

Oak Middle School
2018 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

Wicked Bugs (Young Readers Edition): the meanest, deadliest, grossest bugs on Earth by Amy Stewart - Average
Did you know there are zombie bugs that not only *eat* other bugs but also inhabit and control their bodies? There's even a wasp that delivers a perfectly-placed sting in a cockroach's brain and then leads the roach around by its antennae — like a dog on a leash. Scorpions glow in ultraviolet light. Lots of bugs dine on corpses. And if you want to know how much it hurts to get stung by a bullet ant (hint: it really, *really* hurts), you can consult the Schmidt Sting Pain Index. This book is a creepy-cool guide to the worst of the worst of insects, arachnids, and other arthropods.

* 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

* One Goal by Amy Bass – Challenging

In the tradition of *Friday Night Lights* and *Outcasts United*, ONE GOAL tells the inspiring story of the soccer team in a town bristling with racial tension that united Somali refugees and multi-generation Mainers in their quest for state--and ultimately national--glory.

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

Counting by 7's by Holly Goldberg Sloan - Average

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. Her journey to find a fascinatingly diverse and fully believable surrogate family is a joy and a revelation to read.

El Deafo by Cece Bell – Easy

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 subsequent experiences with the Phonic Ear, a very powerful—and very awkward—hearing aid. The Phonic Ear gives Cece the ability to hear but also isolates her from her classmates. She really just wants to fit in and find a true friend. After some trouble, she is finally able to harness the power of the Phonic Ear and become “El Deafo, Listener for All.” And more importantly, declare a place for herself in the world and find the friend she's longed for.

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.

*** Far From the Tree** by Robin Benway – Challenging

Robin Benway's beautiful interweaving story of three very different teenagers connected by blood explores the meaning of family in all its forms—how to find it, how to keep it, and how to love it.

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*?

Any book from The Lunch Lady series by Jarrett J. Krosoczka – Easy

Serving justice . . . and lunch! Hector, Terrence, and Dee have always wondered about their school lunch lady. What does she do when she isn't dishing out the daily special? Where does she live? Does she have a lot of cats at home? Little do they know, Lunch Lady doesn't just serve sloppy joes—she serves justice! Whatever danger lies ahead, it's no match for LUNCH LADY!

Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli – Easy

Stargirl. From the day she arrives at quiet Mica High in a burst of color and sound, the hallways hum with the murmur of “Stargirl, Stargirl.” She captures Leo Borlock's heart with just one smile. She sparks a school-spirit revolution with just one cheer. The students of Mica High are enchanted. At first. Then they turn on her. Stargirl is suddenly shunned for everything that makes her different, and Leo, panicked and desperate with love, urges her to become the very thing that can destroy her: normal.

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 Bloor - 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.

Out of My Mind, by Sharon Draper – Average

Considered by many to be mentally challenged, 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."

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

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain – Challenging

Tom and Huck Finn conceal themselves in the town cemetery, where they witness a grave robbery and a murder. Later, the boys, feeling unappreciated, hide out on a forested island while the townspeople conduct a frantic search and finally mourn them as dead. The friends triumphantly return to town to attend their own funeral, in time for a dramatic trial for the graveyard murder. A three-day ordeal ensues when Tom and his sweetheart, Becky Thatcher, lose their way in the very cave that conceals the murderer. With its hilarious accounts of boyish pranks and its shrewd assessments of human nature, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* has captivated generations of readers of all ages.

Historical Fiction

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 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

Any book in the Magnus Chase series by Rick Riordan – Average

Magnus Chase has seen his share of trouble. Ever since that terrible night two years ago when his mother told him to run, he has lived alone on the streets of Boston, surviving by his wits, staying one step ahead of the police and truant officers. One day, he's tracked down by an uncle he barely knows. Uncle Randolph tells him an impossible secret: Magnus is the son of a Norse god. The gods of Asgard are preparing for war. Trolls, giants, and worse monsters are stirring for doomsday. 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 . . .

Any book in the Wings of Fire series by Tui T Sutherland – Easy

Not every dragonet wants a destiny ... Clay has grown up under the mountain, chosen along with four other dragonets to fulfill a mysterious prophecy and end the war between the dragon tribes of Pyrrhia. He's not so sure about the prophecy part, but Clay can't imagine not living with the other dragonets; they're his best friends. So when one of the dragonets is threatened, all five spring into action. Together, they will choose freedom over fate, leave the mountain, and fulfill their destiny -- on their own terms.

Any book in the Harry Potter Series, by JK Rowling - Average

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?

* The Young Elites by Marie Lu – Challenging

Amouteru is a survivor of the blood fever. A decade ago, the deadly illness swept through her nation. Most of the infected perished, while many of the children who survived were left with strange markings. Adelina's black hair turned silver, her lashes went pale, and now she has only a jagged scar where her left eye once was. But some of the fever's survivors are rumored to possess more than just scars—they are believed to have mysterious and powerful gifts, and they have come to be called the Young Elites. Teren Santoro works for the king. As Leader of the Inquisition Axis, it is his job to seek out the Young Elites, to destroy them before they destroy the nation. He believes the Young Elites to be dangerous and vengeful, but it's Teren who may possess the darkest secret of all.

Science Fiction / Dystopian Lit

*Ready Player One by Ernest Cline - Challenging

In the year 2045, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenage Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines. But when Wade stumbles upon the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize. The race is on, and if Wade's going to survive, he'll have to win—and confront the real world he's always been so desperate to escape.

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.*

The Maze Runner by James Dashner – Average

When Thomas wakes up in the lift, the only thing he can remember is his name. He's surrounded by strangers—boys whose memories are also gone. Outside the towering stone walls that surround them is a limitless, ever-changing maze. It's the only way out—and no one's ever made it through alive. Then a girl arrives. The first girl ever. And the message she delivers is terrifying: Remember. Survive. Run.

* 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.

The Recruit: Cherub, Book 1 by Robert Muchamore – Average

CHERUB agents are highly trained, extremely talented--and all under the age of seventeen. For official purposes, these agents do not exist. They are sent out on missions to spy on terrorists, hack into crucial documents, and gather intel on global threats—all without gadgets or weapons. It is an exceptionally dangerous job, but these agents have one crucial advantage: adults never suspect that teens are spying on them.

Mystery/Thriller

* 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.

Murder on the Orient Express by Agatha Christie – Challenging

Just after midnight, the famous Orient Express is stopped in its tracks by a snowdrift. By morning, the millionaire Samuel Edward Ratchett lies dead in his compartment, his door locked from the inside. Without a shred of doubt, one of his fellow passengers is the murderer. Isolated by the storm, detective Hercule Poirot must find the killer among a dozen of the dead man's enemies, before the murderer decides to strike again.

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.

*You're Welcome Universe, by Whitney Gardner – Schneider Family Book Award – Challenging

After executing her best-ever graffiti, to cover up an insult written about her friend, Julia is kicked out of her Deaf school and mainstreamed. Frustrated by trying to connect with her hearing peers, Julia delves deeper into her art, only to find a rival defacing her finest creations.

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

Flygirl, 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.