

Shrewsbury Public Schools
Sherwood Middle School Summer Reading List 2016

Students are asked to read three novels over the summer. The list below contains titles that are recommended for early middle-level readers. If the list does not contain a novel that suits a students' interest or reading level, please see the recommended author's section at the bottom of the page for more suggestions!

New and notable – 2016 American Library Association Award Winners

Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings: A Memoir, Margarita Engle – ***Pura Belpré Book Award***

Margarita is a girl from two worlds. Her heart lies in Cuba, her mother's tropical island country, a place so lush with vibrant life that it seems like a fairy tale kingdom. But most of the time she lives in Los Angeles, lonely in the noisy city and dreaming of the summers when she can take a plane through the enchanted air to her beloved island. Words and images are her constant companions, friendly and comforting when the children at school are not. Then a revolution breaks out in Cuba. Margarita fears for her far-away family. When the hostility between Cuba and the United States erupts at the Bay of Pigs Invasion, Margarita's worlds collide in the worst way possible. How can the two countries she loves hate each other so much? And will she ever get to visit her beautiful island again?

Fish in a Tree, by Lynda Mullaly Hunt – ***Shneider Family Book Award***

"Everybody is smart in different ways. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid."

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.

Any one from the Trilogy: *One Crazy Summer, P.S. Be Eleven, Gone Crazy in Alabama**, by Rita Williams Garcia –
****Coretta Scott King Book Award***

The Coretta Scott King Award-winning *Gone Crazy in Alabama* by Newbery Honor and *New York Times* bestselling author Rita Williams-Garcia tells the story of the Gaither sisters as they travel from the streets of Brooklyn to the rural South for the summer of a lifetime. Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern are off to Alabama to visit their grandmother Big Ma and her mother, Ma Charles. Across the way lives Ma Charles's half sister, Miss Trotter. The two half sisters haven't spoken in years. As Delphine hears about her family history, she uncovers the surprising truth that's been keeping the sisters apart. But when tragedy strikes, Delphine discovers that the bonds of family run deeper than she ever knew possible.

Echo, by Pam Muñoz Ryan – ***John Newbery Medal***

Lost and alone in a forbidden forest, Otto meets three mysterious sisters and suddenly finds himself entwined in a puzzling quest involving a prophecy, a promise, and a harmonica. Decades later, Friedrich in Germany, Mike in Pennsylvania, and Ivy in California each, in turn, become interwoven when the very same harmonica lands in their lives. All the children face daunting challenges: rescuing a father, protecting a brother, holding a family together. And ultimately, pulled by the invisible thread of destiny, their suspenseful solo stories converge in an orchestral crescendo. Richly imagined and masterfully crafted, this impassioned, uplifting, and virtuosic tour de force will resound in your heart long after the last note has been struck.

Roller Girl, by Victoria Jamieson – ***John Newbery Medal***

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. In this graphic novel debut that earned a Newbery Honor and five starred reviews, real-life derby girl Victoria Jamieson has created an inspiring coming-of-age story about friendship, perseverance, and girl power!

The War that Saved My Life, Kimberly Brubaker Bradley – ***John Newbery Award***

Nine-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 of 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?

Adventure

Level One:

Any title from The Everest Series: The Contest, The Climb, The Summit by Gordon Korman

The climbing contest to see who will be the youngest person to climb Mount Everest turns into a life or-death rescue mission.

Mr. Tucket (or any other book in the "Tucket" Series) by Gary Paulsen

In 1848, while on a wagon train headed for Oregon, fourteen-year-old Francis Tucket is kidnapped by Pawnee Indians and then falls in with a one-armed trapper who teaches him how to live in the wild. (Other titles include: Call Me Francis Tucket, Tucket's Gold, Tucket's Home, and Tucket's Ride.)

Little House in the Big Woods, Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder

The first two stories about Laura Ingalls and her family. The Ingalls family travels by covered wagon across the Midwest in the 1870's first settling in Wisconsin then moving to Kansas.

Level Two:

Brian's Winter, Brian's Return, and Brian's Hunt by Gary Paulsen

These three books are sequels to Hatchet.

On the Banks of Plum Creek by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Laura and her family move to Minnesota where they live in a dugout until a new house is built and face misfortunes caused by flood, blizzard, and grasshoppers.

Jason's Gold by Will Hobbs

Fifteen-year-old Jason embarks on a ten thousand-mile journey in 1897 in hopes of striking it rich after hearing the news that gold has been discovered in Canada's Yukon Territory.

Level Three:

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen

After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce.

Canyons by Gary Paulsen

Finding a skull on a camping trip in the canyons outside El Paso, Texas, Brennan becomes involved with the fate of a young Apache Indian who lived in the late 1800s.

My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George

A young boy relates his adventures during the year he spends living alone in the Catskill Mountains including his struggle for survival, his dependence on nature, his animal friends, and his ultimate realization that he needs human companionship.

Graphic Novels

Any Level:

Zita the Spacegirl. By Ben Hatke, Illus. by the author. First Second.

When a little red button crashes to earth any self-respecting graphic novel character would push it. When Joseph is whisked through an inter-dimensional portal to an alien planet, Zita follows to rescue him.

Fantasy

Level One:

The Boggart by Susan Cooper

After visiting the castle in Scotland, which her family has inherited, and returning home to Canada, twelve-year-old Emily finds that she has accidentally brought back with her a boggart, an invisible and mischievous spirit with a fondness for practical jokes.

Princess Sonora and the Long Sleep by Gail Carson Levine

In this retelling of the fairy tale Sleeping Beauty, Princess Sonora, who is ten times smarter than anyone else, vows to choose for herself the best time to be pricked by the spindle.

The Wish by Gail Levine

When granted her wish to be the most popular girl in school, Wilma, an eighth grader, forgets that she will graduate in three weeks and her popularity will vanish.

Level Two:

Ella Enchanted by Gail Levine

In this novel based on the story of Cinderella, Ella struggles against the childhood curse that forces her to obey any order given to her.

The Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle, by Rick Riordan

How do you punish an immortal? By making him human. After angering his father Zeus, the god Apollo is cast down from Olympus. Weak and disoriented, he lands in New York City as a regular teenage boy. Now, without his godly powers, the four-thousand-year-old deity must learn to survive in the modern world until he can somehow find a way to regain Zeus's favor. But Apollo has many enemies-gods, monsters, and mortals who would love to see the former Olympian permanently destroyed. Apollo needs help, and he can think of only one place to go . . . an enclave of modern demigods known as Camp Half-Blood.

Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard, by Rick Riordan

Magnus Chase has always been a troubled kid. Since his mother's mysterious death, he's lived alone on the streets of Boston, surviving by his wits, keeping one step ahead of the police and the truant officers. One day, he's tracked down by an uncle he barely knows-a man his mother claimed was dangerous. Uncle Randolph tells him an impossible secret: Magnus is the son of a Norse god. The Viking myths are true. The gods of Asgard are preparing for war. Trolls, giants and worse monsters are stirring for doomsday. To prevent Ragnarok, Magnus must search the Nine Worlds for a weapon that has been lost for thousands of years. When an attack by fire giants forces him to choose between his own safety and the lives of hundreds of innocents, Magnus makes a fatal decision. Sometimes, the only way to start a new life is to die . . .

The Lightning Thief (or any book in the Percy Jackson series) by Rick Riordan

Books from the 'Redwall' series by Brian Jacques

Level Three:

Splendors and Glooms, by Laura Amy Schlitz

The master puppeteer, Gaspare Grisini, is so expert at manipulating his stringed puppets that they appear alive. Clara Wintermute, the only child of a wealthy doctor, is spellbound by Grisini's act and invites him to entertain at her birthday party. When Clara vanishes that night, suspicion of kidnapping falls upon the puppeteer and, by association, Lizzie Rose and Parsefall. As they seek to puzzle out Clara's whereabouts, Lizzie and Parse uncover Grisini's criminal past and wake up to his evil intentions. Fleeing London, they find themselves caught in a trap set by Grisini's ancient rival, a witch with a deadly inheritance to shed before it's too late.

Golden Compass by Philip Pullman

Accompanied by her daemon, Lyra Belacqua sets out to prevent her best friend and other kidnapped children from becoming the subject of gruesome experiments in the Far North.

Science Fiction

Level Three:

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

Ender, who is the result of genetic experimentation, may be the military genius Earth needs in its war against an alien enemy.

Any Science Fiction book by Nancy Farmer

Realistic Fiction

Levels One, Two, and Three:

Any '**Alex Ryder Adventure**' by Anthony Horowitz

Level One:

Junonia. By Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow Books.

Alice knows just how her vacation on Sanibel Island should be: the same as the previous nine, except that this year she hopes to find a rare junonia shell. Alice's tenth birthday, however, brings unexpected changes.

Judy Moody by Megan McDonald (any book in the series)

Third grader Judy Moody is in a first day of school bad mood until she gets an assignment to create a collage all about herself and begins creating her masterpiece, the Me collage.

Heads or Tails by Jack Gantos - Jack's diary helps him deal with his problems that include dog-eating alligators, a terror for an older sister, a younger brother who keeps breaking parts of himself, and next-door neighbors who are really weird.

The Landry News: A Brand New School Story by Andrew Clements

A fifth-grader starts a newspaper with an editorial that prompts her burnt-out classroom teacher to really begin teaching again, but he is later threatened with disciplinary action as a result.

The Jacket by Andrew Clements

Sixth-grader Phil comes to an awareness of his own racial prejudice after he sees Daniel, an African-American boy, wearing his brother's one-of-a-kind jacket and leaps to the conclusion that Daniel has stolen the coat.

Level Two:

El Deafo by Cece Bell

Going to school and making new friends can be tough. But going to school and making new friends while wearing a bulky hearing aid strapped to your chest? That requires superpowers! In this funny, poignant graphic novel memoir, author/illustrator Cece Bell chronicles her hearing loss at a young age and her experiences with the Phonic Ear, a very powerful—and very awkward—hearing aid.

Rain Reign by Ann M. Martin

Rose Howard is obsessed with homonyms. She's thrilled that her own name is a homonym, and she purposely gave her dog Rain a name with two homonyms (Reign, Rein). Not everyone understands Rose's obsessions, her rules, and the other things that make her different. She struggles to control the obsessions and outbursts that are symptomatic of her high-functioning autism. When a storm hits their rural town, rivers overflow, the roads are flooded, and Rain goes missing. Rose's father shouldn't have let Rain out. Now Rose has to find her dog, even if it means leaving her routines and safe places to search.

Breaking Stalin's Nose. By Eugene Yelchin, Illus. by the author, Henry Holt.

On the eve of his induction into the Young Pioneers, Sasha's world is overturned when his father is arrested by Stalin's guard. (A 2012 Newbery Honor Book)

Emmy and the Incredible Shrinking Rat by Lynne Jonell

When Emmy discovers that she and her formerly loving parents are being drugged by their evil nanny with rodent potions that can change people in frightening ways, she and some new friends must try everything possible to return things to normal.

Rules by Cynthia Lord

Growing up with a brother with autism, twelve-year-old Catherine struggles to come to her own understanding of what it means to be “normal”.

Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech

After her mother leaves home suddenly, thirteen-year-old Sal and her grandparents take a car trip retracing her mother's route. Along the way, Sal recounts the story of her friend Phoebe, whose mother also left.

Beetles Lightly Toasted by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Andy's entering the fifth-grade essay contest stirs his imagination to creative heights as he competes with his know-it-all cousin by making recipes with some unusual food sources and testing them on unaware friends and family.

Hoot by Carl Hiaasen

Roy Eberhart, the new kid in town, hooks up with teenage runaway Mullet Fingers (so named because he can catch fish with his bare hands) and his sister Beatrice, a "major soccer jock...with a major attitude." The three discover that the proposed site for a Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House is also a nesting ground for small burrowing owls, a protected species, and they attempt to halt construction, initiating a cover-up that reaches all the way to the mayor's office.

Level Three:

Dead End in Norvelt. By Jack Gantos. Farrar Straus Giroux.

An achingly funny romp through a dying New Deal town. While mopping up epic nose bleeds, Jack narrates this screw-ball mystery in an endearing and believable voice. (2012 Newbery Medal Book)

Inside Out and Back Again. By Thanhha Lai. HarperCollins.

Hà and her family flee war-torn Vietnam for the American South. In spare, vivid verse, she chronicles her struggle to find her place in a new world. (A 2012 Newbery Honor Book)

The Year of the Dog by Grace Lin

Frustrated at her seeming lack of talent for anything, a young Taiwanese American girl sets out to apply the lessons of the Chinese Year of the Dog, those of making best friends and finding oneself, to her own life.

Historical Fiction

Level One:

The Secret Soldier: the story of Deborah Sampson by Ann McGovern

This biography features a woman who disguised herself as a man and joined the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

War Comes to Willy Freeman by James Lincoln Collier

A free thirteen-year-old black girl in Connecticut is caught up in the horror of the Revolutionary War and the danger of being returned to slavery when her patriot father is killed by the British and her mother disappears.

Level Two:

Nurse, Soldier, Spy: The Story of Sarah Edmonds, a Civil War Hero, by Marissa Moss

The incredible life story of Sarah Edmonds, who fought for the Union army disguised as a man and later became the only woman recognized as a Civil War veteran.

Lunch-Box Dream, by Tony Abbott

Narrated from different perspectives, this is a moving tale about the North and South during the era of Jim Crow, through the experiences of two young boys, one white and one black.

The Devil's Arithmetic by Jane Yolen

Hannah resents stories of her Jewish heritage and of the past until, when opening the door during a Passover Seder, she finds herself in Poland during World War II where she experiences the horrors of a concentration camp, and learns why she-- and we--need to remember the past.

Girl in Blue by Ann Rinaldi

To escape an abusive father and an arranged marriage, fourteen-year-old Sarah, dressed as a boy, leaves her Michigan home to enlist in the Union Army, and becomes a soldier on the battlefields of Virginia as well as a Union spy working in the house of Confederate sympathizer Rose O'Neal Greenhow in Washington, D.C.

Jump Ship to Freedom by James Lincoln Collier

By rights young Daniel Arabus and his mother, slaves in Captain Iver's house in Stratford, Conn., should be free. But the Captain refuses to honor their agreement and instead sells Daniel on board a ship to the West Indies.

Level Three:

May B by Caroline Starr Rose

May is helping out on a neighbor's Kansas prairie homestead. She wants to contribute, but it's hard to be separated from her family by 15 long, unfamiliar miles. Then the unthinkable happens: May is abandoned. Trapped in a tiny snow-covered sod house, isolated from family and neighbors, May must prepare for the oncoming winter. While fighting to survive, May's memories of her struggles with reading at school come back to haunt her. But she's determined to find her way home again.

The Cheshire Cheese Cat: A Dickens of a Tale. By Carmen Agra Deedy and Randall Wright, Illus. by Barry Moser. Peachtree Publishers.

Alley-cat Skillely finds a perfect home, gets help from a friend to return an injured raven to the Tower of London and saves all the Cheshire Cheese Inn mice from the evil Pinch.

Catherine Called Birdy by Karen Cushman

The daughter of an English country knight keeps a journal in which she records the events of her life, particularly her longing for adventures beyond the usual role of women and her efforts to avoid being married off.

Wild Man Island – by Will Hobbs – After fourteen-year-old Andy slips away from his kayaking group to visit the wilderness site of his archaeologist father's death, a storm strands him on Admiralty Island, Alaska, where he manages to survive, encounters unexpected animal and human inhabitants, and looks for traces of the earliest prehistoric immigrants to America.

Lyddie by Katherine Patterson

Impoverished Vermont farm girl Lyddie Worthen is determined to gain her independence by becoming a factory worker in Lowell, Massachusetts, in the 1840s.

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry

In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.

Mystery

Level One:

The Dollhouse Murders by Betty Ren Wright

A dollhouse filled with a ghostly light in the middle of the night, and dolls that have moved from where she last left them, lead Amy and her mentally handicapped sister to unravel the mystery surrounding grisly murders that took place years ago.

Any Chet Gecko Mystery by Bruce Hale

"Those who haven't read a 'Chet Gecko' mystery don't know what they're missing." School Library Journal

Any mystery by John Bellairs

Level Two:

The Puzzling World of Winston Breen, by Eric Berlin

Holes by Louis Sachar

As further evidence of his family's bad fortune, which they attribute to a curse on a distant relative, Stanley Yelnats is sent to a hellish correctional camp in the Texas desert where he finds his first real friend, a treasure, and a new sense of himself.

Chasing Vermeer by Blue Balliett

When seemingly unrelated and strange events start to happen and a precious Vermeer painting disappears, eleven-year-olds Petra and Calder combine their talents to solve an international art scandal.

Room One: A Mystery or Two by Andrew Clements

In small-town Plattstford, Nebraska, sixth-grade paperboy/Boy Scout/4-H-er/mystery buff Ted Hammond secretly befriends a girl who is hiding with her mother and brother in an abandoned farmhouse. When they disappear, Ted must figure out what happened.

Any mystery by Joan Nixon

Level Three:

Wonderstruck by Brian Selznick

Parallel stories of hearing-impaired characters are set 50 years apart. The journeys of these two characters are chronicled in unique and creative ways. One journey is told through prose while the other is described by exceptional illustrations.

The Invention Of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick

When twelve-year-old Hugo, an orphan living and repairing clocks within the walls of a Paris train station in 1931, meets a mysterious toy seller and his goddaughter, his undercover life and his biggest secret are jeopardized. This book won the 2008 Caldecott Medal.

Poetry

Level Two:

The Dream Keeper by Langston Hughes

A collection of sixty-six poems, selected by the author for young readers, including lyrical poems, songs, and blues, many exploring the black experience.

Level Three:

The Place My Words are Looking For by Paul Janeczko

Thirty-nine United States poets share their poems, inspirations, thoughts, anecdotes, and memories.

Traditional

Level Two:

Gilgamesh the Hero by Geraldine McCaughrean -In this version of the epic, the mythic strongman, whose unrestrained vigor in building his city makes him more tyrant than hero, battles with Enkidu, a "wild man" who signifies the natural, uncivilized world. The two become friends and join in heroic adventures.

Soft Rain, A Story of the Cherokee Trail of Tears by Cornelia Cornelissen

A nine-year-old Cherokee girl, is forced to relocate, along with her family, from North Carolina to the West.

Level Three:

One Thousand and One Arabian Nights by Geraldine McCaughrean -Collection of stories told by Shahrazad to her husband King Shahrivar in an effort to keep him from having her put to death she tells tales of Sinbad, Ali Baba, and other characters of the desert world.

Non-Fiction

Level Two:

Zombie Makers: True Stories of Nature's Undead by Rebecca L. Johnson

Are zombies real? Scientists know this for sure: dead people do not come back to live and start walking around, looking for trouble. But there are things that can take over the bodies and brains of innocent creatures, turning them into senseless slaves. Meet nature's zombie makers--including a fly-enslaving fungus, a suicide worm, and a cockroach-taming wasp--and their victims.

Into the Unknown: How Great Explorers Found Their Way by Land, Sea, and Air. By Stuart Ross, Illus. by Stephen Biesty

How did those great explorers travel? What did they wear? Where did they pee? And what did they find on their journeys? Much is revealed in the text and unfolding cross-sections of this fascinating volume.

Level Three:

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

Profiles thirteen women who challenged social norms and government policies to prove they could be exceptional astronauts

Born to Write: The Remarkable Lives of Six Famous Authors by Charis Cotter

Looks at the childhoods of six celebrated authors, including Madeleine L'Engle, E. B. White, L. M. Montgomery, Philip Pullman, Christopher Paul Curtis, and C. S. Lewis, and discusses how their youthful experiences influenced their writing.

Autobiography

Level Two:

Knots in My Yo-yo String, Autobiography of a Kid by Jerry Spinelli

This Italian-American Newbery Medalist presents a humorous account of his childhood and youth in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

My Life in Dog Years by Gary Paulsen

The author describes how dogs have impacted his life from childhood through the present day, recounting the stories of his first dog, Snowball, in the Philippines; Dirk, who protected him from bullies; and Cookie, who saved his life.

Looking Back: A Book of Memories by Lois Lowry

Using family photographs and quotes from her books, the author provides glimpses into her life.

Level Three:

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Woodson's eloquent poetry reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child.

Recommended Authors – The following authors are also great for middle level readers!: Avi, C.S.

Lewis, Robert Newton Peck, Lloyd Alexander, Sharon Creech, Gary Paulsen, Katherine Paterson, John Bellairs, E.L.Konigsburg, T.M. Murphy, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Jane Yolen, Patricia McLachlan, Scott O'Dell, Betsy Byars, Paul Zindel, James Lincoln Collier & Christopher Collier, J.K.Rowling. Kathryn Lasky, Louis Sacher, Russel Freedman, Walter Dean Meyers, Mildred Taylor