

Oak Middle School
2017 SUMMER READING LIST

Summaries adapted from Amazon.com

Students are asked to read **three books** from the list. **One book must come from the Sponsored Novels section.** The other two books may come from either the Sponsored Novels selections or the Supplemental List.

- Denotes novels that contain content appropriate for mature readers. See commonsensemedia.org for reviews and summaries

Sponsored Novels

All students must read at least one title from this list.

Non-Fiction

Primates: The Fearless Science of Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Biruté Galdikas by Jim Ottaviani – Easy
An action-packed account of the three greatest primatologists of the last century: Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Biruté Galdikas. These three ground-breaking researchers were all students of the great Louis Leakey, and each made profound contributions to primatology—and to our own understanding of ourselves.

*** Into the Wild** by John Krakauer - Challenging

After graduating from Emory University in Atlanta in 1992, top student and athlete Christopher McCandless abandoned his possessions, gave his entire \$24,000 savings account to charity and hitchhiked to Alaska, where he went to live in the wilderness. Four months later, he turned up dead. His diary, letters and two notes found at a remote campsite tell of his desperate effort to survive, apparently stranded by an injury and slowly starving. In a moving narrative, Krakauer probes the mystery of McCandless' death.

How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie - Challenging

For more than sixty years the rock-solid, time-tested advice in this book has carried thousands of now famous people up the ladder of success. Learn: * Three fundamental techniques to working with people * The six ways to make people like you * The twelve ways to win people to your way of thinking * The nine ways to change people without causing resentment

Autobiography

*** The Closer**, by Mariano Rivera and Wayne Coffey - Challenging

He is listed along with Ruth, Mantle, Gehrig, and DiMaggio as a top-five Yankee of all time. He is the man who has intimidated thousands of batters by merely opening a bullpen door. Now he tells his full story in this widely acclaimed instant bestseller: the championships, the bosses (including The Boss), the rivalries, the struggles of being a Latino baseball player in the United States, and of maintaining his values in professional athletics. He discusses his drive to win, the secrets behind his legendary composure, what it's like to run up to that mound with the game--or the season--squarely on his shoulders.

Fiction

I Funny: A Middle School Story by James Patterson – Easy

Jamie Grimm is a middle schooler on a mission: he wants to become the world's greatest standup comedian--even if he doesn't have a lot to laugh about these days. He's new in town and stuck living with his aunt, uncle, and their evil son Stevie, a bully who doesn't let Jamie's wheelchair stop him from messing with Jamie as much as possible.

But Jamie doesn't let his situation get him down. When his Uncle Frankie mentions a contest called The Planet's Funniest Kid Comic, Jamie knows he has to enter. But are the judges only rewarding him out of pity because of his wheelchair, like Stevie suggests? Will Jamie ever share the secret of his troubled past instead of hiding behind his comedy act?

I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives, by Martin Ganda & Caitlin Alifirenka – Average

It started as an assignment. Everyone in Caitlin's class wrote to an unknown student somewhere in a distant place. Martin was lucky to even receive a pen-pal letter. There were only ten letters, and fifty kids in his class. But he was the top student, so he got the first one. That letter was the beginning of a correspondence that spanned six years and changed two lives. In this compelling dual memoir, Caitlin and Martin recount how they became best friends --and better people--through their long-distance exchange. Their story will inspire you to look beyond your own life and wonder about the world at large and your place in it.

Some Kind of Happiness, by Claire Legrand – Average

Things Finley Hart doesn't want to talk about: -Her parents, who are having problems. (But they pretend like they're not.) -Being sent to her grandparents' house for the summer -Never having met said grandparents. -Her blue days—when life feels overwhelming, and it's hard to keep her head up. (This happens a lot.)

Finley's only retreat is the Everwood, a forest kingdom that exists in the pages of her notebook. Until she discovers the endless woods behind her grandparents' house and realizes the Everwood is *real*. Finley sets out on a mission to save the dying Everwood and uncover its secrets. But as the mysteries pile up and the frightening sadness inside her grows, Finley realizes that if she wants to save the Everwood, she'll first have to save herself.

Wednesday Wars, by Gary D. Schmidt – Easy

Meet Holling Hoodhood, a seventh-grader at Camillo Junior High, who must spend Wednesday afternoons with his teacher, Mrs. Baker, while the rest of the class has religious instruction. Mrs. Baker doesn't like Holling—he's sure of it. Why else would she make him read the plays of William Shakespeare outside class? But how can Holling stay out of trouble when he has so much to contend with? A bully demanding cream puffs; angry rats; and a baseball hero signing autographs the very same night Holling has to appear in a play in yellow tights! As fate sneaks up on him again and again, Holling finds Motivation—the Big M—in the most unexpected places and musters up the courage to embrace his destiny, in spite of himself.

Written In the Stars, by Aisha Saeed – Challenging

Naila's conservative immigrant parents have always said the same thing: She may choose what to study, how to wear her hair, and what to be when she grows up—but they will choose her husband. Following their cultural tradition, they will plan an arranged marriage for her. When Naila breaks their rule by falling in love with Saif, her parents are livid. Convinced she has forgotten who she truly is, they travel to Pakistan to visit relatives and explore their roots. But Naila's vacation turns into a nightmare when she learns that plans have changed—her parents have found her a husband and they want her to marry him, now! Despite her greatest efforts, Naila is aghast to find herself cut off from everything and everyone she once knew. Her only hope of escape is Saif . . . if he can find her before it's too late.

Middle School, The Worst Years of My Life or any book in the series, by James Patterson and Chris Tebbetts – Easy

It's Rafe Khatchadorian's first day at Hills Village Middle School, and it's shaping up to be the worst year ever. He has enough problems at home without throwing his first year of middle school into the mix, but luckily he's got an ace plan for the best year ever--if only he can pull it off. With his best friend Leonardo the Silent awarding him points, Rafe tries to break every rule in his school's oppressive Code of Conduct. But not everyone thinks Rafe's plan is a good idea, especially not the teachers, parents, and bullies who keep getting in his way. Will Rafe decide that winning is the only thing that matters? Are things about to go from magic to *tragic*?

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants by Ann Brashares – Average

Some friends just fit together. Once there was a pair of pants. Just an ordinary pair of jeans. But these pants, the Traveling Pants, went on to do great things. This is the story of the four friends—Lena, Tibby, Bridget, and Carmen—who made it possible.

Tangerine by R.J. Palacio - Average

So what if he's legally blind? Even with his bottle-thick, bug-eyed glasses, Paul Fisher can see better than most people. He can see the lies his parents and brother live out, day after day. No one ever listens to Paul, though--until the family moves to Tangerine.

Fast Break, by Mike Lupica – Average

Forced to live on his own, 12-year-old Jayson does whatever it takes to get by. He will do anything to avoid the foster care system. Besides, his real home has always been the beat-up basketball court. He manages to get away with his deception until the day he gets caught stealing. Within a day a social worker places him with a family from the other side of town, the Lawtons. Jayson tests the Lawtons' patience at every turn. He wants out, yet the Lawtons refuse to take the bait. But not everyone in Jayson's new life is so ready to trust him. It's on Jayson to believe that he deserves a better life than the one he once had. The ultimate prize if he can? A trip to play in the state finals at Cameron Indoor Stadium. Getting there will be a journey that reaches far beyond the basketball court.

Out of My Mind, by Sharon Draper – Average

Considered by many to be mentally retarded, a brilliant, impatient fifth-grader with cerebral palsy discovers a technological device that will allow her to speak for the first time.

A Series of Unfortunate Events – Any book(s) in the series – Easy

Are you made fainthearted by death? Does fire unnerve you? Is a villain something that might crop up in future nightmares of yours? Are you thrilled by nefarious plots? Is cold porridge upsetting to you? Vicious threats? Hooks? Uncomfortable clothing? It is likely that your answers will reveal *A Series of Unfortunate Events* to be ill-suited for your personal use. A librarian, bookseller, or acquaintance should be able to suggest books more appropriate for your fragile temperament. But to the rarest of readers we say, "Proceed, but cautiously."

After Eli, by Rebecca Rup – Average

Some people die heroically, others accidentally. When Daniel Anderson's older brother dies, he wonders which category Eli's death falls into. In an attempt to understand, Danny creates a Book of the Dead — an old binder that he fills with details about dead people, how they died, and, most important, for what purpose. Time passes, and eventually Daniel is prompted to look up from his notebook of death and questions to make new friends and be swept into their imaginings. With gentle humor and genuine emotion, Rebecca Rupp examines the questions that arise following a profound loss and the moments that start life rolling again.

Backlash by Sarah Darer Littman – Average

Lara just got told off on Facebook. She thought that Christian liked her, that he was finally going to ask her to his school's homecoming dance. It's been a long time since Lara's felt this bad, this depressed. She's worked really hard since starting high school to be happy and make new friends. Bree used to be BBFs with overweight, depressed Lara in middle school, but constantly listening to Lara's problems got to be too much. After weeks of talking online, Lara thought she knew Christian, so what's with this sudden change? And where does he get off saying horrible things on her wall? Even worse - are they true? But no one realized just how far Christian's harsh comments would push Lara. Not even Bree. As online life collides with real life, the truth starts to come together and the backlash is even more devastating than than anyone could have imagined.

Charlie Joe Jackson's Guide to Not Reading, by Tommy Greewald - Easy

Charlie Joe Jackson may be the most reluctant reader ever born. And so far, he's managed to get through life without ever reading an entire book from cover to cover. But now that he's in middle school, avoiding reading isn't as easy as it used to be. And when his friend Timmy McGibney decides that he's tired of covering for him, Charlie Joe finds himself resorting to desperate measures to keep his perfect record intact.

* The Fault in Our Stars, by John Green - Challenging

Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten.

* Fangirl, by Rainbow Rowell - Challenging

In Rainbow Rowell's *Fangirl*, Cath is a Simon Snow fan. For Cath, being a fan is her life--and she's really good at it. She and her twin sister, Wren, ensconced themselves in the Simon Snow series when they were just kids; it's what got them through their mother leaving. Now that they're going to college, Wren has told Cath she doesn't want to be roommates. For Cath, the question is: Can she do this? Is she ready to start living her own life? Writing her own stories? And does she even want to move on if it means leaving Simon Snow behind?

Classics

Where the Red Fern Grows, by Wilson Rawls – Easy

Billy has long dreamt of owning not one, but two, dogs. So when he's finally able to save up enough money for two pups to call his own—Old Dan and Little Ann—he's ecstatic. It doesn't matter that times are tough; together they'll roam the hills of the Ozarks. Soon Billy and his hounds become the finest hunting team in the valley. Stories of their great achievements spread throughout the region, and the combination of Old Dan's brawn, Little Ann's brains, and Billy's sheer will seems unbeatable. But tragedy awaits these determined hunters—now friends—and Billy learns that hope can grow out of despair, and that the seeds of the future can come from the scars of the past.

Historical Fiction

* The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, by John Boyne – Average

Berlin, 1942: When Bruno returns home from school one day, he discovers that his belongings are being packed in crates. His father has received a promotion and the family must move to a new house far, far away, where there is no one to play with and nothing to do. A tall fence stretches as far as the eye can see and cuts him off from the strange people in the distance. But Bruno longs to be an explorer and decides that there must be more to this desolate new place than meets the eye. While exploring his new environment, he meets another boy whose life and circumstances are very different from his own, and their meeting results in a friendship that has devastating consequences.

The War that Saved My Life, by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley – Easy

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. As Ada teaches herself to ride a pony, learns to read, and watches for German spies, she begins to trust Susan (the woman forced to take Ada in) —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?

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle by Avi - Average

Not every thirteen-year-old girl is accused of murder, brought to trial, and found guilty. But I was just such a girl, and my story is worth relating even if it did happen years ago. Be warned, however: If strong ideas and action offend you, read no more. Find another companion to share your idle hours. For my part I intend to tell the truth as I lived it.

The Slave Dancer by Paula Fox - Challenging

Snatched from the docks of New Orleans, thirteen-year-old Jessie is thrown aboard a slave ship where he must play his life so that captured slaves will "dance," to keep their muscles strong and their bodies profitable for their owners' use.

* The Book Thief by Markus Zusak – Challenging

Death himself narrates the World War II-era story of Liesel Meminger from the time she is taken, at age nine, to live in Molching, Germany, with a foster family. The child arrives having just stolen her first book—although she has not yet learned how to read. Across the ensuing years of the late 1930s and into the 1940s, Liesel collects more stolen books as well as a peculiar set of friends: the boy Rudy, the Jewish refugee Max, the mayors' reclusive wife, and especially her foster parents.

Fantasy

Michael Vey: Fall of Hades (or any book in the series), by Richard Paul Evans - Average

Michael and the Electroclan are about to embark on their deadliest mission yet. Some of them may not make it back. The head of the resistance, known only as the voice, believes that the best way to wipe out the Elgen is to steal their money. They've learned about a highly placed member of the Elite Elgen Guard named Welch, who wants to defect. They also know that Hatch has condemned three of his electric youth to death. If the Electroclan can get to Welch before the Elgen do, and if they can rescue Quentin, Torstyn, and Tara, they just might be able to steal the *Joule*. But it's a big "if"... The stakes have never been higher, and Michael and his friends are about to be tested in ways they never imagined.

The Land of Stories: An Author's Odyssey (or any book in the series), by Chris Colfer – Average

The Masked Man has captured all the royal families from the Land of Stories with the help of his army of literature's greatest villains. With his sinister plan finally in motion, he is eager to destroy the families and take his place as emperor. Alex and Conner know they are no match against the Masked Man's legion of villains, but they realize that they may be in possession of the greatest weapon of all: their own imaginations! So begins the twins' journey into Conner's very own stories to gather an army of pirates, cyborgs, superheroes, and mummies as they band together for the ultimate fight against the Masked Man. Meanwhile, an even more dangerous plan is brewing--one that could change the fates of both the fairy-tale world and the Otherworld forever.

Gregor the Overlander, by Suzanne Collins – Average

Young Gregor falls through a grate in the laundry room of his apartment building and hurtles into the dark Underland. This strange world is on the brink of war, and Gregor's arrival is no accident. A prophecy foretells that Gregor has a role to play in the Underland's uncertain future. Gregor wants no part of it -- until he realizes it's the only way to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance. Gregor embarks on a dangerous adventure that will change both him and the Underland forever.

Any book in the Harry Potter Series, by JK Rowling, John Tiffany, Jack Thorne – Release Date July 31 - Challenging

Based on an original new story by J.K. Rowling, Jack Thorne and John Tiffany, a new play by Jack Thorne, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* is the eighth story in the Harry Potter series and the first official Harry Potter story to be presented on stage. The play will receive its world premiere in London's West End on July 30, 2016. It was always difficult being Harry Potter and it isn't much easier now that he is an overworked employee of the Ministry of Magic, a husband and father of three school-age children. While Harry grapples with

a past that refuses to stay where it belongs, his youngest son Albus must struggle with the weight of a family legacy he never wanted. As past and present fuse ominously, both father and son learn the uncomfortable truth: sometimes, darkness comes from unexpected places.

Kingdom Keepers – Or any book from the series, Ridley Pearson - Easy

In book one, five young teens tapped as models for theme park "guides" find themselves pitted against Disney villains and witches that threaten both the future of Walt Disney World and the stability of the world outside its walls. Using a cutting-edge technology Finn Whitman, an Orlando teen, and four other kids are transformed into hologram projections that guide guests through the park. The new technology turns out, however, to have unexpected effects that are both thrilling and scary. Soon Finn finds himself transported into the Magic Kingdom at night. Is it real? Is he dreaming?

Science Fiction / Dystopian Lit

***I Am Number Four** (or any book in the series) by Pittacus Lore - Challenging

John Smith seems like an ordinary teenager, living a normal life with his guardian Henri in Paradise, Ohio. But for John, keeping a low profile is essential, because he is *not* an ordinary teenager. He's an alien from the planet Lorien, and he's on the run. A group of evil aliens from the planet Mogadore, who destroyed his world, are hunting anyone who escaped. Nine Loric children were sent to Earth to live in hiding until they grew up and developed their Legacies, powers that would help them fight back—and help them save us. Three of them are now dead. John is Number Four, and he knows he's next....

Gathering Blue, by Lois Lowry – Average

The story of Kira, orphaned, physically flawed, and left with an uncertain future. As she did in *The Giver* and later *Messenger*, in *Gathering Blue* Lois Lowry challenges readers to imagine what our world could become, how people could evolve, and what could be considered valuable.

The Martian: Classroom Edition, by Andy Weir – Challenging

Six days ago, astronaut Mark Watney became one of the first people to walk on Mars. Now, he's sure he'll be the first person to die there. After a dust storm nearly kills him and forces his crew to evacuate while thinking him dead, Mark finds himself stranded and completely alone with no way to even signal Earth that he's alive—and even if he could get word out, his supplies would be gone long before a rescue could arrive. Chances are, though, he won't have time to starve to death. The damaged machinery, unforgiving environment, or plain-old "human error" are much more likely to kill him first. But Mark isn't ready to give up yet. Drawing on his ingenuity, his engineering skills—and a relentless, dogged refusal to quit—he steadfastly confronts one seemingly insurmountable obstacle after the next. Will his resourcefulness be enough to overcome the impossible odds against him?

Cinder, by Marissa Meyer – Challenging

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. But when her life becomes intertwined with the handsome Prince Kai's, she suddenly finds herself at the center of an intergalactic struggle. Caught between duty and freedom, loyalty and betrayal, she must uncover secrets about her past in order to protect her world's future.

*** Divergent**: Or any book in the series, by Veronica Roth – Challenging

One choice can transform you. Beatrice Prior's society is divided into five factions—Candor (the honest), Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Amity (the peaceful), and Erudite (the intelligent). Beatrice must choose between staying with her Abnegation family and transferring factions. Her choice will shock her

community and herself. But the newly christened Tris also has a secret, one she's determined to keep hidden, because in this world, *what makes you different makes you dangerous*.

*** Red Queen, by Victoria Aveyard – Challenging**

Mare Barrow's world is divided by blood—those with common, Red blood serve the Silver-blooded elite, who are gifted with superhuman abilities. Mare is a Red, scraping by as a thief in a poor, rural village, until a twist of fate throws her in front of the Silver court. There, she discovers she has an ability of her own. To cover up this impossibility, the king forces her to play the role of a lost Silver princess, and betroths her to one of his own sons. As Mare is drawn further into the Silver world, she risks everything and uses her new position to help the Scarlet Guard—a growing Red rebellion—even as her heart tugs her in an impossible direction. One wrong move can lead to her death, but in the dangerous game she plays the only certainty is betrayal.

*** The Selection or any book in the series by Kiera Cass – Average**

For thirty-five girls, the Selection is the chance of a lifetime. The opportunity to escape the life laid out for them since birth. But for America Singer, being Selected is a nightmare. It means turning her back on her secret love with Aspen, who is a caste below her. Leaving her home to enter a fierce competition for a crown she doesn't want. Living in a palace that is constantly threatened by violent rebel attacks. Then America meets Prince Maxon. Gradually, she starts to question all the plans she's made for herself—and realizes that the life she's always dreamed of may not compare to a future she never imagined.

Mystery/Thriller

Abduction, by Peg Kehret – Easy

Matt is missing. Bonnie's brother left his classroom to use the bathroom—and disappeared. A police dog traces his scent to the curb, where he apparently got into a vehicle. But why would Matt go anywhere with a stranger? Overwhelmed with fear, Bonnie discovers that her dog is gone, too. Was Pookie used as a lure for Matt? Bonnie makes one big mistake in her attempt to find her brother. In a chilling climax on a Washington State ferry, Bonnie and Matt must outsmart their abductor or pay with their lives.

*** The Body of Christopher Creed by Carol Plum Ucci - Challenging**

First-novelist Plum-Ucci wraps a well-crafted mystery around a topical issue: the effect teenage intolerance can have on misfits. When class freak Chris Creed suddenly disappears, his fellow students are not so much worried but abuzz with speculation: Is he a runaway, a suicide, a crime victim? Through a complicated but believable turn of events, narrator Torey Adams, a popular 16-year-old, starts to feel some concern and resolves to find the truth.

And Then There Were None by Agatha Christie – Challenging

"Ten . . ." Ten strangers are lured to an isolated island mansion off the Devon coast by a mysterious "U. N. Owen." "Nine . . ." At dinner a recorded message accuses each of them in turn of having a guilty secret, and by the end of the night one of the guests is dead.

*** Paper Towns by John Green – Challenging**

When Margo Roth Spiegelman beckons Quentin Jacobsen in the middle of the night—dressed like a ninja and plotting an ingenious campaign of revenge—he follows her. Margo's always planned extravagantly, and, until now, she's always planned solo. After a lifetime of loving Margo from afar, things are finally looking up for Q . . . until day breaks and she has vanished. Always an enigma, Margo has now become a mystery. But there are clues. And they're for Q.

Supplemental List

Students may choose up to two novels from this list.

Fantasy

The Tale of Despereaux by Kate DiCamillo – Easy

The adventures of Despereaux Tilling, a small mouse of unusual talents, the princess that he loves, the servant girl who longs to be a princess, and a devious rat determined to bring them all to ruin.

The Dark is Rising by Susan Cooper – Average

On his eleventh birthday, Will Stanton discovers that he is the last of the Old Ones, destined to seek the six magical signs that will enable the Old Ones to triumph over the evil forces of the Dark.

Castle in the Air by Diana Wynne Jones - Challenging

Abdullah the rug merchant leaves his humdrum life far behind when he purchases a threadbare magic carpet from a mysterious stranger. Almost immediately, Abdullah is whisked off on a series of adventures that bear an uncanny resemblance to his own daydreams.

First Light, by Rebecca Stead – Challenging

Twelve-year-old Peter and his family arrive in Greenland for his father's research, where he stumbles upon a secret his mother has been hiding from him all his life, and begins an adventure he never would have imagined possible.

Science Fiction

Fantastic Voyage, by Isaac Asimov - Easy

A story about five people shrinking down and going into a scientist's body. They try to destroy a blood clot in the scientist's brain with a laser. Throughout the entire book the team uncovers many problems that they must face to complete the mission. The team has only 60 minutes to get to the clot and destroy it, and get out of the body.

Running Out of Time by Margaret P. Haddix – Easy

What if the costumed workers at historical sites really lived there, and tourists watched them through hidden cameras rather than from pathways? What if those workers and families were not allowed to leave, ever? Jessie lives in the 1840s, or so she believes until her mother sends her on an escape mission outside the fence, where it's 1996.

Matched or Crossed by Ally Condie – Average

Cassia has always trusted the Society to make the right choices for her: what to read, what to watch, what to believe. So when Xander's face appears on-screen at her Matching ceremony, Cassia knows he is her ideal mate . . . until she sees Ky Markham's face flash for an instant before the screen fades to black. Cassia can't stop thinking about Ky, and as they slowly fall in love, Cassia begins to doubt the Society's infallibility and is faced with an impossible choice: between Xander and Ky, between the only life she's known and a path that no one else has dared to follow.

Graphic Novels

Anya's Ghost. By Vera Brosgol – Average – Graphic Novel

This graphic novel tells the story of Anya, a Russian immigrant, whose lack of self-esteem changes when her life is almost taken over by a determined ghost.

Fiction

Crash by Jerry Spinelli – Easy

Ever since first grade "Crash" Coogan has been tormenting dweeby Penn Ward, a skinny vegetarian Quaker boy who lives in a tiny former garage with his aged parents. Now that they're in seventh grade, "chippy chirpy perky" Penn becomes an even better target: he joins the cheerleading squad.

Cosmic, by Frank Cottrell Boyce – Easy

Twelve-year-old Liam, who looks like he is thirty and is tired of being treated like he is older than he actually is, decides he is going to pose as the adult chaperone on the first spaceship to take civilians into space, but when he ends up in outer space with a group of kids and no adult supervision, he must think fast to make things right.

The Misfits by James Howe – Easy

The four "misfits" are slightly larger than life wiser than their years, worldlier than the small town setting would suggest, and remarkably well-adjusted but there remains much authenticity in the story's message about preadolescent stereotyping and the devastating effects of degrading labels. An upbeat, reassuring novel that encourages preteens and teens to celebrate their individuality.

Olive's Ocean by Kevin Henkes – Easy

More than anything Martha wants to be a writer. The problem is that her father does, too. Is there room for two writers in a single family? This is only one of the many questions that beg to be answered during Martha's twelfth summer. Here are others: Is Godbee, the paternal grandmother whom the family is visiting at Cape Cod, dying? Why is Martha's father so angry? Could Jimmy, the eldest of the five neighboring Manning brothers, be falling in love with her (and vice-versa)? And what does all this have to do with Olive, Martha's mysterious classmate, who died after being hit by a car weeks earlier?

Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli - Easy

He wasn't born with the name Maniac Magee. He came into this world named Jeffrey Lionel Magee, but when his parents died and his life changed, so did his name. And Maniac Magee became a legend. But the thing Maniac Magee is best known for is what he did for the kids from the East Side and those from the West Side.

Million Dollar Throw, by Mike Lupica – Average

Eighth-grade star quarterback Nate Brodie's family is feeling the stress of the troubled economy, and Nate is frantic because his best friend Abby is going blind, so when he gets a chance to win a million dollars if he can complete a pass during the halftime of a New England Patriot's game, he is nearly overwhelmed by the pressure to succeed.

Crazy Lady by J. Conly – Average

In this story, a boy comes to understand his own life through his relationship with Maxine and her special son.

The Pigman by Paul Zindel - Average

When sophomores John and Lorraine played a practical joke a few months ago on a stranger named Angelo Pignati, they had no idea what they were starting. Virtually overnight, almost against their will, the two befriended the lonely old man.

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton – Average

No one ever said life was easy. But Ponyboy is pretty sure that he's got things figured out. He knows that he can count on his brothers, Darry and Sodapop. And he knows that he can count on his friends—true friends who would do anything for him, like Johnny and Two-Bit. And when it comes to the Socs—a vicious gang of rich kids

who enjoy beating up on "greasers" like him and his friends—he knows that he can count on them for trouble. But one night someone takes things too far, and Ponyboy's world is turned upside down...

Wringer by Jerry Spinelli – Average

Palmer dreads turning ten because he does not want to become a “wringer” at Family Fest. After great personal struggle, Palmer stops being afraid and stands up for what he believes in.

Moves Make the Man by Bruce Brooks - Average

Jerome Foxworthy -- the Jayfox to his friends -- likes to think he can handle anything. He handled growing up without a father. He handled being the first black kid in school. And he sure can handle a basketball.

The Death Defying Pepper Roux, by Geraldine McCaughrean – Challenging

Pepper Roux decides to test fate and embarks on a journey the day before he turns fourteen, which is also the day he is expected to die, meeting outrageous friends and dangerous enemies along the way.

Historical Fiction

Jason's Gold by Will Hobbs – Easy

Fifteen-year-old Jason first hears about the discovery of gold in the Klondike while working as a paperboy in New York. He quickly rushes to Seattle to meet up with his brothers, only to find that they have left for the Yukon without him. As he goes the trip alone, adventures pile up.

The Midwife's Apprentice by Karen Cushman - Easy

The story takes place in medieval England. The protagonist is Alyce, who rises from the dung heap (literally) of homelessness and namelessness to find a station in life--apprentice to the crotchety, snaggletooth midwife Jane Sharp.

The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate , by Jacqueline Kelly - Average

In central Texas in 1899, eleven-year-old Callie Vee Tate is instructed to be a lady by her mother, learns about love from the older three of her six brothers, and studies the natural world with her grandfather, the latter of which leads to an important discovery.

Daughter of Venice by Donna Jo Napoli - Average

A historical novel about a young woman who longs to experience the wide world beyond her cloistered window. The year is 1592, and 14-year-old Donata is a pampered member of the noble Mocenigo family. But Donata is restless.

The Ramsay Scallop by Frances Temple – Average

Thirteenth century couple, Elenor and Tom, overcomes their reluctance to marry after they are sent on a pre-nuptial journey to Spain and learn more about the world and each other.

The Brooklyn Nine, by Alan Gratz – Challenging

Follows the fortunes of a German immigrant family through nine generations, beginning in 1845, as they experience American life and play baseball

Fly Girl, by Sherri L. Smith – Challenging

During World War II, a light-skinned African American girl "passes" for white in order to join the Women Airforce Service Pilots.

Cold Sassy Tree by Olive Ann Burns - Challenging

The one thing you can depend on in Cold Sassy, Georgia, is that word gets around - fast. When Grandpa E. Rucker Blakeslee announces one July morning in 1906 that he's aiming to marry the young and freckled milliner,

Miss Love Simpson - a bare three weeks after Granny Blakeslee has gone to her reward - the news is served up all over town with that afternoon's dinner.

Nine Days a Queen by Ann Rinaldi – Challenging

Lady Jane became a pawn in the complex game of political maneuvers, until, with the death of King Edward VI, she was forced to accept the throne as a move to block Mary and her Catholic supporters. When Mary's right to the throne was recognized, she had 16-year-old Jane beheaded.

Echoes of the White Giraffe by Sook Nyui Choi – Challenging

Sequel to: Year of impossible goodbyes. Fifteen-year-old Sookan adjusts to life in the refugee village in Pusan but continues to hope that the civil war will end and her family will be reunited in Seoul.

Gathering of Pearls by Sook Nyui Choi – Challenging

Sequel to: Year of impossible goodbyes. Sookan struggles to balance her new life as a college freshman in the United States with expectations from her family at home in Korea.

Mystery

The Hideout by Eve Bunting – Easy

Twelve-year-old Andy feels he would be better off with his father in England than in his San Francisco home with his mother and her new husband. To raise the money needed to finance his trip to England, he stages his own kidnapping, but the plan backfires when someone decides to make the kidnapping a reality.

The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin- Average

This highly inventive mystery involves sixteen people who are invited to the reading of Samuel W. Westing's will. They could become millionaires-it all depends on how they play the tricky and dangerous Westing game, a game involving blizzards, burglaries, and bombings!

The Sally Lockhart Trilogy: The Ruby in the Smoke, The Shadow in the North, The Tiger in the Well by Phillip Pullman - Challenging

"Her name was Sally Lockhart; and within fifteen minutes, she was going to kill a man." Philip Pullman begins his Sally Lockhart trilogy with a bang in *The Ruby in the Smoke*--a fast-paced, finely crafted thriller set in a rogue- and scalawag-ridden Victorian London. His 16-year-old heroine has no time for the usual trials of adolescence: her father has been murdered, and she needs to find out how and why.

Non-Fiction (Not leveled)

How They Croaked: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous by Georgia Bragg, Kevin O'Malley – Non-Fiction

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. *How They Croaked* relays all the gory details of how nineteen world figures gave up the ghost.

Chasing Lincoln's Killer, by James L. Swanson – Non-Fiction

Recounts the twelve-day pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth, covering the chase through Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, with a discussion of Abraham Lincoln as a father, husband, and friend that examines the impact of his death on those close to him.

Our Choice: A Plan to Solve the Climate Crisis, by Al Gore – Non-Fiction

Former vice-president Al Gore theorizes that making bolder choices regarding the environment in the twenty-first century will create more jobs, stimulate the economy, and inspire a new generation of potential world leaders.

Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland, by Sallie M. Walker – Non-Fiction

Reports on the work of forensic scientists who are excavating grave sites in James Fort, in Jamestown, Virginia, to understand who lived in the Chesapeake Bay area in the 1600s and 1700s; and uncovers the lives of a teenage boy, a ship's captain, a colonial officer, an African slave girl, and others.

An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 by Jim Murphy
If surviving the first 20 years of a new nationhood weren't challenge enough, the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, centering in Philadelphia, was a crisis of monumental proportions. Murphy chronicles this frightening time with solid research and a flair for weaving facts into fascinating stories, beginning with the fever's emergence on August 3, when a young French sailor died in Richard Denny's boardinghouse on North Water Street.

Police Lab: How Forensic Science Tracks Down and Convicts Criminals by David Owen
Police Lab shows how forensic scientists gather and analyze evidence, examine weapons and bodies and use DNA testing and other techniques to help solve crimes. Twenty real-life case studies show forensic scientists in action and demonstrate the fascinating secrets of police labs.

Black Potatoes by Susan Campbell Bartoletti
A compelling story of men, women, and children in Ireland who defied landlords and searched empty fields for scraps of harvested vegetables and edible weeds to eat, who walked several miles each day to hard-labor jobs for meager wages and to reach soup kitchens, and who committed crimes just to be sent to jail, where they were assured of a meal. It's the story of children and adults who suffered from starvation, disease, and the loss of family and friends, as well as those who died.

Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters by Andrea Davis Pinkney
Rosa Parks. Harriet Tubman. Shirley Chisholm. The lives these women led are part of an incredible story about courage in the face of oppression; about the challenges and triumphs of the battle for civil rights; and about speaking out for what you believe in--even when it feels like no one is listening.

Tell Them We Remember: The Story of the Holocaust by Susan Bachrach
Bachrach makes the victims of Hitler's cruelty immediate to readers, showing that, like readers, they were individuals with hobbies and desires, friends and family.

Biography

Lincoln: A Photobiography by Russell Freedman
A complete and enjoyable book about one of the nation's most fascinating and important figures, Abraham Lincoln. Russell Freedman covers Lincoln's life and career in a balanced treatment that is enhanced by period photographs and drawings.

Autobiography

Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo by Zlata Filipovic
From September 1991 through October 1993, young Zlata Filipovic kept a diary. When she began it, she was 11 years old, concerned mostly with friends, school, piano lessons, MTV, and Madonna. As the diary ends, she has become used to constant bombing and snipers; severe shortages of food, water, and gas; and the end of a privileged adolescence in her native Sarajevo.