

**Portsmouth Christian Academy at Dover
Suggested Summer Reading and Activities
Grades 5-8
2019**



Great Books!

Note to parents: The PCA library recommends the following books for students' reading enjoyment and to help them preserve their reading skills over the summer months.

*The following titles represent a wide range of recommended reading for students from grades 5-8. **Books of interest to all four grades are listed under "Grades 5-8" while books that are more complex/mature in content and/or language are listed under "More Good Upper Junior High Reads".** Books are appropriate for and appeal to different ages, reading skills and maturity levels, personalities, and parents' preferences. As always, please use your discretion in helping your student choose what to read.*

Readers may wish to consult the list for grades 3-4 as well. Older junior high students may wish to consult the Upper School list for additional great reading suggestions.

A Word About Lexile Measures

Lexile measures quantify the difficulty of a piece of text OR a student's reading ability level. Where available, Lexile levels have been provided for books in the following list, in the hope that these books will help your student to maintain and improve his or her reading skills over the summer.

2019

Angus, Sam. *A Horse Called Hero*. On the brink of World War II, a family is forced out of their London home and into the countryside. Wolfie and his older sister Dodo are devastated to leave behind everything they've ever known, but they slowly settle into their new life. One day they come across an

orphaned foal, which they raise as Hero, a strong and beautiful horse who lives up to his name when he saves the children from a fire. Wolfie and Dodo find comfort in their new life, but the war is escalating quickly and horses are needed for combat. One night, Hero is stolen, and the children are shattered. Years go by and there's no sign of Hero returning. It's only when Wolfie becomes a stable hand that he discovers Hero has ended up working in the mines under terrible conditions. Then and there, Wolfie resolves to save Hero, even if it puts his own life in danger. Together, they will survive.

Applegate, Katherine. *Endling: the Last*. Byx is the youngest member of her dairne pack. Believed to possess remarkable abilities, her mythical doglike species has been hunted to near extinction in the war-torn kingdom of Nedarra. After her pack is hunted down and killed, Byx fears she may be the last of her species. The Endling. So Byx sets out to find safe haven, and to see if the legends of other hidden dairnes are true. Along the way, she meets new allies--animals and humans alike--who each have their own motivations for joining her quest. And although they begin as strangers, they become their own kind of family--one that will ultimately uncover a secret that may threaten every creature in their world”

Avi. *The Player King*. In 1486 England, a penniless kitchen boy named Lambert Simnel is told by a mysterious friar that he, Lambert, is actually Prince Edward, the true King of England, setting him on a dangerous course to regain the throne. Based on a true story.

Burgos, Hilda Eunice. Ana Maria does NOT live in a castle. Ana Maria Reyes tries to win a scholarship to a prestigious New York academy, only to find herself facing obstacles. In the process, she discovers herself and the importance of family.

Bowels, David. *They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems*. Güero describes his neighborhood on the Mexican border, his hard-working family, and his growing love of poetry in this novel-in-verse.

Maldonado, Torrey. *Tight*. Bryan’s friendship with new friend Mike highlights the young teen’s journey through peer pressure and family dynamics as he struggles to navigate the consequences of choosing between right and wrong. (*Pura Belpré Author Honor Book*)

Cartaya, Pablo. *Marcus Vega Doesn't Speak Spanish*. After Marcus is suspended from school for fighting, his frustrated mother takes him and his brother to Puerto Rico for a week to reconnect with family he didn't know existed.

Creech, Sharon. *Saving Winslow*. Through vignettes of sparse text, this story follows 10-year-old Louie as he takes on the challenge of saving a fragile, newborn mini-donkey that has been rejected by its mother.

DiCamillo, Kate. *Louisiana's Way Home*. Louisiana finds her own inner strength when her granny abandons her in a run-down motel while they attempt to lift a curse that has plagued their family for generations.

Galante, Cecilia. *Strays Like Us*. Twelve-year-old Fred (never Winifred) is being fostered by the eccentric but kind Margery Dawson while her mother is dealing with addiction problems, and mostly Fred is determined not to form any attachments to anybody--until the condition of Toby, the abused dog next door, captures first her attention and then her heart, and somehow it becomes increasingly difficult to stay detached from the people who are helping her.

Gemeinhart, Dan. *Good Dog*. Brodie was a good dog. And good dogs go to heaven. Except Brodie can't move on. Not just yet. As wonderful as his glimpse of the afterlife is, he can't forget the boy he left behind. The boy he loved, and who loved him in return. The boy who's still in danger. So Brodie breaks the rules of heaven. He returns to Earth as a spirit. With the help of two other lost souls -- lovable pitbull Tuck and surly housecat Patsy -- he is determined to find his boy and to save him. Even if it costs him paradise. Even if he loses his eternal soul. Because it's what a good dog would do.

Glaser, Karina Yan. *The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street*. old that they will have to move out of their Harlem brownstone just after Christmas, the five Vanderbeeker children, ages four to twelve, decide to change their reclusive landlord's mind.

Gratz, Alan. *Grenade*. On April 1, 1945 with the battle of Okinawa beginning, fourteen-year-old native Okinawan Hideki, drafted into the Blood and Iron Student Corps, is handed two grenades and told to go kill American soldiers; small for his age Hideki does not really want to kill anyone, he just wants to find his family, and his struggle across the island will finally bring him face-to-face with Ray, a marine in his very first battle--and the choice he makes then will change his life forever.

Gratz, Alan. *Prisoner B-3087*. Based on the life of Jack Gruener, this book relates his story of survival from the Nazi occupation of Krakow, when he was eleven, through a succession of concentration camps, to the final liberation of Dachau.

Gratz, Alan. *Projekt 1065*. It is 1943, and thirteen-year-old Michael O'Shaunessey, son of the Irish ambassador to Nazi Germany in Berlin, is also a spy for the British Secret Service, so he has joined the Hitler Youth, and pretending that he agrees with their violence and book-burning is hard enough--but when he is asked to find out more about "Projekt 1065" both his and his parents' lives get a lot more dangerous.

Hingson, Michael. *Thunder Dog: The True Story of a Blind Man, His Guide Dog, and the Triumph of Trust*. Discover how blindness and a bond between dog and man saved lives and brought hope during one of America's darkest days.

Key, Watt. *Deep Water*. When two reckless clients refuse to follow directions while diving twelve-year-old Julie realizes she is over her head.

Medina, Meg. *Merci Suarez Changes Gear*. (2019 Newbery Medal Winner) Eleven-year-old Cuban American Merci Suarez balances the demands of her multi-generational family with the challenges of being a scholarship student at a private school in Florida.

Murdock, Catherine Gilbert. *The Book of Boy*. (2019 Newbery Honor book) Readers are swept into an epic quest across Europe in 1350 with Boy and a mysterious pilgrim, adventuring to recover seven relics of St. Peter. Layered characters from goats to nuns, lyrical languages, and multiple reveals combine to create this powerful story of redemption.

Nielsen, Jennifer A. *Resistance*. In 1942 sixteen-year-old Chaya Lindner is a Jewish girl living in Nazi-occupied Poland, a courier who smuggles food and documents to the isolated Jewish ghettos in southern Poland, depending on her forged papers and "Aryan" features--but when a mission goes wrong and many of her colleagues are arrested she finds herself on a journey to Warsaw, where an uprising is in the works.

Sandler, Martin W. *Apollo 8: The Mission that Changed Everything*. With riveting text and stunning archival

photos capturing the excitement and danger, this compelling account of the Apollo 8 mission emphasizes the turning point of the space program.

Sidman, Joyce. *The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian's Art Changed Science*. On page featuring Merian's illustrations, this inviting volume demonstrates how her fascination with observing life cycles led her to create realistic and detailed drawings that changed scientific research.

Stone, Tanya Lee. *Pass Go and Collect \$200: The Real Story of How Monopoly Was Invented*. This picture-book history offers a spirited account of the evolution of the popular board game and the people who were involved over the years in its creation.

Sutherland, Tui. *Wings of Fire Series Books 1-12*. These are fantasy books about different types of dragons.

Watkins, Steve. *On Blood Road*. Taylor is a rebellious teenager with a habit of sneaking out to hang with his anti-war friends, so in January 1968 his mother drags him off to Saigon where his father is attached to the United States embassy; bored (and still rebellious) Taylor sneaks out of the embassy to watch the Tet celebrations, just as the war erupts all over Vietnam and there he is captured by the North Vietnamese Army and sent North as a prisoner and hostage--and during the brutal journey Taylor is forced to confront the realities of war and survival for the first time in his sheltered life.

Books

Alcott, Louisa. *Little Women*. 1160L They came to life on the PCA stage in 2012! You'll never forget Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy March once you read this much-loved story of four very different sisters growing up in New England during the Civil War years! Enjoy their adventures and misadventures, and then read on as *Little Men* follows the lives of Jo March (now Jo Bhaer) and the many boys in the school run by her and her professor husband.

Alexander, Lloyd. *Time Cat*. 660L Jason isn't too surprised when Gareth, his cat, speaks to him. What's surprising is that Gareth tells him he doesn't actually have nine lives- but he can visit nine lives, anywhere, at any time in the history of the world. What's more, he can take Jason with him!

Anderson, Laurie R. King. *Fever 1793*. 580L *Fever 1793* is based on the true story of the yellow fever epidemic that killed 5,000 residents of Philadelphia during the hot, mosquito-infested summer of 1793. When 16-year-old Mattie's mother contracts the disease, Mattie and her grandfather, like many others, must flee the city, where they endure terror and hardship before they return and try to find her mother and restart their lives.

Angleberger, Tom. *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda*. 760L According to sixth grade wisdom, Dwight is kind of a loser until he starts talking to his classmates via an origami finger puppet of Yoda. If that weren't strange enough, the puppet is uncannily wise and accurate. Dwight's classmate Tommy wonders how Yoda can be so smart when Dwight himself is so clueless. With contributions from his puzzled classmates, he assembles the case file that forms this funny but wise novel and its many sequels.

Applegate, Katherine. *The One and Only Ivan*. 2013 Newbery Award winner. 570L This awesome book is based on the true story of Ivan the Shopping Mall gorilla. If it seems strange to read a point written from the point of view of a gorilla, it won't after you read it. This is a heart-tugging, heart-warming, awesome novel of courage and friendship!

Applegate, Kathryn. *Wishtree*. L590 This thoughtful story is told from the point of view of an oak tree named Red, who is "two hundred and sixteen rings old," Red is part of a special tradition in the community, because around May 1 of every year, people write their wishes on pieces of cloth and hang them from Red's branches. Samar, a young Muslim refugee, wishes for a friend, but another boy hangs hateful messages on the tree, directed at Samar and her family. The owner of the tree is planning to cut Red down, hoping the hateful messages will disappear as well as the roots reaching into the plumbing. Can Red be saved and can hate turn to acceptance, with help from the animals and birds that shelter in Red's branches?

Balliett, Blue. *Chasing Vermeer*. 770L When a book brings Petra and Calder together, strange things start to happen, including the disappearance of a valuable Vermeer painting. The two find themselves at the center of an international art scandal. Petra and Calder are drawn into a mysterious labyrinth, and must draw on their intuition, their problem solving skills, and their knowledge of Vermeer. Can they solve a crime that has stumped even the FBI? For another exciting art mystery, try *The Calder Game* and other titles by the same author.

Barnhill, Kelly. *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*. 2017 Newbery Medal. 640L. Every year, the people of the Protectorate leave a baby as an offering to the witch who lives in the forest. They hope this sacrifice will keep her from terrorizing their town. But the witch in the forest, Xan, is kind. She shares her home with a wise Swamp Monster and a Perfectly Tiny Dragon. Xan rescues the children and delivers them to welcoming families on the other side of the forest, nourishing the babies with starlight on the journey. One year, Xan accidentally feeds a baby moonlight instead of starlight, filling the ordinary child with extraordinary magic. Xan decides she must raise this girl, whom she calls Luna, as her own. As Luna's thirteenth birthday approaches, her magic begins to emerge--with dangerous consequences.

Barry, Dave, and Pearson, Ridley. *Peter and the Starcatchers* series, and Barrie, J.M. *Peter Pan*. McCaughrean, Geraldine. *Peter Pan in Scarlet*. Immerse yourself in the legend of Peter Pan this summer! Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson's *Starcatchers* trilogy explores how Peter Pan and the other characters came to be who they are. Then read J.M. Barrie's original *Peter Pan* – and find out what happened afterwards by reading McCaughrean's sequel, *Peter Pan in Scarlet!*

Bell, Cece. *El Deafo*. 2015 Newbery Honor Book and autobiographical novel. 420L Cece loses her hearing due to spinal meningitis. In this humorous graphic novel, she tells her story of learning to lip read and make sense of the sounds coming from her hearing aid, using characters who are all rabbits. In the process, she deals with a crush on a neighborhood boy, searches for a friend, and copes with all manner of challenges faced by the hearing impaired. The up side: her hearing aid, connected to an amplifier the teacher wears, gives her a superpower because she can hear EVERYTHING, whether she should or not! She is the fearless El Deafo!

Bertman, Jennifer Chambliss. *Book Scavenger*. Twelve-year-old Emily, who recently moved to San Francisco, is excited that she now lives in the same city as her idol Garrison Griswold, book publisher and creator of the online sensation Book Scavenger (a game where books are hidden in cities all over the country and clues to find them are revealed through puzzles). Emily learns that Griswold has been attacked and is now in a coma, and no one knows anything about the epic new game he had been about to launch. Then Emily and her new friend James discover an odd book, which they come to believe is from Griswold himself, and might contain the only copy of his mysterious new game. Racing against time, Emily and James follow clue after clue, desperate to figure out the secret of Griswold's new

game—before those who attacked Griswold come after them too.

Birdsall, Jeanne. *The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits, and a Very Interesting Boy*. 800L Meet the Penderwick family, including Prof. Penderwick, a widower; Rosalind, 12, the younger girls' substitute mother; Skye, 11, known for her hot temper; Jane, 10, the wannabe mystery writer; and Batty, the family's shy, butterfly-loving four-year-old. Meet the Penderwicks during their summer holiday at a cottage on the estate of snobby Mrs. Tifton – and follow up with *The Penderwicks on Gardam Street*, *The Penderwicks at Point Mouette* and *The Penderwicks in Spring*.

Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. *The War That Saved My Life*. 580L Ada, age nine, has never left her one-room apartment because her mother is too embarrassed by Ada's twisted foot. When her little brother Jamie is sent away from London to escape the bombings, Ada sneaks out and joins him. They are sent to live with the very reluctant Susan Smith. As Ada learns to read and ride a pony, and watches for German spies, she begins to trust Susan—and Susan begins to love Ada and Jamie. Will this bond be enough to hold them together through wartime and after? Or will Ada and her brother be forced to return to their mother?

Buckley, Michael. *N.E.R.D.S. (National Espionage, Rescue, and Defense Society)*. A group of unpopular fifth graders run a spy network from inside their school. With the help of cutting-edge science, they transform their nerdy qualities into incredible abilities! Their enemies? An array of James Bond-style villains, each with an evil plan more diabolical and more ridiculous than the last.

Buyea, Rob. *Because of Mr. Terupt*. 560L It's the start of fifth grade for seven kids at Snow Hill School. Only Mr. Terupt, their new and energetic teacher, seems to know how to deal with them all. He makes the classroom a fun place, even if he doesn't let them get away with much . . . until the snowy winter day when an accident changes everything—and everyone. Followed by *Mr. Terupt Falls Again*.

Davis, Bryan. *Dragons in our Midst* series. How would you feel if you found out your ancestors were dragons – and someone is hunting you? Dig deep – and find your God-given strength, as Billy and Bonnie do in this exciting fantasy.

DiCamillo, Kate. *The Magician's Elephant*. 730L When ten-year-old orphan Peter Augustus Duchene encounters a fortuneteller in the marketplace one day and she tells him that his sister, who is presumed dead, is in fact alive, he embarks on a remarkable series of adventures as he desperately tries to find her.

D'Aulaire, Ingri and Edgar. *D'Aulaire's Book of Greek Myths*. 1070L Students will enjoy these clearly-written stories and beautiful illustrations covering all the major and minor gods and goddesses of ancient Greece.

DuPrau, Jeanne. *City of Ember* series. There is no daylight in Ember – only the great lights, and now they are growing dim. Is there a way out – before the lights go out? Enjoy the prequel, *The Prophet of Yonwood*, and the sequels: *The People of Sparks* and *The Diamond of Darkhold*.

Ferris, Jean. *Love Among the Walnuts*. 890L. Sandy Huntington-Ackerman's life becomes increasingly complicated when his bungling, moneygrubbing uncles try to shanghai the family fortune by poisoning

a birthday cake. Luckily, those conniving uncles prove yet again that they can't do anything right. Instead of bumping off the whole family, they put Sandy's mom and dad and their pet chicken into mysterious comas. Sandy joins forces with his loyal butler and a wise and wacky nurse to save his parents and squelch his uncles' felonious high jinks.

Fitzgerald, Laura Marx. *Under the Egg*. 790L Before dying, Theodora's grandfather, Jack, whispers, "There's a letter... And a treasure" hidden "under the egg." After his passing, Theo could certainly use a treasure; her absentminded mother hides herself away on the top floor of their dilapidated Greenwich Village townhouse while the 13-year-old struggles to make ends meet with the \$463 that Jack left. Hanging above the mantelpiece is one of her late grandfather's paintings which depicts a large egg. Could a treasure be hiding underneath? An accident with a bottle of rubbing alcohol reveals an unusual image that sets the teen off on an art history adventure taking her from New York Public Library to a fancy Upper East Side auction house and to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Along the way, she befriends Bodhi, the daughter of two celebrities; Reverend Cecily from Grace Church; and a punk-rock librarian named Eddie.

Flanagan, John. *Brotherband Chronicles, Bk. I*. They are outcasts. Hal, Stig, and the others - they are the boys the others want no part of. Skandians, as any reader of Ranger's Apprentice could tell you, are known for their size and strength. Not these boys. Yet that doesn't mean they don't have skills. And courage - which they will need every ounce of to do battle at sea against the other bands, the Wolves and the Sharks, in the ultimate race. The icy waters make for a treacherous playing field . . . especially when not everyone thinks of it as playing. John Flanagan, author of the international phenomenon Ranger's Apprentice, creates a new cast of characters to populate his world of Skandians and Araluens, a world millions of young readers around the world have come to know and admire.

George, Jessica Day. *Dragon Slippers*. 850L Creel's aunt wants to marry her off to the prince, but Creel has other ideas! Creel befriends the dragons and travels to the city, where she hopes to start a dress shop. On her journey, she receives a supposedly-ordinary pair of slippers that link her to a dangerous plot. Creel's embroidery talent brings her fame as a dressmaker, but soon the slippers begin to cause big trouble, and it's up to feisty Creel and her new friend the prince to save the kingdom and defend the dragons. Followed by *Dragon Flight* and *Dragon Spear*. Other enjoyable George novels: *Princess of Glass*, *Princess of the Midnight Ball* and *Princess of the Silver Woods*.

Grabenstein, Chris. *Escape From Mr. Lemoncello's Library*. 720L Discover the coolest library EVER! Kyle Keeley is a huge fan of all games—board games, word games, and particularly video games. His hero, Luigi Lemoncello, the most notorious and creative gamemaker in the world, just so happens to be the genius behind the construction of the new town library. Lucky Kyle wins a coveted spot as one of twelve kids invited for an overnight sleepover in the library, hosted by Mr. Lemoncello and riddled with lots and lots of games. But when morning comes, the doors stay locked. Kyle and the other kids must solve every clue and figure out every secret puzzle to find the hidden escape route! Enjoy this crazy, exciting and cool adventure! You might also enjoy the next Grabenstein adventures, *Mr. Lemoncello's Library Olympics* and *Mr. Lemoncello's Great Library Rac* – also *The Island of Dr. Libris*.

Graff, Lisa. *A Tangle of Knots*. 840L Watch how this story, told from multiple viewpoints, eventually connects. In this slightly-magical version of Poughkeepsie, NY, where many people have a Talent, eleven-year-old Cady is an orphan with a phenomenal Talent for cake baking. Her path leads her to a mysterious address that houses a lost luggage emporium, an old recipe, a family of children searching

for their own Talents, and a Talent Thief who will alter her life forever. However, these encounters hold the key to Cady's past and how she became an orphan. If she's lucky, perhaps she will be reunited with her long-lost parent.

Gutman, Dan. *The Homework Machine* 680L and *Return of the Homework Machine*. Four so-called 'losers' start spending a lot of time together when one of their number invents a Homework Machine (called Belch) to do their homework for them. This invites unwelcome attention and ultimately, things get out of hand...

Gutman, Dan. *The Genius Files* series. Twins Coke and Pepsi MacDonald are unwillingly headed out on a cross-country trip with their parents. When they discover that they are on a secret list intended to use young geniuses to solve the country's gravest problems, life gets a LOT more exciting and, in fact, downright dangerous. Fire up the old Google Maps and follow the McDonald twins as they get chased cross-country from the Pez museum to the largest ball of twine in the world.

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Running Out Of Time*. 730L Jessie's growing up in 1800s United States - or so she thinks. Actually, it's 1996, and she's living in a tourist attraction that's a replica of an historical village - and something more sinister. People are dying - and she's got to escape and get help!

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Among the Hidden*. 800L Book One of the *Shadow Children* series. In Haddix's dystopian world, overpopulation has led to a law where families are allowed only two children. Third children (the 'shadow children') must live their lives in hiding, because death is the penalty if they are discovered. But there are some who are ready to fight for their right to exist, despite the risks.

Hannigan, Katherine. *Ida B and Her Plans to Maximize Fun, Avoid Disaster and (Possibly) Save the World*. 970L Ida loves home schooling, hanging out in her orchard, and having full opportunity to indulge in adventures, real and imaginary. Her mom's cancer changes everything, and Ida isn't taking it too well...

Harrar, George. *The Trouble with Jeremy Chance*. 780L Based on a true event! Hurt that his father punished him for speaking his mind, Jeremy hops a train to Boston, hoping to meet his soldier brother, who is returning from battle (World War I.) He is in Boston's North End when distillery tanks burst and spill two million gallons of molasses (this really happened!)! Jeremy's in danger, but so are many other people!

Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *Fish in a Tree*. 550L Ally is great at math, and an amazing artist, but here's her big secret: reading is almost impossible. So far she's kept anyone from finding out, but a new teacher at school seems to see right through her. Ally has a hard time accepting Mr. Daniel's help and is also dealing with loneliness and depression, with worry over her father, deployed in the Middle East, and with an awful group of mean girls at school. There's no fairy tale ending, but bit by bit, Ally gains some confidence in herself.

Jacques, Brian. *Redwall* series. Spend some time this summer in Mossflower Wood in this long-running fantasy series that started with *Redwall* and ends with *The Rogue Crew*, perhaps Jacques' most action-packed tale yet. Celebrate the series with a feast from *The Redwall Cookbook!*

Kelly, Eric P. *The Trumpeter of Krakow*. 1200L In 15th century Poland, a courageous young patriot must protect a mysterious jewel at all costs.

Konigsberg, E.L. *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. 700L When suburban Claudia Kincaid decides to run away, she knows she doesn't just want to run *from* somewhere she wants to run *to* somewhere—to a place that is comfortable, beautiful, and preferably elegant - like the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Knowing that her younger brother, Jamie, has money and thus can help her with the serious cash flow problem, she invites him along. Once settled into the museum, Claudia and Jamie, find themselves caught up in the mystery of an angel statue that the museum purchased at an auction for a bargain price of \$250. The statue is possibly an early work of the Renaissance master Michelangelo, and therefore worth millions. Is it? Or isn't it? Claudia is determined to find out. This quest leads Claudia to Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, the remarkable old woman who sold the statue and to some equally remarkable discoveries about herself.

Larson, Kirby. *Hattie Big Sky*. 700L In this historical novel set in 1918, 16-year-old orphan Hattie Brooks inherits a Montana homestead from her uncle, but has less than a year to fence and farm the land in order to keep it. Each chapter opens with articles that Hattie writes for a newspaper or a letter to a friend who is fighting in France. Hattie's struggles to keep her farm and her confusion about the war and the anti-German feelings of her community make this an excellent teen novel.

Lasky, Kathryn. *Guardians of Ga'Hoole* series. Fans of the *Warriors* series by Erin Hunter may enjoy switching species and following the adventures of Soren and his fellow owls in this fantasy series. In Book One, *The Capture*, 730L Soren, the barn owl loves hearing the legends about the Guardians of Ga'Hoole, Jedi-like owls "who would rise each night into the blackness and perform noble deeds." After he falls from his nest, he is captured by evil owls and taken to the St. Aegolius Academy for Orphaned Owls. Soren and his friend Gylfie rely on the Legends of Ga'Hoole to survive, escape, and warn their fellow owls about St. Aegolias.

Law, Ingrid. *Savvy*. 1070L For generations, the Beaumont family has harbored a secret. They each possess a "savvy" - a special supernatural power that strikes when they turn thirteen. Grandpa Bomba moves mountains, her older brothers create hurricanes and spark electricity . . . and now it's the eve of Mibs's big day. As if waiting were not hard enough, the family gets scary news two days before Mibs's birthday: Poppa has been in a terrible accident! You may also enjoy the sequels: *Scumble* 900L and *Switch*. 830L

L'Engle, Madeline. *A Wrinkle in Time (Time Quintet.)* 740L Did you see the movie? Everyone thinks Meg Murry is hotheaded and stupid, as is her younger brother, Charles Wallace. They also gossip that their father, a physicist, has abandoned their scientist mother. Meg is fed up with these rumors when Charles Wallace introduces her to Mrs. Whatsit, a strange being who is able to transport Meg, Charles Wallace and their new friend Calvin O'Keefe through space in a search to find Mr. Murry. There is great danger when they must travel behind the shadow of an evil power that is spreading its shadow over the universe, one planet at a time. Meg, Charles Wallace and Calvin must depend on their individual and collective strengths to fight this evil and find Mr. Murry.

Levine, Gail Carson. *Fairest*. 590L Aza's singing voice is the best in all the land, and the most unusual. She can "throw" her voice so it seems to come from anywhere. But Aza doesn't possess the other quality that is prized in her kingdom: beauty. She's hidden in the shadows in her parents' inn, but when

she becomes lady-in-waiting to the new queen, she can hide no longer—especially when the queen demands her unique services. What follows is a suspenseful knot involving a magic mirror, a prince, a jealous queen, palace plots, and an injured king that Aza must unravel to save herself and her kingdom.

London, C. Alexander. *Dog Tags* series. *Dog Tags* is an exciting series of stand-alone books, each exploring the bond between soldier and dog in times of war. *Semper Fido* is Book One.

Melvin, Leland. *Chasing Space: Young Reader's Edition*. From NFL star to astronaut, dreamchaser Leland Melvin shares his remarkable story. When the former Detroit Lion's football career was cut short by an injury, Leland found a new dream. He joined NASA, braved an injury that nearly left him permanently deaf, and still managed to travel to space on the shuttle *Atlantis* to help build the International Space Station. Be inspired by the story of this amazing can-do man!

Montgomery, L.M. *Anne of Green Gables* series. Everybody's favorite redhead! Follow the triumphs and tragedies of Anne with an 'e' through the series, which starts with her unexpected arrival at Green Gables and carries through to the adventures of her own children. Another of L.M. Montgomery's many great books – *The Story Girl*. We also recommend Budge Wilson's Anne of Green Gables prequel (listed below) – *Before Green Gables*.

Mull, Brandon. *Fablehaven* series. Kendra and Seth are sent to their grandparents for a visit that soon becomes far more interesting than expected. It turns out that their country estate is actually a protected area – for magical creatures, and their grandfather is the caretaker. Adventure, trouble, and suspense quickly follow in this action-packed series.

O'Dell, Scott. *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. 1000L Based on the true story of a young girl who lived alone for years on an island off the coast of California.

O'Dell, Scott. *Streams to the River, River to the Sea*. 740L O'Dell's exciting story of Sacagawea and the Lewis and Clark Expedition, told from Sacagawea's point of view. For a very different point of view – that of Seaman, Captain Lewis' Newfoundland Dog - check out *The Captain's Dog: My Journey with the Lewis and Clark Tribe* 890L by Roland Smith!

Palacio, R.J. *Wonder*. 790L Have you seen the movie? A fabulous, must-read story about friendship, tenacity, fear, and most importantly, kindness. August Pullman was born with a major facial deformity and, up until now, he has been homeschooled. Starting 5th grade at a public school, Auggie just wants to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates just can't get past his face. *Wonder* starts with Auggie's point of view, but soon switches to his classmates, his sister, her boyfriend, and others. Together, they tell the journey of one community's struggle with empathy, compassion, and acceptance.

Paulsen, Gary. *Lawn Boy*. 780L When the narrator's grandmother gives him an old rider mower for his 12th birthday, he immediately starts a lawn-mowing business. When he mows the lawn of stockbroker Arnold Howell, it turns out to be the start of a beautiful friendship. Arnold invests the money, provides business advice and soon "Lawn Boy" has 15 employees, and a thriving business! Just how successful it really is - well, read the book and find out! Then read the sequel, *Lawn Boy Returns* 920L.

Paterson, Katherine. *Lyddie*. Think school is tough? Imagine that is 1843, your father has

lost his farm, you are 11 years old and working long hours in a New England cloth factory. The only way out is to educate yourself and go to college, but what are the chances of that happening – especially for a girl?

Paterson, Katherine. *Jacob Have I Loved*. 880L For everyone who has ever been jealous of their sister or brother! Louise Bradshaw is jealous of her twin Caroline, who has always been the pretty one, the talented one, the special one. What will it take for Louise to finally step outside her sister's shadow?

Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet*. 1020L Brian survives a plane crash in the Canadian wilderness. All he's got are his hatchet and his wits – does this city kid have what it takes to survive? Enjoy Paulsen's many other gritty tales of courage and survival!

Pennypacker, Sara. *Pax*. L760. *Note: Best read by parents with, or before giving to younger or very sensitive readers.* "Pax" is set in an unidentified country during a time of war. The time period is also not specified. The story alternates between 12-year-old Peter, and his tame fox, Pax. Peter's father has enlisted in the army and Peter must go to live with his grandfather, 300 miles away. Before they leave, Peter's father forces him to release Pax back into the wild. Soon after he arrives at his grandfather's, Peter is overcome with guilt and begins the journey back to Pax, praying he will be there. Pax, meanwhile, waits patiently for Peter to return but must learn to survive in the wild. Both must learn not only how to survive, especially during a time of war, but also more about themselves.

Philbrick, Rodman. *Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg*. 950L When his mean guardian, Uncle Squinton, is paid to let Homer P. Figg's older brother, Harold, take a rich man's son's place in the Union army, Homer is determined to alert the army authorities and save his brother. Homer tracks Harold's regiment, facing many dangers, and eventually lands in the middle of the Battle of Gettysburg. The book is fun, but has serious messages about the horror of war and the evil of slavery.

Riordan, Rick. *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series. (*The Lightning Thief* 740L, *The Sea of Monsters* 740L, *The Titan's Curse* 630L, *The Battle of the Labyrinth* 590L, *The Last Olympian* 620L) The classic Greek myths and legends get a 21st Century makeover in this exciting series, whose main character, Percy, discovers that he is the son of the Greek god Poseidon.

Riordan, Rick. *The Red Pyramid*. (*Kane Chronicles*, Book One) 650L Carter and Sadie accompany their Egyptologist father to the British Museum, where he summons an Egyptian god, Set. Unfortunately, Set traps him, but Sadie and Carter are able to escape. While trying to rescue their father, the children discover they are actually the descendants of the pharaohs and they battle ancient beings determined to destroy humankind. Followed by *Throne of Fire* 710L and *The Serpent's Shadow* 1040L

Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Esperanza Rising*. 750L Life was good on Esperanza's family ranch in Mexico, until tragedy strikes and she and her mother must flee to California. There, they must live the difficult life of Mexican migrant workers, struggling to make a living in the midst of the Great Depression. Read Ryan's other great books as well!

Schmidt, Gary. *The Wednesday Wars*. 990L Set in Long Island, NY during the 1960s, Vietnam isn't the only war that is raging. Mrs. Baker hates Holling – why else would she be making him read and discuss Shakespeare on Wednesday afternoons while everyone else

in his class goes off to religious instruction? Each month of Holling's seventh-grade year is a chapter as he deals with Mrs. Baker, Shakespeare, and other trials of growing up.

Shetterly, Margot Lee. *Hidden Figures: Young Readers' Edition*. Read this powerful story of four African-American female mathematicians at NASA, who helped achieve some of the greatest moments in America's space program. Yet until now, their story was largely unknown. This group of dedicated female mathematicians, known as "human computers" used pencils, slide rules, and adding machines to calculate the numbers that would launch rockets, and astronauts like John Glenn and Neil Armstrong, into space and bring them home again.

Shusterman, Neil. *The Schwa Was Here*. 790L "They say his clothes blend into the background, no matter where he stands. They say a lot of things about the Schwa, but one thing is for sure – no one ever noticed him. Except me. My name is Antsy Bonano. When I realized the Schwa was functionally invisible, I used him to make some big bucks...but also caused him more grief than a friend should."

Silvey, Anita. *Henry Knox: Bookseller, Soldier, Patriot*. You may not have heard of him, but this bookseller made an important contribution to the success of the American Revolution. Read how "Knox's Folly" became a successful mission to transport heavy weaponry captured from the British 300 miles to where it was most needed – Boston! Other Revolutionary War books to check out: Jean Fritz's *And Then What Happened, Paul Revere? What's The Big Idea, Ben Franklin?* and *Will You Sign Here, John Hancock?* Take a look at Kathryn Lasky's *A Voice of Her Own: The Voice of Phyllis Wheatley, Slave Poet* and of course Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*.

Soup, Dr. Cuthbert. *A Whole Nother Story*. 900L Mr. Cheeseman, his three relatively odor-free children, a psychic hairless dog, and a sock puppet named Steve are on the run. Why? Because Mr. Cheeseman invented a time machine, of course. Now they're being chased by international super spies, top secret government agents, and a genius monkey. Dr. Cuthbert Soup, the head of the Center of Unsolicited Advice, narrates this wild adventure that will lead readers straight into the sequel: *Another Whole Nother Story and No Other Story*.

Stewart, Trenton Lee. *The Secret Keepers*. 820L A magical watch. A string of secrets. A race against time. When Reuben discovers an extraordinary antique watch, he soon learns it has a secret power and his life takes an intriguing turn. At first he is thrilled with his new treasure, but as one secret leads to another, Reuben finds himself torn between his innately honest nature and the lure to be a hero. Now he is on a dangerous adventure--full of curious characters, treacherous traps, and hairsbreadth escapes--as he races to solve the mystery before it is too late. Even with fearless Penny, mighty Jack, and the wise Mrs. Genevieve on his side, can Reuben outwit and outmaneuver the sly villain called The Smoke and his devious defenders the Directions, and save the city from a terrible fate?

Stewart, Trenton Lee. *The Mysterious Benedict Society*. 840L "Are you a gifted child looking for Special Opportunities?" Orphan Reynie Muldoon answers this strange newspaper ad, and is sent on a mission, along with four other contestants --Sticky, Kate and Constance -- to infiltrate the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened, which is broadcasting negative messages into people's minds. This fast-paced adventure explores topics such as how sloganeering can impact society, as well as issues of fear, abandonment, family, and loyalty. Followed by *The Mysterious Benedict Society and the Perilous Journey* 890L and *The Mysterious Benedict Society and the Prisoner's Dilemma*, 900L and *The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict*. 900L

Telgemeier, Raina. *Smile*. GN410L Braces are challenging enough for most people – but check out this graphic novel and its major dental challenge! One night, sixth-grader Raina trips and falls, severely injuring her two front teeth. What follows is a long and frustrating journey with on-again, off-again braces, surgery, embarrassing headgear, and even a retainer with fake teeth attached. Throw that on top of the normal challenges of early teen life, add a major earthquake, and you can understand Raina’s struggle to just..smile.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit, or, There and Back Again*. 1000L If you loved the movies and you’re a fan of Frodo and Legolas, but never took the time to see why Frodo idolizes Bilbo, read *The Hobbit* this summer!

Van Leeuwen, Jean. *Bound for Oregon*. 830L A fictionalized account of the journey made by nine-year-old Mary Ellen Todd and her family from their home in Arkansas westward over the Oregon Trail in 1852.

Wilson, Budge. *Before Green Gables*. If you love the *Anne of Green Gables* series, you’ll love this prequel – the story of Anne’s parents, Anne’s orphaning and the years just before she came to Green Gables.

Woodrow, Allan. *The Pet War*. It’s dog vs cat and brother vs sister! Eleven-year-old Otto wants a dog. His twelve-year-old sister Lexi wants a cat. Their mother wants neither: pets are expensive and what happens when Otto and Lexi are at their dad’s for the weekend? Finally it’s decided that whichever sibling can raise enough money first will decide which pet they get. With Otto and Lexi each out to defeat the other, the competition gets fiercer, the stakes get higher and the battle is on. Let the Pet War begin!

More Good Upper Junior High Reads – more complex/challenging content and/or language

Acampora, Paul. *I Kill the Mockingbird*. 640L It really begins with the death of everybody’s favorite eighth-grade English teacher, Mr. Nowak. Mr. Nowak had assigned only one book as summer reading the previous year, Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Now, best friends Lucy, Elena, and Michael vow to find a way to memorialize their teacher by insuring that everybody will want to read the modern classic. Their plan: make the book desirable by making it scarce. Their strategy: visit every library and bookstore in the area and hide all copies of the book, then publicize their campaign with posters and a website proclaiming, I Kill the Mockingbird. Will the kids succeed? Will Lucy and Michael’s friendship blossom into something more? Will Lucy’s mom, whose cancer is in remission, ever learn to eat healthfully? Acampora’s well-written, resolutely cheerful offering celebrates books, reading, and life.

Applegate, Katherine. *Crenshaw*. 540L In this tough but often funny story, Jackson, his parents, and his five-year-old sister are once again faced with an eviction notice and impending homelessness. Jackson is frustrated not only because of their money troubles: it’s also the way his parents make light of their problems rather than acknowledging their difficult situation. Then an old friend reappears: Crenshaw, an imaginary seven-foot-tall talking cat, who first came into Jackson’s life several years before, when he and his family were homeless and living out of their car. Jackson tries to ignore Crenshaw, but the cat starts to actually make sense. While sarcastic Crenshaw isn’t your typical warm and fuzzy imaginary friend, he’s exactly what Jackson needs to cope with his family’s situation.

Avi. *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. 780L In 14th century England, Crispin is a 13-year-old peasant who runs away from his village after his mother dies and he is unjustly accused of a crime. He sets out to search for a father he has never known, the words on his mother's cross his only clue, and joins forces with Bear, a juggler. The sequel (which may be difficult for sensitive readers) is *Crispin: At the Edge of the World*.

Boyne, John. *Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. 1080L Don't be fooled by the deceptively simple 'voice' of the narrator – this is not a child's book. The reality unfolding in front of us, as readers, is all the more horrifying because we are seeing it through the eyes of a child.

Carter, Ally. *I'd Tell You I Love You, But Then I'd Have to Kill You*. (*Gallagher Girls* series). 1000L Starting with, enjoy this series about Cammie and other students at the Gallagher Academy for Exceptional Young Women, an all-girls school that claims to be a school for geniuses -- but it's really a school for *spies*.

Collier, James. *My Brother Sam is Dead*. 770L Loyalties divide a family during the American Revolution. Parents should know this is a tough and tragic book: sensitive students may have a hard time with it. **some infrequent language*

Condie, Ally. *Matched*. HL680L Cassia has always trusted the Society to make the right choices for her in almost every aspect of life. 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. The Society tells her it's just a rare malfunction, and that she should forget it and focus on her life ahead with Xander. But Cassia can't stop thinking about Ky, and begins to doubt the Society's infallibility. She is faced with an impossible choice: between Xander and Ky, between the only life she's known and a frightening and unknown future. Followed by *Crossed* and *Reached*.

Crane, Stephen. *Red Badge of Courage*. 900L Caught up in the excitement of the Civil War, young Henry Fleming joins the army against the wishes of his mother. Like any soldier, Henry wonders whether he will really be brave enough when he's actually in battle, or whether fear will get the best of him. Read on to see how Henry deals with his first battle experiences!

Creech, Sharon. *Walk Two Moons*. 770L Thirteen-year-old Salamanca's mother has disappeared, and Salamanca and her grandparents travel from Ohio to Idaho in search of her. You'll also enjoy the story-within-a story contained in this Newbery award-winning novel. Explore Creech's many other wonderful coming-of-age stories, including *Bloomability* 850L, *Heartbeat*, and *Absolutely Normal Chaos* 900L.

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Elijah of Buxton*. 1070L Eleven year-old Elijah is the first child to be born 'free' in Buxton, Canada, a settlement of runaway slaves near the American border. Elijah talks way too much and he's a bit of a scaredy-cat. When a former slave steals money from Elijah's friend, Elijah is the one who must find the thief – and the courage to make the journey. **Although not gratuitous, the violence is mentioned in a matter-of-fact way, and the author pulls no punches in describing blood, pain, smells, and the like. Children who are particularly sensitive should exercise caution.*

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Madmen of Piney Woods*. 870L A companion to *Elijah of Buxton* and the 2015 Newbery Medal winner. Return to the world of *Elijah of Buxton*. Both Benji and Red have encountered a strange presence in the forest, watching them and tracking them. Could The Madmen of

Piney Woods actually be real? **Although not gratuitous, the violence is mentioned in a matter-of-fact way, and the author pulls no punches in describing blood, pain, smells, and the like. Children who are particularly sensitive should exercise caution.*

Cushman, Karen. *Catherine, Called Birdy*. Corpus Bones! 1170L The place is England, the year, 1290. Birdy, 14, is the daughter of an English nobleman. She's no fainthearted damsel in distress - you'll laugh and cheer on her spunk as she finds ways to avoid being married off, especially to the man she calls Shaggy Beard. In the process, you'll learn a lot about medieval England – the good, the bad and the just plain gross! Another good read and by Karen Cushman: *The Midwife's Apprentice* 1240L. *Note: some earthy language/behaviors typical of the time period.*

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. This 'king of detectives' solves crimes not with fancy gadgets, but with incredible mental feats of observation, reasoning and inference.

Erskine, Kathryn. *Mockingbird*. 630L Caitlin is a bright fifth grader and a gifted artist. She also has Asperger's syndrome. From inside Caitlin's head, we see the aftermath of **NOTE** a middle school shooting that took the life of Devon, the older brother who helped her interpret the world. Now she has only her father, a widower who is swallowed up by his own grief and unable to be of much help to his daughter. But she does have Mrs. Brooks, a school counselor who is trying to teach her the social skills that are so difficult for her. Throughout the book, Caitlin begins to come to terms with her loss and makes her first steps toward friendship. At the same time, we as readers come to understand the way Caitlin thinks and reasons, and that helps all of us understand the complications of life with a condition like Asperger's.

Hiaasen, Carl. *Scat*. 810L Another of Hiaasen's exciting eco-thrillers! *Scat* pits teens Nick and Marta against greedy oil men in this Everglades adventure, with the safety of an endangered black panther and her cubs at stake. Throw in a missing biology teacher, a 'loser' named Smoke, and a number of other characters and complications, and enjoy this environmental whodunit! With Carl Hiaasen, you can count on environmental adventures a-plenty, so enjoy his other books like *Hoot*, *Chomp*, and *Flush!*

Ellis, Deborah. *The Breadwinner*. 640L An Afghani girl disguises herself as a boy to support her family. Sequels: *Parvana's Journey* 640L, and *Mud City* (the story of Parvana's best friend, Shauzia.) 740L

Frank, Anne. *Diary of a Young Girl*. 1080L True story. When the Nazis finally found the hiding place of the Frank family, they accidentally overlooked the diary of 15-year-old Anne. Her diary captures the terror of her two years in hiding, along with the normal joys and sorrows of growing up. For other stories of teen Holocaust victims, read Jacob Boas' *We Are Witnesses: Five Diaries of Teenagers Who Died in the Holocaust*, 970L and Jane Yolen's haunting *The Devil's Arithmetic*. 730L

Gray, Elizabeth Janet. *Adam of the Road*. 1030L It is 2194 and 11-year-old Adam has only his harp and minstrel skills to earn him food and shelter as he searches for his father and his dog.

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Found* (Book One in *The Missing* series.) 750L A plane arrives – no one was expecting it. Pilots and flight attendants – none. There ARE 36 passengers, all infants. Thirteen years later, adopted teenagers Jonah and Chip receive messages saying they are among

"the missing" and that someone is coming for them. The frightened boys search for their real identities in hopes of solving the mystery of who they are – and who wants to find them. Enjoy this sci fi/time travel fantasy series by the queen of plot twists! Followed by *Sent* 730L, *Sabotaged*, 730L *Torn* 720L, *Caught* 730L, *Risked* 770L and *Revealed!* 800L

Hale, Shannon. *Princess Academy*. 890L Miri, like most of the girls living on Mount Eskel, plans to work as a miner in the nearby quarry, when the village receives the surprise announcement that the prince will choose a bride from their community. Miri and the other eligible girls are sent off to attend a special academy. It's no picnic! There are hardships, challenges, suspense and even danger awaiting them at Princess Academy! Don't miss the sequels to *Princess Academy: Palace of Stone* 740L and *The Forgotten Sisters*. 750L
Hale, Shannon and Dean, ill. Nathan Hale. *Rapunzel's Revenge* and the sequel, *Calamity Jack*. Enjoy this barely recognizable rethinking of the classic fairy tales, with Shannon's clever dialog and Nathan's great graphics!

Haugaard, Eric. *The Samurai's Tale*. 960L Taro was the young son of a noble Samurai, but his family is killed by the soldiers of Lord Takeda. The soldiers spare young Taro's life and he becomes a servant in the household of Lord Akiyama. There, he meets the cook, Togan, who takes Taro under his wing. When Togan is killed, Taro is determined to become a samurai, and redeem his family's honor and status.

Holm, Jennifer L. *The Fourteenth Goldfish*. 550L Eleven-year-old Ellie Cruz's life changes dramatically when her mother brings a teenage boy home one night and she learns it is her estranged grandfather, Melvin, a scientist who has figured out how to reverse aging and is now 13 again! Tensions are high between Melvin and his adult daughter, Ellie's mother, but Ellie feels like she now has the opportunity to really get to know her grandfather. Her interest in science blossoms as she helps Melvin with his work. Along the way, Ellie learns about the work of real-life scientists Jonas Salk, Robert Oppenheimer, and Marie Curie. But as she learns more, she realizes that scientific discoveries often have unforeseen consequences.

Libenson, Terri. *Invisible Emmie*. This is the story of two totally different girls—quiet, shy, artistic Emmie and popular, outgoing, athletic Katie—and how their lives unexpectedly intersect one day, when an embarrassing note falls into the wrong hands. All the ups and downs, boredom, and drama of middle school are compressed into one surprising day in this extraordinary novel.

London, Jack. *Call of the Wild*. 1120L Buck may be the most famous dog in all literature! After being stolen from his family's home, he is forced to become an Alaskan sled dog...and his amazing journey doesn't end there. One of the best dog books ever!

Lord, Cynthia. *Rules*. 780L Life with her autistic brother can be pretty tough, but Catherine learns a few lessons herself from her brother David and her disabled friend Jason.

Lord, Cynthia. *Half a Chance*. 690L Twelve-year old Lucy and her parents have just moved from Boston to a lake cottage in New Hampshire, when her nature photographer father heads off to Arizona for a photo shoot. Fortunately, she is befriended by Nate, who is spending the summer with his grandmother in the house next door. Lucy, who is also talented with a camera, is about to learn that her photographic skills can come with opportunities to both help -- and hurt.

Lowry, Lois. *The Giver*. Have you seen the movie? Twelve-year-old Jonas lives in a world with happy families, no poverty, no crime, no sickness and no unemployment. When Jonas receives his career assignment as Receiver of Memories, he becomes the holder of his society's memories – and becomes aware that all is not perfect in his 'perfect' world. The series continues with *Gathering Blue*, *Messenger* and the new release, *Son*.

Lupica, Mike. *Bat Boy*. It's Brian's dream job - batboy for his hometown Major League team. It's also a chance for Brian to win back his father...and form an unlikely friendship with a formerly popular player making a comeback after his ban for using steroids. Other good Mike Lupica (former ESPN reporter) sports fiction: *The Big Field* 970L, *Heat* 940L, *Summer Ball* 910L, *Travel Team* 930L, *Miracle on 49th Street* 790L, *Game Changers Books 1 and 2* and *True Legend*.

Lupica, Mike. *Last Man Out*. 840L A story of heroes, family, skateboarding, and football. When the Brighton Bears suit up on game day, 12-year-old Tommy Gallagher is the toughest kid on the football field. And the bravest. After all, his father Patrick is a Boston firefighter--one of Boston's bravest. Tommy's dad taught him everything he knows about football--and life. Yet even Tommy isn't strong enough for what happens. "First man in; last man out" had always been his dad's motto . . . yet he never said anything about leaving in an ambulance. What kind of risk had his dad taken? Now Tommy's biggest battle has nothing to do with football. The kid who always had such respect for risk on the gridiron finds himself drawn to it off the field. Set in New England, home of the Patriots' football dynasty, Mike Lupica shows off his trademark knack for spinning a tale that is equal parts sports action and heart. *Last Man Out* is a thoughtful tribute to the bravery of firefighters and the need we all have to live up to the level of our heroes.

Mazer, Harry. *A Boy at War*. 530L While fishing with his friends off Honolulu on December 7, 1941, teenaged Adam is caught in the midst of the Japanese attack and tries to find his father, a naval officer who was serving on the U.S.S. Arizona when the bombs fell. The other two books in the series are *Heroes Don't Run* and *A Boy No More*.

Meloy, Maile. *The Apothecary*. Bk.1 740L. It's 1952 and the Cold War era. The Scott family has just moved from Los Angeles to London. Here, fourteen-year-old Janie meets a mysterious apothecary and his son, Benjamin Burrows - a fascinating boy who's not afraid to stand up to authority and dreams of becoming a spy. When Benjamin's father is kidnapped, Janie and Benjamin must uncover the secrets of the apothecary's sacred book, the Pharmacopoeia, in order to find him, all while keeping it out of the hands of their enemies - Russian spies in possession of nuclear weapons. Discovering and testing potions they never believed could exist, Janie and Benjamin embark on a dangerous race to save the apothecary and prevent impending disaster.

Milford, Kate. *Greenglass House*. 800L It's Christmas break and Milo and his parents are looking forward to a vacation all to themselves at Greenglass House, their inn where they play host to passing smugglers. When five unusual guests unexpectedly arrive, and their belongings - which all have something to do with the house—start disappearing, Milo finds himself at the heart of a real mystery. The help of Meddy, the oddball girl who arrives with the cook, plus a role-playing game gives him the courage to poke around where he knows he is not supposed to. Milo uses his knowledge of the house and his skills of observation to find the missing objects, piece together the mystery of the house, and discover a secret about the legendary folk hero who used to live there.

Neilsen, Jennifer. *The False Prince (Ascendance Trilogy, Bk.1)*. 710L Choose to lie...or choose to die.

In a discontent kingdom, civil war is brewing. To unify the divided people, Conner, a nobleman of the court, devises a cunning plan to find an impersonator of the king's long-lost son and install him as a puppet prince. Four orphans are recruited to compete for the role, including a defiant boy named Sage. Sage knows that Conner's motives are more than questionable, yet his life balances on a sword's point - he must be chosen to play the prince or he will certainly be killed. But Sage's rivals have their own agendas as well. As Sage moves from a rundown orphanage to Conner's sumptuous palace, layer upon layer of treachery and deceit unfold, until finally, a truth is revealed that, in the end, may very well prove more dangerous than all of the lies taken together.

Oppel, Kenneth. *Airman*. 800L Matt loves his work as a cabin boy aboard the luxury passenger airship *Aurora*. Life gets exciting when *Aurora* finds a damaged hot air whose dying passenger says he has seen beautiful "cloud cats" flying around an uncharted island. A year later, Matt meets the man's granddaughter, Kate, and they learn that her grandfather was telling the truth. Pirates attack the *Aurora* and a fierce storm grounds the ship on the same island – where Kate and Matt search for the mysterious cloud cats and find (unfortunately) the pirates' secret hideaway. The series continues with *Skybreaker* and *Starclimber*.

Oppel, Kenneth. *The Boundless*. 730L The Boundless, the greatest train ever built, is on its maiden voyage across the country, and first-class passenger Will Everett is about to begin the adventure of his life! When Will ends up in possession of the key to a train car containing priceless treasures, he becomes the target of sinister figures from his past. In order to survive, Will must join a circus that is also traveling on the train, enlisting the aid of Mr. Dorian, the ringmaster and leader of the troupe, and Maren, a girl his age who is an expert escape artist. With villains fast on their heels, can Will and Maren reach Will's father and save *The Boundless* before someone winds up dead?

Owen, James. *Here, There Be Dragons* 870L. Book One of an AWESOME series for lovers of fantasy and myth – a great choice for Rick Riordan fans. An unusual murder brings together three strangers, John, Jack, and Charles, on a rainy night in London during the first World War. An eccentric little man called Bert tells them that they are now the caretakers of the *Imaginarium Geographica*: an atlas of all the lands that have ever existed in myth and legend, fable and fairy tale. Pursued by terrifying creatures, the companions flee London aboard a Dragonship. Traveling to the very realm of the imagination itself, they must learn to overcome their fears and trust each other if they are to defeat the dark forces that threaten the two worlds. In the process, they will share a great adventure filled with clues that lead readers to discover just who these men really are. Followed by *The Search for the Red Dragon* 830L, *The Indigo King* 790L, *The Shadow Dragons* 820L, *The Dragon's Apprentice* 790L, *The Dragons of Winter* 850L, and *The First Dragon* 870L.

Park, Linda Sue. *A Long Walk to Water* 720L. *A Long Walk to Water* begins as two stories, told in alternating sections, about two eleven-year-olds in Sudan, a girl in 2008 and a boy in 1985. The girl, Nya, is fetching water from a pond that is two hours' walk from her home: she makes two trips to the pond every day. The boy, Salva, becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan, refugees who cover the African continent on foot as they search for their families and for a safe place to stay. Enduring every hardship from loneliness to attack by armed rebels to contact with killer lions and crocodiles, Salva is a survivor, and his story goes on to intersect with Nya's in an astonishing and moving way.

Park, Linda Sue. *A Single Shard*. 920L A tale of courage and devotion, and a glimpse of life in 12th-century Korea. Tree-ear, an orphan, works hard to look after himself and Crane-man, his only family. Tree-ear longs to create pottery as beautiful as that made by Min and the other village potters. After an

accident forces Tree-ear to work off a debt to Min, he learns both the art of pottery-making and important life lessons like courage, loyalty and selflessness. Other good books by Linda Sue Park: *Project Mulberry* and *Silk*.

Paulsen, Gary. *Tracker*. For John Borne's family, hunting has nothing to do with sport or manliness. It's a matter of survival. Every fall John and his grandfather go off into the woods to shoot the deer that puts meat on the table over the long Minnesota winter. But this year John's grandfather is dying, and John must hunt alone. John tracks a doe for two days, but as he closes in on his prey, he begins to doubt whether he can actually shoot it. Gary Paulsen is an excellent writer of exciting outdoor and survival stories for middle grade readers – check out his many novels, including his *Brian* series and the autobiographical *Woodson*.

Philbrick, Rodman. *Zane and the Hurricane*. 860L Thirteen-year-old Zane Dupree and his dog, Bandy, travel from their New Hampshire home to New Orleans to visit his great-grandmother, Miss Trissy, his only link to the father who died before he was born. Hurricane Katrina arrives just after they do, and in the turmoil, Zane and Bandy are separated from family. They are rescued by Mr. Tru and his young charge, Malvina, and together they face the overwhelming difficulties of surviving the aftermath of Katrina.

Rinaldi, Ann. *Girl in Blue*. The Civil War is raging. Desperate to flee an abusive father and a forced marriage to a man she hates, Sarah, 16, runs away, successfully disguises herself as “Neddy Compton” and enlists in the 2nd Michigan Infantry. She encounters war firsthand at the Battle of Bull Run. When her real identity is finally discovered, Sarah avoids jail by going to work as a spy for the Pinkerton Detective Agency, investigating Rose Greenhow (a real agency and a person, by the way!), who may be a Confederate spy. Rinaldi writes many excellent historical novels, so check out her many other books as well!

Reeder, Carolyn. *Shades of Gray*. 800L After the Civil War, young Will Page is forced to live with his uncle, who had refused to fight in the Civil War – against the Yankees who had robbed Will of his family.

Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Echo*. 680L 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. Ultimately, their suspenseful solo stories converge.

Sachar, Louis. *Holes*. 660L A magical tale of a young boy who believes he has inherited a curse from his great-great-grandfather. Wrongly sent to a juvenile detention center, he must dig holes all day to “build character.” It's not long before he digs up a real mystery!

Sloan, Holly. *Counting by 7s*. 770L Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions. 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. But this book is *not* a tragedy. Willow manages to push through her grief, and her journey to find a fascinatingly diverse and fully believable surrogate family is a joy to read. Enjoy this

sweet story featuring wonderful characters who learn gentle but real lessons about resourcefulness, community, and resilience.

Schmidt, Gary. *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*. 1000L It is 1912. After an unwelcome move from Boston to the small coastal community of Phippsburg, Turner hates his new town and makes a bad impression on the residents. Eventually he makes friends with Lizzie Griffin, who lives in the poverty-stricken former slave community of Malaga Island. The townspeople, including Turner's minister father, are planning to send Lizzie's people away from the island and build tourist accommodations. Turner is willing to fight for the people of Malaga Island. Can he make a difference? Lizzie and Turner are fictional, but the expulsion of the Malaga Island community is historical fact.

Stead, Rebecca. *When You Reach Me*. (2010 Newbery Medal winner) 750L Sixth-grader Miranda lives in 1979 New York City with her mother, and she is obsessed with Madeleine L'Engle's classic book *A Wrinkle in Time*. (Read that too!) Miranda's best friend has stopped talking to her, her mother is about to compete on a game show, and as well, Miranda is receiving a series of anonymous notes, warning her about a future tragedy, that she believes are coming from someone who knows the future. Can Miranda solve the mystery and make the connection between the notes and her everyday life?

Tarshis, Lauren. *Emma-Jean Lazarus Fell Out of a Tree*. 830L Emma-Jean Lazarus is the smartest and strangest girl at William Gladstone Middle School. Her classmates don't understand her, but that's okay because Emma-Jean doesn't quite get them either. But one afternoon, all that changes when she sees Colleen Pomerantz crying in the girl's room. It is through Colleen that Emma-Jean gets a glimpse into what it is really like to be a seventh grader. And what she finds will send her tumbling out of a tree and questioning why she ever got involved in the first place. *NOTE* – Lauren Tarshis is the author of the popular *I Survived* historical fiction series!

Wendelin Van Draanen. *Flipped*. 720L The first time Juli saw Bryce, in second grade, she flipped for him. The first time Bryce saw Juli, he ran. It was like that till the eighth grade, when everything starts to turn upside down. Just as Bryce starts thinking Juli's kind of cool, she's thinking that he's not everything she thought he was. It's a hilarious series of misunderstandings and missed opportunities, told in alternating chapters. Underneath the funny stuff, though, it's also a book about choices – good and bad, and those who learn from them – or not. Juli and Bryce are each learning to look beyond the surface of people, and figure out who they are, who they want to be, and who they want to be *with*.

Wendelin Van Draanen. *Sammy Keyes and the Hotel Thief*. Book 1 in Sammy Keyes series. 840L Look out Harriet the Spy! Here comes Sammy Keyes, a resourceful, brave, too-curious-for-her-own-good young sleuth who gets into trouble with her grandmother's binoculars. Sammy was just killing time when she looked across the avenue with the binoculars. She certainly didn't imagine that she would see a thief in the act of stealing something from one of the rooms at the Heavenly Hotel. The worst part is that the thief saw Sammy spying! And what did "smart" Sammy do then? She waved at the thief! Now Sammy is in loads of trouble. Can she solve the mystery of the hotel thief before the thief finds her and before the police discover that she has been living illegally with her grandmother?

Whelan, Gloria. *Homeless Bird*. 800L Married, widowed and abandoned at the age of 13, without any money or family to support her, Koly's future seems hopeless. Can her courage and talent for embroidery save her?

Fun things to do this summer

PCA's Eagle Camp offers fun themed activities all summer long! Visit <https://pcaschool.org/summer/> for details.

Prescott Park Arts Festival, Portsmouth <https://www.prescottpark.org/>, presents "Seussical" running throughout the summer, in addition to many other concerts and activities for children and families. Read Dr. Seuss's "Horton Hears a Who" and go see the show!

American Independence Museum, Exeter. <https://www.independencemuseum.org> (603) 772-2622. In 1774 the rebellious Provincial Congress began meeting in Exeter after Colonial Governor John Wentworth banned it from the colonial capitol at Portsmouth. Exeter thus became New Hampshire's capital for the next 14 years. It's therefore an appropriate location for the American Independence Museum, which boasts a world class collection of items pertaining to the American Revolution and the founding of our nation, two beautiful historic structures and a one-acre campus in downtown Exeter. Mark your calendars for the American Independence Festival July 13, 2019 which gives families an awesome chance to visit the historic encampments, reenactments, portrayals, artisan village, take part in children's activities and see the revolutionary spirit come to life!

Seacoast Science Center, Odiorne Point State Park, Rye, NH offers excellent personal learning opportunities for families and students to learn about coastal environmental history and stewardship, and offers many special events and activities, including day camp opportunities for children. For more information, call 603-436-8043 or visit <http://www.seacoastsciencecenter.org>

Fort Foster, Kittery, ME is a pleasant beach, picnic and day recreation park which still shows the remnants of fortifications from the period from 1873 to 1948 when it was an active military site. Calm saltwater swimming, walking trails, and an excellent view of Whaleback Light and Portsmouth Harbor from the pier. Call Fort Foster gate house. (207) 439-2182. Entry fee \$10 per vehicle, pedestrians or bicyclists \$5 adults/\$1 under 12. Open daily 10AM-8PM. <https://fortfoster.weebly.com/>

Woodman Institute Museum. 182 Central Avenue, Dover. (603) 742-1038. Students' understanding of New Hampshire and local history will definitely benefit from a visit to this amazing collection of New Hampshire birds, insects and animals, minerals, shells, and local history, Civil War artifacts, and just plain strange and wonderful stuff. While there, don't miss a visit to the oldest garrison house in the state, survivor of the Cochecho Massacre. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10am-5pm. <http://woodmanmuseum.org/>

Great Bay Discovery Center, Greenland, NH is the conservation and education headquarters for the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The trail and boardwalk allow visitors to explore estuarine habitats including hardwood forests, freshwater wetlands, salt marsh and mudflats. Climb aboard a 19th century gundalow replica or wander through the native gardens surrounding the center. Watch for eagles, warblers, waterfowl, and osprey. Enjoy the interactive displays and touch tank inside the Discovery Center. Summer programs include "Summer Bay Ventures" environmental education program series for students entering grades 1-6. Call (603)778-0015 or visit <http://www.greatbay.org/programs/education.htm>

Butternut Farm, Farmington, NH <http://www.butternutfarm.net/home> (603) 335-4705. A family-oriented pick-your-own-fruit farm. Check the website to see what's ripe for the picking! Also: Emery Farm, Durham, NH. <http://www.emeryfarm.com/> (603)742-8495. These and many other fine local farms provide your children with an appreciation for God's bounty, for the work of the farmer, and for an important part of New Hampshire's heritage.

Strawbery Banke Museum, Portsmouth. Explore four centuries of life in Portsmouth's oldest neighborhood. Strawberry Banke Museum offers many special events and kids' activities, particularly at the Jones Discovery Center, as well as summer camps for all ages. Call the museum at (603) 433-1100 or visit <http://www.strawberybanke.org/>

The Wright Museum of WWII History, Wolfeboro, NH. <http://www.wrightmuseum.org/> 77 Center Street (Route 28) Wolfeboro, NH (603) 569-1212. The Wright Museum's exhibits and displays focus on America's involvement in World War II and its significant and lasting impact on American life. A great place for all ages!

New Hampshire Farm Museum, Milton, NH. Explore three centuries of farm life in New Hampshire at this museum, which also offers a number of special events and day camps for children of all ages. For more information call (603) 652-7840 or visit <http://www.nhfarmmuseum.org/>

Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, Holderness, NH. <http://www.nhnature.org/>, (603)968-7194. Through spectacular exhibits of live animals in natural settings, education programs, and lake cruises, Squam Lakes Natural Science Center has educated visitors for over forty years about our natural world. Open meadows, mature forests, and marsh boardwalks connect interactive exhibits where native animals reside: black bears, mountain lions, raptors, river otters, bobcats, and many more. In the Gordon Children's Activity Center, visitors young and old can climb a giant spider web, crawl through an underground tunnel, hear the sounds of nocturnal animals, invent their own plant or insect, climb through a two-story learning tree, and much more! Check out the center's summer programs for children ages 4-14.

SEE Science Center. 200 Bedford Street, Manchester, NH. 03101. (603) 669-0400. <http://www.see-sciencecenter.org/> Summer camps, family workshops, and two floors of hands-on science fun! Check out the Lego Millyard Project, built with over 3 million Lego bricks!

Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum, Warner, NH. <http://indianmuseum.org/> (603) 456-2600. Indoor and outdoor quests help families learn about and engage with Native American culture. Enjoy the museum's galleries, exhibits and nature trail. You might also enjoy a family picnic and hike in nearby Rollins State Park! <http://www.nhstateparks.com/rollins.html>

McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center, Concord, NH. <http://www.starhop.com/> 603.271.STAR (7827). The Center's many programs, events and interactive exhibits actively engage learners of all ages in the exploration of astronomy, aviation, Earth and space science. From the planetarium theater presentations to workshops, programs, special events, and summer camps, this is a must-visit for anyone with an appreciation for God's amazing universe! CHECK OUT their summer STEM day camps for students ages 5-14!

Cool things to do in Massachusetts

Free Fun Fridays: This program provides free admission (including NH and ME residents) to some of Massachusetts' best cultural institutions at no cost to visitors on designated Fridays. For more information and schedules, visit www.highlandstreet.org. <http://www.highlandstreet.org/sites/default/files/free-fun-friday-2017-english-version.pdf>

Springfield Museums and Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden, Springfield, MA. <https://springfieldmuseums.org/> 1-413-263-6800. Visit Dr. Seuss' birthplace, the home of five world-class museums, including the Springfield Science Museum with its Lego Brick Lab, Dinosaur Hall, the Solutia Live Animal Center and much more.

Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA. 1-800 733-1830. <http://www.osv.org/> A visit to Old Sturbridge Village is a step back in time, as costumed historians talk about what life was like in early New England life from 1790-1840. Visit 59 historic buildings on 200 acres, see three authentic water-powered mills and two covered bridges, ride in a stagecoach, view antiques, heirloom gardens, meet the farm animals, and take part in hands-on crafts and many activities for children. This summer they present “The Charlotte’s Web Experience” based on the book written by E.B. White. Read the book, and visit!

Minuteman National Historic Park, Concord, MA. <https://www.nps.gov/mima/index.htm> (978)369-6993. At Minute Man National Historical Park, the opening battle of the Revolution comes to life as visitors explore the battlefields and structures associated with April 19, 1775. Don’t forget Bunker Hill Monument, Faneuil Hall Market, the Freedom Trail, and so many other opportunities to learn about the birth struggles of our nation! Check the website for special events!

Boston Museums

For a gateway to help you review the many great Boston area museums, visit <http://www.museumsofboston.org/>

New England Aquarium. Central Wharf, Boston, MA. (617) 973-5200. <https://www.neaq.org/> The Aquarium was recently renovated and has more exhibits and sea creatures than ever! Check the website for a current list of activities and exhibits!

Boston Museum of Science, <http://www.mos.org> (617) 723-2500. You’ll find multiple opportunities for fun and learning at the Museum of Science, whether it’s the regular exhibits (including Mapping the World Around Us, the Butterfly Garden and the Live Animal Exhibit) as well as the special exhibits, the IMAX theater and the 3-D Digital Cinema. Check the website for a current list of activities and exhibits!

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. <http://www.mfa.org/> 617-267-9300. Download Art Connections Cards from the website or stop by the Sharf Visitor Center to pick up this fun self-guided activity, a kind of scavenger hunt through MOFA. It will lead you on a search for objects and images, from cats and flowers to mythical creatures to arms and armor. You’ll also learn interesting facts and get ideas for art-making activities! Each activity focuses on a specific theme, linking intriguing objects from many cultures.

Read...relax....enjoy a GREAT summer!