Garvey's father has always wanted Garvey to be athletic, but Garvey is interested in astronomy, science fiction, reading—anything but sports. Feeling like a failure, he comforts himself with food. Garvey is kind, funny, smart, a loyal friend, and he is also overweight, teased by bullies, and lonely. When his only friend encourages him to join the school chorus, Garvey's life changes. The chorus finds a new soloist in Garvey, and through chorus, Garvey finds a way to accept himself, and a way to finally reach his distant father—by speaking the language of music instead of the language of sports.

When Friendship Followed Me Home, Paul Griffin

Ben Coffin has never been one for making friends. As a former foster kid, he knows people can up and leave without so much as a goodbye. Ben prefers to spend his time with the characters in his favorite sci-fi books...until he rescues an abandoned mutt from the alley next-door to the Coney Island Library. Scruffy little Flip leads Ben to befriend a fellow book-lover named Halley—yes, like the comet—a girl unlike anyone he has ever met. Ben begins thinking of her as “Rainbow Girl” because of her crazy-colored clothes and her laugh, pure magic, the kind that makes you smile away the stormiest day. Rainbow Girl convinces Ben to write a novel with her. But as their story unfolds Ben's life begins to unravel, and Ben must discover for himself the truth about friendship and the meaning of home.

Drama, Raina Telgmeier

Callie loves theater. And while she would totally try out for her middle school's production of *Moon over Mississippi*, she can't really sing. Instead she's the set designer for the drama department's stage crew, and this year she's determined to create a set worthy of Broadway on a middle-school budget. But how can she, when she doesn't know much about carpentry, ticket sales are down, and the crew members are having trouble working together? Not to mention the onstage AND offstage drama that occurs once the actors are chosen. And when two cute brothers enter the picture, things get even crazier!

Prisoner of Cell 25, Richard Paul Evans

To everyone at Meridian High School, fourteen-year-old Michael Vey is nothing special, just the kid who has Tourette's syndrome. But in truth, Michael is extremely special—he has electric powers. Michael thinks he is unique until he discovers that a cheerleader named Taylor has the same mysterious powers. With the help of Michael's friend, Ostin, the three of them set out to discover how Michael and Taylor ended up with their abilities, and their investigation soon brings them to the attention of a powerful group who wants to control the electric teens—and through them, the world.

The Big Dark, Rodman Philbrick

What would you do if every spark of electricity suddenly vanished, as if somebody had flipped a switch on the entire planet? Cars won't start, the heat shuts off, there's no water in your faucet, and your radio, TV, and flashlight go dark. Everyone in Charlie's small town is baffled. But as time passes, lawlessness erupts and takes an ugly turn. When the market and pharmacy are torched by an anti-Semitic arsonist, Charlie realizes his mother will die without her medicine. So he dons his

and heads off alone, seeking the nearest hospital. After traveling 50 miles through brutal ice and snow, Charlie encounters a burned-out, looted city of terrified citizens. Will he be able to save his mom?

The Seventh Most Important Thing, Shelley Pearsall

Arthur T. Owens grabbed a brick and hurled it at the trash picker. Arthur had his reasons, and the brick hit the Junk Man in the arm, not the head. But none of that matters to the judge—he is ready to send Arthur to juvie forever. Amazingly, it's the Junk Man himself who offers an alternative: 120 hours of community service . . . working for him. Arthur is given a rickety shopping cart and a list of the Seven Most Important Things: glass bottles, foil, cardboard, pieces of wood, lightbulbs, coffee cans, and mirrors. He can't believe it—is he really supposed to rummage through people's trash? But it isn't long before Arthur realizes there's more to the Junk Man than meets the eye, and the "trash" he's collecting is being transformed into something more precious than anyone could imagine. . . .

Space Case, Stuart Gibbs

Like his fellow lunarnauts—otherwise known as Moonies—living on Moon Base Alpha, twelve-year-old Dashiell Gibson is famous the world over for being one of the first humans to live on the moon. And he's bored out of his mind. Kids aren't allowed on the lunar surface, meaning they're trapped inside the tiny moon base with next to nothing to occupy their time—and the only other kid Dash's age spends all his time hooked into virtual reality games. Then Moon Base Alpha's top scientist turns up dead. Dash senses there's foul play afoot, but no one believes him. Everyone agrees Dr. Holtz went onto the lunar surface without his helmet properly affixed, simple as that. But Dr. Holtz was on the verge of an important new discovery, Dash finds out, and it's a secret that could change everything for the Moonies—a secret someone just might kill to keep...

Spy School, Stuart Gibbs

Ben Ripley may only be in middle school, but he's already pegged his dream job: CIA or bust. Unfortunately for him, his personality doesn't exactly scream "secret agent." In fact, Ben is so awkward, he can barely get to school and back without a mishap. Because of his innate nerdiness, Ben is not surprised when he is recruited for a magnet school with a focus on science—but he's entirely shocked to discover that the school is actually a front for a junior CIA academy. Could the CIA really want him?

Out and Back Again, Thanhá Lai

Hà has only ever known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, and the warmth of her friends close by. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. Hà and her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope—toward America. This moving story of one girl's year of change, dreams, grief, and healing received four starred reviews, including one from Kirkus which proclaimed it "enlightening, poignant, and unexpectedly funny."

Fuzzy, Tom Angleberger and Paul Dellinger

When Max—Maxine Zelaster—befriends her new robot classmate Fuzzy, part of Vanguard One Middle School's new Robot Integration Program, she helps him learn everything he needs to know about surviving middle school—the good, the bad, and the really, really, ugly. Little do they know that surviving seventh grade is going to become a true matter of life and death, because Vanguard has an evil presence at its heart: a digital student evaluation system named BARBARA that might be taking its mission to shape the perfect student to extremes!

All's Faire in Middle School, Victoria Jamieson

Eleven-year-old Imogene (Impy) has grown up with two parents working at the Renaissance Faire, and she's eager to begin her own training as a squire. First, though, she'll need to prove her bravery. Luckily Impy has just the quest in mind—she'll go to public school after a life of being homeschooled! But it's not easy to act like a noble knight-in-training in middle school. Impy falls in with a group of girls who seem really nice (until they don't) and starts to be embarrassed of her thrift shop apparel, her family's unusual lifestyle, and their small, messy apartment. Impy has always thought of herself as a heroic knight, but when she does something really mean in order to fit in, she begins to wonder whether she might be more of a dragon after all.

Roller Girl, Victoria Jamieson

For most of her twelve years, Astrid has done everything with her best friend Nicole. But after Astrid falls in love with roller derby and signs up for derby camp, Nicole decides to go to dance camp instead. And so begins the most difficult summer of Astrid's life as she struggles to keep up with the older girls at camp, hang on to the friend she feels slipping away, and cautiously embark on a new friendship. As the end of summer nears and her first roller derby bout (and junior high!) draws closer, Astrid realizes that maybe she is strong enough to handle the bout, a lost friendship, and middle school... in short, strong enough to be a roller girl.

Hideout, Watt Key

In this riveting middle-grade adventure, the son of a Mississippi policeman finds a boy living on his own in the wilderness. Twelve-year-old Sam has been given a fishing boat by his father, but he hates fishing. Instead he uses the boat to disappear for hours at a time, exploring the forbidden swampy surroundings of his bayou home. Then he discovers a strange kid named Davey, mysteriously alone, repairing an abandoned cabin deep in the woods. Not fooled by the boy's evasive explanation as to why he's on his own, Sam becomes entangled in his own efforts to help Davey. But this leads him to telling small lies that only get bigger as the danger increases for both boys and hidden truths become harder to conceal.

Punching the Air, Ibi Zoboi & Yusef Salaam

One fateful night, an altercation in a gentrifying neighborhood escalates into tragedy. 'Boys just being boys' turns out to be true only when those boys are white. Suddenly, at just sixteen years old, Amal Shahid's bright future is upended: he is convicted of a crime he didn't commit and sent to prison. Despair and rage almost sink him until he turns to the refuge of his words, his art. This never should have been his story. But can he change it? With spellbinding lyricism, award-winning author Ibi Zoboi and prison reform activist Yusef Salaam tell a moving and deeply profound story about how one boy is able to maintain his humanity and fight for the truth, in a system designed to strip him of both.

King and the Dragonflies, Kacen Callendar

In a small but turbulent Louisiana town, King lost his older brother. To move on, he must find himself. King is convinced his brother isn't dead, that he has instead turned into a dragonfly, and he searches for Khalid down by the bayou. Khalid visits him in turn, in King's dreams. King must keep these secrets to himself as he watches grief transform his family. It would be easier if King could talk with his best friend, Sandy. But King had ended their friendship. Before his death, his brother had said, "You don't want anyone to think you're gay too, do you?" But when Sandy goes missing, sparking a town-wide search, King finds his former best friend and the two begin an adventure as they hide Sandy down by the bayou, among the dragonflies. As King's friendship with Sandy is reignited, he's forced to confront questions about himself and the reality

of his brother's death.

***The Boy Who Carried Bricks*, Alton Carter**

Abandoned by his father, neglected by his mother, shuttled between foster homes and a boys ranch for most of his formative years, a young man refuses to succumb to the fate that the world says should be his. Early on, Alton decides he wants a "normal life"--even if that means standing up to abusive relatives and being teased by his siblings and cousins. Along the way, he keeps an eye out for those who might help lighten the load, never losing hope that such people exist.

***Dreams from My Father*, Barack Obama**

In this lyrical, unsentimental, and compelling memoir, the son of a black African father and a white American mother searches for a workable meaning to his life as a black American. It begins in New York, where Barack Obama learns that his father—a figure he knows more as a myth than as a man—has been killed in a car accident. This sudden death inspires an emotional odyssey—first to a small town in Kansas, from which he retraces the migration of his mother's family to Hawaii, and then to Kenya, where he meets the African side of his family, confronts the bitter truth of his father's life, and at last reconciles his divided inheritance.

***The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia*, Candace Fleming**

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 make this an utterly mesmerizing read.

***Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food*, Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson**

Kids love fast food. And the fast food industry definitely loves kids. But where do fast food hamburgers come from? And what makes those fries taste so good? When Eric Schlosser's best-selling book, *Fast Food Nation*, was published for adults in 2001, many called for his groundbreaking insight to be shared with young people. Now Schlosser, along with co-writer Charles Wilson, has investigated the subject further, uncovering new facts kids and teens need to know. In *Chew On This*, they share the fascinating and sometimes frightening truth about what lurks between those sesame seed buns.

***How They Croaked*, Georgia Bragg**

Over the course of history, men and women have lived and died. In fact, getting sick and dying can be a big, ugly mess--especially before the modern medical care that we all enjoy today. From King Tut's ancient autopsy to Albert Einstein's great brain escape, *How They Croaked* contains all the gory details of the awful ends of nineteen awfully famous people.

***The President Has Been Shot!: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, James L. Swanson**

In his new young-adult book on the Kennedy assassination, James Swanson will transport readers back to one of the most shocking, sad, and terrifying events in American history. As he did in his bestselling Scholastic YA book, *CHASING LINCOLN'S KILLER*, Swanson deploys his signature "you are there" style -- a riveting, ticking-clock pace, with an unprecedented eye for dramatic details and impeccable historical accuracy -- to tell the story of the JFK assassination as it has never been told before. The book is illustrated with archival photos, diagrams, source notes, bibliography, places to visit, and index.

***The Boy on the Wooden Box*, Leon Leyson**

Leon Leyson (born Leib Lezjon) was only ten years old when the Nazis invaded Poland and his family was forced to relocate to the Krakow ghetto. With incredible luck, perseverance, and grit, Leyson was able to survive the sadism of the Nazis, including that of the demonic Amon Goeth, commandant of Plaszow, the concentration camp outside Krakow. Ultimately, it was the generosity and cunning of one man, a man named Oskar Schindler, who saved Leon Leyson's life, and the lives of his mother, his father, and two of his four siblings, by adding their names to his list of workers in his factory—a list that became world renowned: Schindler's List.

Relish: My Life in the Kitchen, Lucy Knisley

Lucy Knisley loves food. The daughter of a chef and a gourmet, this talented young cartoonist comes by her obsession honestly. In her forthright, thoughtful, and funny memoir, Lucy traces key episodes in her life thus far, framed by what she was eating at the time and lessons learned about food, cooking, and life. Each chapter is bookended with an illustrated recipe—many of them treasured family dishes, and a few of Lucy's original inventions.

I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban, Malala Yousafzai

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she became a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and The Space Race, Margot Lee Shetterly

Gender roles, racial prejudice and segregation are clearly addressed in the inspiring story of four African-American female mathematicians at NASA who made significant contributions to the space program.

The Boys Who Challenged Hitler, Phillip Hoose

At the outset of World War II, Denmark did not resist German occupation. Deeply ashamed of his nation's leaders, fifteen-year-old Knud Pedersen resolved with his brother and a handful of schoolmates to take action against the Nazis if the adults would not. Naming their secret club after the fiery British leader, the young patriots in the Churchill Club committed countless acts of sabotage, infuriating the Germans, who eventually had the boys tracked down and arrested. But their efforts were not in vain: the boys' exploits and eventual imprisonment helped spark a full-blown Danish resistance.

Because They Marched: The People's Campaign for Voting Rights that Changed America, Russell Freedman

In the early 1960s, tensions in the segregated South intensified. Tired of reprisals for attempting to register to vote, Selma's black community began to protest. In January 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led a voting rights march and was attacked by a segregationist. In February, the shooting of an unarmed demonstrator by an Alabama state trooper inspired a march from Selma to the state capital. The event got off to a horrific start on March 7 as law officers brutally attacked peaceful demonstrators. But when vivid footage and photographs of the violence was broadcast throughout the world, the incident attracted widespread outrage and spurred demonstrators to complete the march at any cost.

Bomb-The Race to Build and Steal the World's Most Dangerous Weapon, Steve Sheinkin

In December of 1938, a chemist in a German laboratory made a shocking discovery: When placed next to radioactive material, a Uranium atom split in two. That simple discovery launched a scientific race that spanned three continents. In Great Britain and the United States, Soviet spies worked their way into the scientific community; in Norway, a commando force slipped behind enemy lines to attack German heavy-water manufacturing; and deep in the desert, one brilliant group of scientists was hidden away at a remote site at Los Alamos. This is the story of the plotting, the risk-taking, the deceit, and genius that created the world's most formidable weapon. This is the story of the atomic bomb

Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight for Civil Rights, Steve Sheinkin

On July 17, 1944, a massive explosion rocked the segregated Navy base at Port Chicago, California, killing more than 300 sailors who were at the docks, critically injuring off-duty men in their bunks, and shattering windows up to a mile away. On August 9th, 244 men refused to go back to work until unsafe and unfair conditions at the docks were addressed. When the dust settled, fifty were charged with mutiny, facing decades in jail and even execution.

Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream, Tanya Lee Stone

What does it take to be an astronaut? Excellence at flying, courage, intelligence, resistance to stress, top physical shape — any checklist would include these. But when America created NASA in 1958, there was another unspoken rule: you had to be a man. Here is the tale of thirteen women who proved that they were not only as tough as the toughest man but also brave enough to challenge the government. They were blocked by prejudice, jealousy, and the scrawled note of one of the most powerful men in Washington. But even though the Mercury 13 women did not make it into space, they did not lose, for example empowered young women to take their place in the sky, piloting jets and commanding space capsules. *Almost Astronauts* is the story of thirteen true pioneers of the space age.