



May, 2018

Dear Parents,

Time away from the regular school routine means a student's skills sometimes deteriorate. Away from the rigor of the classroom, a student requires different challenges to stay sharp. A new adventure keeps a student's intellect keen, and so does reading.

We expect the boys to read many books over the summer and to be prepared to write about or discuss them when they return in September. Our faculty has provided multiple resources in other subjects as well. While many of these resources provide work for the students, it is not required, apart from the one **required** summer reading book.

Students are **required** to read *Rules by Cynthia Lord* in Grade 5, *Book of Greek Myths by Ingri D'Aulaire*, and *Edgar Parin D'Aulaire* in Grade 6, *Wonder by R.J. Palacio* in Grade 7 and *Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell* in Grade 8.

Students interested in art are welcome to create a presentation about a living artist or artist from history. Be creative with your presentation.

The following pages provide a list of basic expectations and internet links to many great resources to explore over the summer. It is important to review these items before school starts.

Grade 5 math students should be able to:

- Add, subtract, multiply, divide and compare whole numbers
- Identify place value and round to a given place value
- Use word names for numbers and computations
- Work with fractions with common denominators
- Memorization of multiplication tables
- Compute factors and multiples

Grade 6 math students should be able to:

- Add, subtract, multiply, divide, compare and order whole numbers, fractions (like and unlike denominators) and decimals
- Recognize and determine equivalent fractions and lowest terms

- Change between mixed number and improper fraction and vice versa
- Change between percentages, fractions and decimals
- Find area and perimeter of 2 dimensional figures (circle, square, triangle, etc.)
- Compute factors, multiples, GCF and LCM

Grade 7 math students should be able to:

- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide integers (positive and negative whole numbers) and rational numbers (fractions and decimals)
- Evaluate and solve one and two-step algebraic equations and inequalities
- Change between percentages, fractions, and decimals
- Use the order of operations to solve a variety of problems
- Graph points in the coordinate plane

Math Algebra 1 students should be able to:

- Writing algebraic expressions with variables (i.e., two more than twice a number plus seven)
- Order of operations
- Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of integers and rational numbers (fractions and decimals)
- The Distributive Property
- Properties of real numbers
- One, two and multi-step equations and inequalities
- Equations and inequalities with variables on both sides of the equal sign
- Ratios, rates and conversions
- Proportions and similar figures
- Percentages
- Graphs of linear equations and inequalities

Math Geometry students should be able to:

- Add, subtract, multiply and divide integers, rational numbers, polynomials, radicals and rational expressions
- Solve multi-step equations and inequalities with variables on both sides
- Simplify exponents and radicals
- Rationalize radicals
- Find the midpoint and distance
- Factor
- Graph linear, quadratic, exponential, inequalities, radical and absolute value equations
- Solve systems of equations and inequalities
- Use the Order of Operations
- Use the Distributive Property

Math Resources:

We have found the GRASP program to be a great program to keep skills up during the summer. Their website is www.grps.org/grasp.

<http://www.aaamath.com/> (How to instructions)

<http://www.purplemath.com/> (How to instructions)

Make Your Own Worksheets

<http://www.edhelper.com/math.htm?gclid=CJnC2YKq1JMCF0OaFQod5HiGkw>

Practice Problems

<http://www.coolmath.com/> (One-by-one practice problems)

<http://www.aplusmath.com/> (Flashcards)

<http://www.internet4classrooms.com/> (a little bit of everything)

Other Math Resources

<http://www.youtube.com/user/khanacademy?gl=CA>

<http://www.kutasoftware.com/>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/Mathademics>

Science Resources:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/minutephysics>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/minuteearth>

<http://www.youtube.com/veritasium>

Language Arts Resources:

http://phschool.com/atschool/writing_grammar_08/program_page.html

This link covers basic grammar for each grade level.

Latin Resources:

<http://www.quia.com/pages/pvilatin1cambridge.html>

This link covers chapters 1-20, which are the chapters that our Grades 5-8 cover. Review these chapter activities in their entirety if you are a returning seventh or eighth grader and review/preview the first few chapters if you are a fifth or sixth grader.

Summer Reading:

Students are expected to read at least 120 minutes per week.

Grades 5-8

The following books are recommended for summer reading, which is necessary to maintain fluency, improve reading level and encourage independent reading. Since there are many variables among like-aged children, particularly during the middle school years, this list should provide something for everyone. As always, we suggest that parents know what their sons are reading and help in selecting their books.

The reading levels and ages noted in our book list should be used as suggestions only. Your son's reading ability, maturity, and interest, are all factors that should be taken into consideration when selecting a book.

Breaking Stalin's Nose (Eugene Yelchin)

2012 Newbery Honor

This book was awarded the 2012 Newbery Honor
One of *Horn Book's* Best Fiction Books of 2011

... now that it is finally time to join the Young Pioneers, the day Sasha has awaited for so long, everything seems to go awry. He breaks a classmate's glasses with a snowball. He accidentally damages a bust of Stalin in the school hallway. And worst of all, his father, the best Communist he knows, was arrested just last night. This moving story of a ten-year-old boy's world shattering is masterful in its simplicity, powerful in its message, and heartbreaking in its plausibility.
(Amazon.com)

Stumptown Kid (Carol Gorman)

Grade Level: 5 and up

This dramatic and moving story set in the days of the Negro Leagues illustrates the true meanings of friendship, prejudice, and heroism.

Praise for STUMPTOWN KID:

"Readers will enjoy this winning mix of sports, suspense, and heroism, and delight in the baseball wit and wisdom." --School Library Journal

- Honorable mention, 2005 Gustavus Myers Award
- 2006 Paterson Prize for Books for Young People
- 2005-6 Pennsylvania Young Adult Top Forty List
- Kansas State Reading Circle 2005 Recommended Reading List

(Amazon.com)

Maximilian & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel: A Bilingual Lucha Libre Thriller (Xavier Garza)

This book was awarded the American Library Association's 2012 Pura Belpré Honor for a Latino writer and illustrator whose children's books best portray, affirm and celebrate the Latino cultural experience!

Margarito acts like any other eleven-year-old aficionado of lucha libre. He worships all the players. But in the summer just before sixth grade, he tumbles over the railing at a match in San Antonio and makes a connection to the world of Mexican wrestling that will ultimately connect him—maybe by blood!—to the greatest hero of all time: the Guardian Angel.

(Amazon.com)

Out of My Mind (Sharon Draper)

Publication Date: May 1, 2012 | Age Level: 10 and up

"If there is one book teens and parents (and everyone else) should read this year, *Out of My Mind* should be it" (*Denver Post*).

Melody is not like most people. She cannot walk or talk, but she has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced.

She is smarter than most of the adults who try to diagnose her and smarter than her classmates in her integrated classroom—the very same classmates who dismiss her as mentally challenged, because she cannot tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by cerebral palsy. And she’s determined to let everyone know it...somehow. In this breakthrough story—reminiscent of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*—from multiple Coretta Scott King Award-winner Sharon Draper, readers will come to know a brilliant mind and a brave spirit who will change forever how they look at anyone with a disability.
(Amazon.com)

Okay For Now (Gary D. Schmidt)

Publication Date: April 5, 2011 | Grade Level: 5 and up

As a fourteen-year-old who just moved to a new town, with no friends and a louse for an older brother, Doug Swieteck has all the stats stacked against him. So begins a coming-of-age masterwork full of equal parts comedy and tragedy from Newbery Honor winner Gary D. Schmidt. As Doug struggles to be more than the “skinny thug” that his teachers and the police think him to be, he finds an unlikely ally in Lil Spicer—a fiery young lady who “smelled like daisies would smell if they were growing in a big field under a clearing sky after a rain.” In Lil, Doug finds the strength to endure an abusive father, the suspicions of a whole town, and the return of his oldest brother, forever scarred, from Vietnam. Together, they find a safe haven in the local library, inspiration in learning about the plates of John James Audubon’s birds, and a hilarious adventure on a Broadway stage. In this stunning novel, Schmidt expertly weaves multiple themes of loss and recovery in a story teeming with distinctive, unusual characters and invaluable lessons about love, creativity, and survival.

(Amazon.com)

Witches!: The Absolutely True Tale of Disaster in Salem (Rosalyn Schanzer)

Reading level: Ages 10 and up

Publisher: National Geographic Children's Books (September 13, 2011)

Author/Illustrator Rosalyn Schanzer's book *Witches! The Absolutely True Tale of Disaster in Salem* (National Geographic) is the winner of the Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators for Best Illustrated Children's Book of 2011 and has also received a 2012 Robert F. Sibert Honor Award as one of the year's 5 most distinguished informational books for children. Other awards for this book include: Starred Review from School Library Journal

SLJ Best Book of the Year

NY Public Library's 25 best Nonfiction Titles of 2011

New York Times Best Books of 2011

A Chicago Public Library Best of the Best Book

Fuse #8 list of 100 Magnificent Children's Books of 2011

Kid Lit Frenzy top 5 Middle Grade Picks of 2011

(Amazon.com)

A Monster Calls (Patrick Ness)

An unflinching, darkly funny, and deeply moving story of a boy, his seriously ill mother, and an unexpected monstrous visitor.

At seven minutes past midnight, thirteen-year-old Conor wakes to find a monster outside his bedroom window. But it isn't the monster Conor's been expecting-- he's been expecting the one from his nightmare, the nightmare he's had nearly every night since his mother started her treatments. The monster in his backyard is different. It's ancient. And wild. And it wants something from Conor. Something terrible and dangerous. It wants the truth. From the final idea of award-winning author Siobhan Dowd-- whose premature death from cancer prevented her from writing it herself-- Patrick Ness has spun a haunting and darkly funny novel of mischief, loss, and monsters both real and imagined.

Reading level: Ages 12 and up
(Amazon.com)

The Scorpio Races (Maggie Stiefvater)

Reading level: Ages 14 and up

The Scorpio Races is a 2012 Michael L. Printz award honor book for excellence in young adult literature.

From the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Shiver* and *Linger* comes a brand new, heart stopping novel.

Some race to win. Others race to survive.

It happens at the start of every November: the Scorpio Races. Riders attempt to keep hold of their water horses long enough to make it to the finish line.

Some riders live.

Others die.

At age nineteen, Sean Kendrick is the returning champion. He is a young man of few words, and if he has any fears, he keeps them buried deep, where no one else can see them.

Puck Connolly is different. She never meant to ride in the Scorpio Races. But fate hasn't given her much of a choice. So she enters the competition - the first girl ever to do so. She is in no way prepared for what is going to happen.

As she did in her bestselling *Shiver* trilogy, author Maggie Stiefvater takes us to the breaking point, where both love and life meet their greatest obstacles, and only the strong of heart can survive. *The Scorpio Races* is an unforgettable reading experience.

(Amazon.com)

Under the Mesquite (Guadalupe Garcia McCall)

Under the Mesquite is the winner of the American Library Association's 2012 Pura Belpré author award honoring a Latino writer and illustrator whose children's books best portray, affirm and celebrate the Latino cultural experience!

Reading level: Ages 12 and up

Lupita, a budding actor and poet in a close-knit Mexican American immigrant family, comes of age as she struggles with adult responsibilities during her mother's battle with cancer in this young adult novel in verse.

When Lupita learns Mami has cancer, she is terrified by the possibility of losing her mother, the anchor of her close-knit family. Suddenly, being a high school student, starring in a play, and dealing with friends who don't always understand, become less important than doing whatever she can to save Mami's life.

While her father cares for Mami at an out-of-town clinic, Lupita takes charge of her seven younger siblings. As Lupita struggles to keep the family afloat, she takes refuge in the shade of a mesquite tree, where she escapes the chaos at home to write. Forced to face her limitations in the midst of overwhelming changes and losses, Lupita rediscovers her voice and finds healing in the power of words.

Told with honest emotion in evocative free verse, Lupita's journey toward hope is captured in moments that are alternately warm and poignant. *Under the Mesquite* is an empowering story about testing family bonds and the strength of a young woman navigating pain and hardship with surprising resilience.

(Amazon.com)

The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story of Adventure, Heroism, & Treachery
(Steve Sheinkin)

Publication Date: November 9, 2010 | Grade Level: 6 and up

Most people know that Benedict Arnold was America's first, most notorious traitor. Few know that he was also one of its greatest war heroes. This accessible biography introduces young readers to the real Arnold: reckless, heroic, and driven. Packed with first-person accounts, astonishing battle scenes, and surprising twists, this is a gripping and true adventure tale.

The Notorious Benedict Arnold is the winner of the 2011 Boston Globe - Horn Book Award for Nonfiction.

(Amazon.com)

Monster (Walter Dean Myers)

Reading level: Ages 13 and up

FADE IN: INTERIOR: Early morning in CELL BLOCK D, MANHATTAN DETENTION CENTER.

Steve (Voice-Over)

Sometimes I feel like I have walked into the middle of a movie. Maybe I can make my own movie. The film will be the story of my life. No, not my life, but of this experience. I'll call it what the lady prosecutor called me ... Monster.

From School Library Journal:

Grade 7 Up-Steve Harmon, 16, is accused of serving as a lookout for a robbery of a Harlem drugstore. The owner was shot and killed, and now Steve is in prison awaiting trial for murder. From there, he tells about his case and his incarceration. Many elements of this story are familiar, but Myers keeps it fresh and alive by telling it from an unusual perspective. Steve, an amateur filmmaker, recounts his experiences in the form of a movie screenplay. His striking scene-by-scene narrative

of how his life has dramatically changed is riveting. Interspersed within the script are diary entries in which the teen vividly describes the nightmarish conditions of his confinement. Myers expertly presents the many facets of his protagonist's character and readers will find themselves feeling both sympathy and repugnance for him. Steve searches deep within his soul to prove to himself that he is not the "monster" the prosecutor presented him as to the jury. Ultimately, he reconnects with his humanity and regains a moral awareness that he had lost. *Monster* will challenge readers with difficult questions, to which there are no definitive answers. In some respects, the novel is reminiscent of Virginia Walter's *Making Up Megaboy* (DK Ink, 1998), another book enriched by its ambiguity. Like it, *Monster* lends itself well to classroom or group discussion. It's an emotionally charged story that readers will find compelling and disturbing.

Edward Sullivan, New York Public Library

Parental Advisory: physical abuse

Anything but Typical (Nora Raleigh Baskin)

Publication Date: March 9, 2010 | Age Level: 10 and up

Jason Blake is an autistic 12-year-old living in a neurotypical world. Most days it's just a matter of time before something goes wrong. But Jason finds a glimmer of understanding when he comes across Phoenix Bird, who posts stories to the same online site as he does.

Jason can be himself when he writes and he thinks that Phoenix Bird-her name is Rebecca-could be his first real friend. But as desperate as Jason is to meet her, he's terrified that if they do meet, Rebecca will only see his autism and not who Jason really is. By acclaimed writer Nora Raleigh Baskin, this is the breathtaking depiction of an autistic boy's struggles-and a story for anyone who has ever worried about fitting in.

(Amazon.com)

Fever 1793 (Laurie Halse Anderson)

Publication Date: March 1, 2002 | Age Level: 10 and up

During the summer of 1793, Mattie Cook lives above the family coffee shop with her widowed mother and grandfather. Mattie spends her days avoiding chores and making plans to turn the family business into the finest Philadelphia has ever seen. But then the fever breaks out.

Disease sweeps the streets, destroying everything in its path and turning Mattie's world upside down. At her feverish mother's insistence, Mattie flees the city with her grandfather. But she soon discovers that the sickness is everywhere, and Mattie must learn quickly how to survive in a city turned frantic with disease.

(Amazon.com)

Peak (Roland Smith)

Reading level: Ages 12 and up

The only thing you'll find on the summit of Mount Everest is a divine view. The things that really matter lie far below. –Peak Marcello

After fourteen-year-old Peak Marcello is arrested for scaling a New York City skyscraper, he's left with a choice: wither away in juvenile detention or fly to Kathmandu with his long-lost father. Peak quickly learns that his father's renewed interest in him has strings attached. As owner of Peak Expeditions, he wants his son to be the youngest person to reach the Everest summit. The story of Peak's dangerous ascent—told in his own words—is suspenseful, immediate, and impossible to put down.

Awards: ALA Best Book for Young Adults, ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers, New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age, Booklist Editors' Choice, National Book Award Winner, Junior Library Guild Selection
(Amazon.com)

The False Prince (Jennifer A. Nielsen)

Reading level: Ages 13 and up

Publication Date: April 1, 2012 | Series: Ascendance Trilogy (Book 1)

THE FALSE PRINCE is the thrilling first book in a brand-new trilogy filled with danger and deceit and hidden identities that will have readers rushing breathlessly to the end.

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.

An extraordinary adventure filled with danger and action, lies and deadly truths that will have readers clinging to the edge of their seats.

(Amazon.com)

Ted & Me (Baseball Card Adventures)

Reading level: Ages 10 and up

Stosh should have figured that the FBI would find him eventually.

Now they've turned up on his doorstep—and they know all about his ability to travel through time using baseball cards. In fact, they want to send him back in time on a mission: to warn President Roosevelt about the attack on Pearl Harbor!

But when Stosh finds out that his “ticket” back to 1941 is a Ted Williams card, he starts planning a mission of his own. Williams is one of the greatest hitters of all time—even though he lost almost five years of his career to serve in the Marines.

How many more home runs would the Splendid Splinter have hit if he had those years back? What if Stosh can prevent the attack on Pearl Harbor *and* convince Williams not to serve in the military?

Sometimes you can change history. Sometimes history can change you.

The Grave Robbers Apprentice (Allan Stratton)

Reading level: Ages 10 and up

“A playfully dramatic adventure with swashbuckling kids, mountain hermits, avalanche sledding and circus bears. Stratton’s prose is artistic, clever and funny.”
(Kirkus Reviews)

“This clever tale hits all the right notes.” (Publishers Weekly)

“Readers who like their fairy tales packed with action and happy endings will want to add this to their collection.” (Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books)

“The Grave Robber’s Apprentice is a tale told with sound and furious action—chock full of villainous villains, heroic heroes (and heroines), and moments of absolute hilarity. Stratton is a master at his craft and he’s given this story a heart of gold.”
(Arthur Slade, author of *The Hunchback Assignments*)

“A rollicking and enchanting fairy tale for the 21st century.” (Kenneth Oppel, author of the *Airborne* trilogy and *Silverwing* series)

“A fun read.” (School Library Journal)
(Amazon.com)

King of the Mound: My Summer with Satchel Paige (Wes Tooke)

Reading level: Ages 8 and up

Baseball legend Satchel Paige changes a boy’s life in this coming-of-age tale from the author of *Lucky*.

Nick was going to be a star baseball player, no doubt about it. People for miles around talked about the twelve-year-old boy with the golden arm. And then Nick is diagnosed with polio—a life-threatening disease in the 1930s. Everyone is devastated, especially Nick’s father, who copes by closing off from his son. When Nick finally leaves the hospital he wants nothing more than to get back in the game, but he seems to be the only one who thinks it’s possible. But after he begins working for Mr. Churchill, the owner of a minor league team, Nick meets Satchel Paige, arguably the best player in baseball. Satchel faces obstacles of his own—his skin color prevents him from joining the major leagues—and he encourages Nick to overcome the odds and step out of the dugout.

(Amazon.com)

The Puzzler’s Mansion (Eric Berlin)

Publication Date: May 10, 2012 | Age Level: 8 and up

Winston Breen is back with more puzzle fun!

Puzzle fanatic Winston Breen and his best friends receive a once-in-a-lifetime invitation--to a weekend of riddles, games and puzzles at a fabulous mansion! Famous musician Richard Overton is giving away valuable prizes and Winston is ready to win. But the ultimate weekend becomes the ultimate mystery when prizes start going missing, and no guests are above suspicion. Can Winston crack the case before the weekend is up?

A fast-paced whodunit filled with interactive puzzles and plenty of clever brain-teasers, the latest Winston Breen installment will have readers hooked!

(Amazon.com)

Crush (Gary Paulsen)

Publication Date: May 8, 2012 | Age Level: 9 and up

Readers met the comical Kevin in *Liar, Liar* and *Flat Broke*. Kevin gets serious about Tina Zabinski, the Most Beautiful Girl in the World. Finally, finally, he's worked up his courage—he's going to ask her out. Or will his trademark scheming get in his way?

(Amazon.com)

Liesl and Po (Lauren Oliver)

Publication Date: October 2011

'On the third night after the day her father died, Liesl saw the ghost.' Liesl lives in a tiny attic bedroom, locked away by her cruel stepmother. Her only friends are the shadows and the mice - until one night a ghost appears from the darkness. It is Po, who comes from the Other Side. Both Liesl and Po are lonely, but together they are less alone.

That same night, an alchemist's apprentice, Will, bungles an important delivery. He accidentally switches a box containing the most powerful magic in the world with one containing something decidedly less remarkable. Will's mistake has tremendous consequences for Liesl and Po, and it draws the three of them together on an extraordinary journey.

(Amazon.com)

Woods Runner (Gary Paulsen)

Reading level: Ages 12 and up (Grades 6-9)

January 11, 2011

Samuel, 13, spends his days in the forest, hunting for food for his family. He has grown up on the frontier of a British colony, America. Far from any town, or news of the war against the King that American patriots have begun near Boston.

But the war comes to them. British soldiers and Iroquois attack. Samuel's parents are taken away, prisoners. Samuel follows, hiding, moving silently, determined to find a way to rescue them. Each day he confronts the enemy, and the tragedy and

horror of this war. But he also discovers allies, men and women working secretly for the patriot cause. And he learns that he must go deep into enemy territory to find his parents: all the way to the British headquarters, New York City.

From Booklist

Steering his narrative through an unsentimentalized and deglorified depiction of the American Revolution, Paulsen's latest work of historical fiction provides a stark glimpse of just how awful the war really was for those who suffered through it. Though his parents are city folk trying to hack out a life on the frontier in Pennsylvania, 13-year-old Samuel is entirely at home in the woodland wilderness that surrounds their little settlement. Soon after word arrives of the uprising in Concord and Lexington, Samuel returns home from a jaunt in the forest to find his home burned down, the neighbors slaughtered, and his parents missing. Samuel tracks his captured parents through the countryside to British-held New York, encountering scalping bands of Iroquois, pillaging squads of mercenary Hessians, and a few hardy, helpful rebels along the way. Paulsen alternates chapters of Samuel's story with historical notes that illuminate the sobering realities of the Revolution and add some context not found in most history books. Paulsen's rewarding and fast-paced novel offers an honest assessment of heroism with both small and large. Grades 6-9. --Ian Chipman (Amazon.com)

The Watsons Go to Birmingham (Christopher Paul Curtis)

Publication Date: 1963 | Age Level: 10 and up |

A wonderful middle-grade novel narrated by Kenny, 9, about his middle-class black family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan. When Kenny's 13-year-old brother, Byron, gets to be too much trouble, they head South to Birmingham to visit Grandma, the one person who can shape him up. And they happen to be in Birmingham when Grandma's church is blown up.

From School Library Journal:

Grade 5-8-In the only Newbery Honor book to make my list, the weighty issues and historical perspectives don't get in the way of a very funny family. Byron plays some awful tricks on his younger brother Kenny, but readers can't help but laugh at some of his less harmful teasing. He tells a convincing story to little sister Joey about how garbage trucks scoop up frozen Southern folks who don't dress warmly enough, and half-fools Kenny with his tall tale. While the boys supply many of the laughs, it's clear that they get their sense of humor from their dad. His gentle teasing and tongue-in-cheek exaggerations can be hilarious. Laughter and Tears Award: More than any other book on my list, the humor in *The Watsons* shifts to near tragedy and many thought-provoking developments. The serious stuff succeeds in part because readers grow so close to this family through the humor that comes earlier in the book.

(Amazon.com)

Countdown (Deborah Wiles)

Book Description

Publication Date: April, 2013 | Age Level: 8 and up

Four starred reviews greeted this new, groundbreaking classic from Deborah Wiles!

It's 1962, and it seems everyone is living in fear. Twelve-year-old Franny Chapman lives with her family in Washington, DC, during the days surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis. Amidst the pervasive threat of nuclear war, Franny must face the tension between herself and her younger brother, figure out where she fits in with her family, and look beyond outward appearances. For Franny, as for all Americans, it's going to be a formative year.

(Amazon.com)

Dead End in Norvelt (Jack Gantos)

Publication Date: September 13, 2011 | Age Level: 10 and up

Dead End in Norvelt is the winner of the 2012 Newbery Medal for the year's best contribution to children's literature and the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction!

Melding the entirely true and the wildly fictional, *Dead End in Norvelt* is a novel about an incredible two months for a kid named Jack Gantos, whose plans for vacation excitement are shot down when he is "grounded for life" by his feuding parents, and whose nose spews bad blood at every little shock he gets. But plenty of excitement (and shocks) are coming Jack's way once his mom loans him out to help a feisty old neighbor with a most unusual chore—typewriting obituaries filled with stories about the people who founded his utopian town. As one obituary leads to another, Jack is launched on a strange adventure involving molten wax, Eleanor Roosevelt, twisted promises, a homemade airplane, Girl Scout cookies, a man on a trike, a dancing plague, voices from the past, Hells Angels . . . and possibly murder. Endlessly surprising, this sly, sharp-edged narrative is the author at his very best, making readers laugh out loud at the most unexpected things in a dead-funny depiction of growing up in a slightly off-kilter place where the past is present, the present is confusing, and the future is completely up in the air.

(Amazon.com)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS BOOK HAS ALREADY BEEN READ TO INCOMING 6TH GRADERS.

The Book Thief (Markus Zusak's)

From School Library Journal:

Starred Review. Grade 9 Up—Zusak has created a work that deserves the attention of sophisticated teen and adult readers. 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 in a working-class neighborhood of tough kids, acid-tongued mothers, and loving fathers who earn their living by the work of their hands. The child arrives having just stolen her first book—although she has not yet learned how to read—and her foster father uses it, *The Gravediggers Handbook*, to lull her to sleep when she's roused by regular nightmares about her younger brother's death. 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 (who has a whole library from which she allows Liesel to steal), and especially her foster parents. Zusak not only creates a mesmerizing and original story but also writes with poetic syntax, causing readers to deliberate over phrases and lines, even as the action impels them forward. Death is not a sentimental storyteller, but he does attend to an array of satisfying details, giving Liesel's story all the nuances of chance, folly, and fulfilled expectation that it deserves. An extraordinary narrative.—*Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA*

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (Sherman Alexie)

From School Library Journal:

Starred Review. Grade 7–10—Exploring Indian identity, both self and tribal, Alexie's first young adult novel is a semiautobiographical chronicle of Arnold Spirit, aka Junior, a Spokane Indian from Wellpinit, WA. The bright 14-year-old was born with water on the brain, is regularly the target of bullies, and loves to draw. He says, "I think the world is a series of broken dams and floods, and my cartoons are tiny little lifeboats." He expects disaster when he transfers from the reservation school to the rich, white school in Reardan, but soon finds himself making friends with both geeky and popular students and starting on the basketball team. Meeting his old classmates on the court, Junior grapples with questions about what constitutes one's community, identity, and tribe. The daily struggles of reservation life and the tragic deaths of the protagonist's grandmother, dog, and older sister would be all but unbearable without the humor and resilience of spirit with which Junior faces the world. The many characters, on and off the rez, with whom he has dealings are portrayed with compassion and verve, particularly the adults in his extended family. Forney's simple pencil cartoons fit perfectly within the story and reflect the burgeoning artist within Junior. Reluctant readers can even skim the pictures and construct their own story based exclusively on Forney's illustrations. The teen's determination to both improve himself and overcome poverty, despite the handicaps of birth, circumstances, and race, delivers a positive message in a low-key manner. Alexie's tale of self-discovery is a first purchase for all libraries.—*Chris Shoemaker, New York Public Library*

Parental Advisory: Physical Abuse

Theodore Boone Kid Lawyer (John Grisham)

Publication Date: May 25, 2010 | Age Level: 8 and up | Series: Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer

A perfect murder

A faceless witness

A lone courtroom champion knows the whole truth . . . and he's only thirteen years old

Meet Theodore Boone

In the small city of Strattenburg, there are many lawyers, and though he's only thirteen years old, Theo Boone thinks he's one of them. Theo knows every judge, policeman, court clerk—and a lot about the law. He dreams of being a great trial

lawyer, of a life in the courtroom.

But Theo finds himself in court much sooner than expected. Because he knows so much—maybe too much—he is suddenly dragged into the middle of a sensational murder trial. A cold-blooded killer is about to go free, and only Theo knows the truth.

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (Jules Verne)

In the mid-nineteenth century, a French professor and his two companions, trapped aboard a fantastic submarine as prisoners of the deranged Captain Nemo, come face to face with exotic ocean creatures and strange sights hidden from the world above. Please Note: Incoming 8th graders have already read this book.

A Christmas Carol (Charles Dickens)

Ebenezer Scrooge, a mean old miser, is given a second chance to do right after being haunted by three ghosts on Christmas Eve.

A Day No Pigs Would Die (Robert Newton Peck)

A semi-autobiographical tale of a boy's struggle with adolescence and the responsibility of manhood.

Diary of a Young Girl (Anne Frank)

A Jewish girl and only 13 years old when she was forced to go into hiding during the Holocaust, she and her family, along with four others, spent 25 months during World War II in an annex of rooms above her father's office in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, before they were found by the Nazis and sent to concentration camps. Although Anne did not survive, her diary did. Through this diary we see Anne's life, set against a background of unbelievably horrific world events.

Johnny Tremain (Esther Forbes)

Unique because it tells the story of the American Revolution through the eyes of a boy, not a leader of the Revolution. "Esther Forbes's power to create, and to recreate, a face, a voice, a scene takes us as living spectators to the Boston Tea Party, to the Battle of Lexington and of North Creek."

Treasure Island (Robert Louis Stevenson)

An adventure novel, a thrilling tale of "buccaneers and buried gold." Traditionally considered a coming of age story, it is an adventure tale of superb atmosphere, character and action, and also a wry commentary on the ambiguity of morality—as seen in Long John Silver—unusual for children's literature then and now.

The Upstairs Room (Johanna Reiss)

Johanna de Leeuw Reiss has written a remarkably fresh and moving account of her own experiences as a young girl during World War II. Like many adults she was

innocent of the German plans for Jews, and she might have gone to a labor camp as scores of families did. "It won't be for long and the Germans have told us we'll be treated well," those families said. "What can happen?" They did not know, and they could not imagine.... But millions of Jews found out. Mrs. Reiss's picture of the Oosterveld family with whom she lived, and of Annie and Sini, reflects a deep spirit of optimism, a faith in the ingenuity, backbone, and even humor with which ordinary human beings meet extraordinary challenges. In the steady, matter-of-fact, day-by-day courage they all showed lies a profound strength that transcends the horrors of the long and frightening war.

Hatchet (Gary Paulsen)

When his plane crashes, 13-year-old Brian survives alone in the wilds of Canada for 54 days with only the clothes on his back and a hatchet.

The Old Man and the Sea (Ernest Hemingway)

The Old Man and the Sea is one of Hemingway's most enduring works. Told in language of great simplicity and power, it is the story of an old Cuban fisherman, down on his luck, and his supreme ordeal—a relentless, agonizing battle with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream. Here Hemingway recasts, in strikingly contemporary style, the classic theme of courage in the face of defeat, of personal triumph won from loss. Written in 1952, this hugely successful novella confirmed his power and presence in the literary world and played a large part in his winning the 1954 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Maus: A Survivor's Tale (Art Spiegelman)

A Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel about the Holocaust.

The Story of My Life (Helen Keller)

In *The Story of My Life*, Helen Keller tells the extraordinary tale of her childhood and her mentor, teacher, and companion Anne Sullivan. Before she was two years old, the otherwise healthy Helen became ill with an unidentified condition from which, she recovered, but not without losing both her sight and hearing completely. Helen's inability to communicate beyond a few rudimentary signs became a source of despair for the Keller family until a young and ambitious Anne Sullivan was asked to become Helen's personal instructor. Helen's incredible true story is an inspiration to anyone who has faced seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Cheaper by the Dozen (Frank B. Gilbreth & Ernestine Gilbreth Carey)

"Gay and lighthearted...One of the most amusing books." (The Chicago Sun-Times)

"Always entertaining, occasionally hilarious, occasionally touching....Sound Americana." (Saturday Review of Literature)

"Instructive, funny, and very readable." (School Library Journal)

From the Publisher:

No growing pains have ever been more hilarious than those suffered loudly by the riotous Gilbreth clan. First, there are a dozen red-haired, freckle-faced kids to contend with. Then there's Dad, a famous efficiency expert who believes a family can be run just like a factory. And there's Mother, his partner in everything except discipline. How they all survive such escapades as forgetting Frank, Jr., in a roadside restaurant or going on a first date with Dad in the backseat or having their tonsils removed en masse will keep you in stitches. You can be sure they're not only cheaper, they're funnier by the dozen.

(Amazon.com)

Nothing but the Truth: a Documentary Novel (Avi)

Publication Date: January 1, 2010 | Age Level: 11 and up |

Newbery Honor Book by acclaimed author Avi

In this thought-provoking examination of freedom, patriotism, and respect, ninth-grader, Philip Malloy, is kept from joining the track team by his failing grades in English class. Convinced that the teacher just doesn't like him, Philip concocts a plan to get transferred out of her class. Breaking the school's policy of silence during the national anthem, he hums along, and ends up in a crisis at the center of the nation's attention.

(Amazon.com)

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas (John Boyne)

Berlin 1942

When Bruno returns home from school one day, he discovers that his belongings are being packed in crates. His father has received a promotion and the family must move from their home to a new house far far away, where there is no one to play with and nothing to do. A tall fence running alongside stretches as far as the eye can see and cuts him off from the strange people he can see in the distance.

But Bruno longs to be an explorer and decides that there must be more to this desolate new place than meets the eye. While exploring his new environment, he meets another boy whose life and circumstances are very different to his own, and their meeting results in a friendship that has devastating consequences.

(Amazon.com)

Al Capone Does my Shirts (Gennifer Choldenko)

Publication Date: May 1, 2006 | Age Level: 10 and up | Series: Al Capone

Today I moved to a twelve-acre rock covered with cement, topped with bird turd and surrounded by water. I'm not the only kid who lives here. There's my sister, Natalie, except she doesn't count. And there are twenty-three other kids who live on the island because their dads work as guards or cooks or doctors or electricians for the prison, like my dad does. Plus, there are a ton of murderers, rapists, hit men, con men, stickup men, embezzlers, connivers, burglars, kidnappers and maybe even an innocent man or two, though I doubt it. The convicts we have are the kind other

prisons don't want. I never knew prisons could be picky, but I guess they can. You get to Alcatraz by being the worst of the worst. Unless you're me. I came here because my mother said I had to.

(Amazon.com)

Travel Team (Mike Lupica)

Publication Date: August 18, 2005

Twelve-year-old Danny Walker may be the smallest kid on the basketball court -- but don't tell him that. Because no one plays with more heart or court sense. But none of that matters when he is cut from his local travel team, the very same team his father led to national prominence as a boy. Danny's father, still smarting from his own troubles, knows Danny isn't the only kid who was cut for the wrong reason, and together, this washed-up former player and a bunch of never-say-die kids prove that the heart simply cannot be measured.

Sunrise over Fallujah (Walter Dean Myers)

From Walter Dean Myers comes a powerful and timely novel about the heroics and horror of war--a gripping companion to FALLEN ANGELS.

Robin "Birdy" Perry, a new army recruit from Harlem, isn't quite sure why he joined the army, but he's sure where he's headed: Iraq. Birdy and the others in the Civilian Affairs Battalion are supposed to help secure and stabilize the country and successfully interact with the Iraqi people. Officially, the code name for their maneuvers is Operation Iraqi Freedom. But the young men and women in the CA unit have a simpler name for it: WAR.

The Wednesday Wars (Gary D. Schmidt)

Age Level: 10 and up

Gary D. Schmidt was awarded a Newbery Honor in 2008 for *The Wednesday Wars*, the story of the seventh-grader Holling Hoodhood from suburban Long Island in 1967 who is stuck spending his Wednesday afternoons with his teacher Mrs. Baker . . . who is clearly trying to kill him with Shakespeare. As time rolls on, Shakespeare starts to grow on Holling, and even when he's not playing the yellow-tighted role of the fairy Ariel, he can't help but hurl the occasional Elizabethan insult. Laugh-out-loud scenes involving overfed escaped classroom rats and chalk-dusted cream puffs mix seamlessly with more poignant moments, some related to the Vietnam War. Holling is courageous, funny, and unique, and readers will love seeing him evolve beyond the expectations of others to become his own fabulous self.

Awards: 2008 Newbery Honor Book, 2008 ALA Notable Children's Book, 2008 ALA Best Book for Young Adults, 2007 Booklist Editors' Choice, 2007 National Parenting Publications Book Award, 2007 New York Public Library 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing, 2007 Book Sense Award Finalist

Mockingbird (Kathryn Erskine)

Publication Date: April 15, 2010 | Age Level: 10 and up

In Caitlin's world, everything is black or white. Things are good or bad. Anything in between is confusing. That's the stuff Caitlin's older brother, Devon, has always explained. But now Devon's dead and Dad is no help at all. Caitlin wants to get over it, but as an eleven-year-old girl with Asperger's, she doesn't know how. When she reads the definition of closure, she realizes that is what she needs. In her search for it, Caitlin discovers that not everything is black and white—the world is full of colors—messy and beautiful.

Kathryn Erskine has written a must-read gem, one of the most moving novels of the year.

(Amazon.com)

Please Note: Boys entering 6th and 7th grade have heard this book read aloud.

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle (Avi)

Publication Date: August 10, 1992 | Age Level: 10 and up

A vicious captain, a mutinous crew --
and a young girl caught in the middle

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.

Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life (Wendy Mass)

In one month Jeremy Fink will turn thirteen. But does he have what it takes to be a teenager? He collects mutant candy, he won't venture more than four blocks from his apartment if he can help it, and he definitely doesn't like surprises. On the other hand, his best friend, Lizzy, isn't afraid of anything, even if that might get her into trouble now and then.

Jeremy's summer takes an unexpected turn when a mysterious wooden box arrives in the mail. According to the writing on the box, it holds the meaning of life! Jeremy is supposed to open it on his thirteenth birthday. The problem is, the keys are missing, and the box is made so that only the keys will open it without destroying what's inside. Jeremy and Lizzy set off to find the keys, but when one of their efforts goes very wrong, Jeremy starts to lose hope that he'll ever be able to open the box. But he soon discovers that when you're meeting people named Oswald Oswald and using a private limo to deliver unusual objects to strangers all over the city, there might be other ways of finding out the meaning of life.

Lively characters, surprising twists, and thought-provoking ideas make Wendy Mass's latest novel an unforgettable read.

Unwind (Neal Shusterman)

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 7 Up—Set in the future, the second civil war is fought over abortion. To end the war, a compromise is reached that ends the practice of abortion

but creates an alternative called "unwinding." Between the ages of 13 and 17, parents or guardians can choose to have their children unwound, which involves having every part of their bodies harvested to be "donated" to another person so, technically, they don't really die. The complex and compelling plot follows three teens whose stories intertwine when they escape while on their way to the harvest camps. Fifteen-year-old Connor's parents can no longer control him. Lev, a tithe, was raised by religious parents for the sole purpose of being unwound. Risa, a ward of the state, is a victim of shrinking budgets since she is not a talented enough musician to be kept alive. Neal Shusterman's engrossing novel (S & S, 2007) is narrated in an even cadence and matter-of-fact tone that suits the author's straightforward narrative style. His wide array of voices makes the involved story line, which is left wide open for what is sure to be an interesting sequel, easy to follow. This gripping, thought-provoking novel is guaranteed to lead to interesting discussions about abortion, adoption, organ donation, religion, politics, and health care.—Karen T. Bilton, Mary Jacobs Memorial Library, Rocky Hill, NJ

The Schwa Was Here (Neal Shusterman)

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's for sure: no one ever noticed him. Except me. My name is Antsy Bonano and I was the one who realized the Schwa was functionally invisible and used him to make some big bucks. But I was also the one who caused him more grief than a friend should. So if you all just shut up and listen, I'll tell you everything there is to know about the Schwa, from how he got his name, to what really happened with his mom. I'll spill everything. Unless, of course, the Schwa Effect wipes him out of my brain before I'm done.
(Amazon.com)

A Single Shard (Linda Sue Park)

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8-Linda Sue Park's 2002 Newbery Award-winning story (Clarion, 2001) about Tree-ear, a 12th century Korean orphan who finds his future through his intuitive interest in the potter's trade, is nicely rendered by Graeme Malcolm. Tree-ear's early years have been spent in the care of the homeless but inventive Crane-man, who has taught him to find a meal among what other villagers have rejected as scrap and shelter beneath a bridge or in an old kimchee cellar, as the season dictates. Now about 12 years old, Tree-ear extends his social and labor habits to an elderly and idiosyncratic potter, first because Tree-ear must repay Min for a pot he damaged when he touched it without permission, and then as Min's helper, a job for which he is paid in food and the motherly affection of Min's wife. In a village renowned for its pottery, those in the trade eagerly anticipate a visit from the representative of the Korean court, each potter hoping that his designs will be selected for royal use. Tree-ear discovers a rival potter's invention of a new surface design technique that he knows Min could use to better effect than does the inventor. Eventually, the technique is revealed and Min is able to adapt it to his excellent work, sending Tree-ear on a long and dangerous journey to court with two sample pieces. By the time Tree-ear arrives, he has but a single shard to show the

court's pottery expert. Malcolm's light British accent is clear and adds a sense of "another place, another time" to this tale. However, many of the issues transcend centuries and cultures: What is home? Can one own a creative idea? How much of an art object must be seen in order to judge its quality? This book will engage both individual readers and discussion groups; the audio version makes it accessible to a broader audience, while giving style and substance to those who have read the print version.

Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA

Charlie Joe Jackson's Guide to Not Reading (Tommy Greenwald)

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. This is the hilarious story of an avid non-reader and the extreme lengths to which he'll go to get out of reading a book.

Please Note: Incoming 6th graders have heard this book read aloud.

Chasing Lincoln's Killer (James L. Swanson)

Publication Date: February 1, 2009

Based on rare archival material, obscure trial manuscripts, and interviews with relatives of the conspirators and the manhunters, CHASING LINCOLN'S KILLER is a fast-paced thriller about the pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth: a wild twelve-day chase through the streets of Washington, D.C., across the swamps of Maryland, and into the forests of Virginia.

"This story is true. All the characters are real and were alive during the great manhunt of April 1865. Their words are authentic and come from original sources: letters, manuscripts, trial transcripts, newspapers, government reports, pamphlets, books and other documents. What happened in Washington, D.C., that spring, and in the swamps and rivers, forests and fields of Maryland and Virginia during the next twelve days, is far too incredible to have been made up."

So begins this fast-paced thriller that tells the story of the pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth and gives a day-by-day account of the wild chase to find this killer and his accomplices. Based on James Swanson's bestselling adult book MANHUNT: THE 12-DAY CHASE FOR LINCOLN'S KILLER, this young people's version is an accessible look at the assassination of a president, and shows readers Abraham Lincoln the man, the father, the husband, the friend, and how his death impacted those closest to him.

(Amazon.com)

Brothers of War (J. Marshall Martin)

Student Review:

Flamingnet Student Book Reviewer AKeen_FPB

Brothers of War illustrates vividly the hardships of living in a Confederate prison

camp during the American Civil War. Two brothers from a Union infantry in Kentucky are captured by the Rebels and fight for their survival while living in Andersonville Prison, one of the largest prison camps in the South. Simon, one of the brothers, realizes that an inmate of the camp has stolen his fife, his most prized possession, and Simon is more than determined to get it back. He hears his fife being played and notices that the man playing it is wearing a medallion that once belonged to Simon's father. Simon then believes that his father is within the walls of the camp. Will Simon get his fife back? Will Simon be reunited with his father?

I really enjoyed reading this book because of the fast moving plot. No one scene or scenario was belabored to the point of boredom. I also was interested that this book is part of the Boys Read series of books. Both of these literary elements make the book even more appealing to boys who don't like to read. Brothers of War is historical fiction and in my opinion it is more fun reading a book when you know a story somewhat similar to this actually did occur during the Civil War. Some of the content may be hard to grasp if the reader is under the age of 12. This book was hard to put down especially because we are finishing up a Civil War unit in school. Some background of the Civil War is also needed to understand the prequel of the story. Reviewer Age: 13

During the summer you might also want to ...

... visit the Detroit's Cultural Center. Within a few blocks you have the Detroit Institute of Arts, The Museum of African-American History, the Scarab Club, the main branch of the Detroit Public Library and other cultural centers. While in the neighborhood you can visit St. Paul's Cathedral (Episcopalian) and have a nice lunch at Union Street, or at the Majestic Café which is attached to the Majestic Theatre (the site of Harry Houdini's last performance.)

... travel to Belle Isle and watch the freighters go by. On the island you can stop at the Dossin Maritime Museum, or the Belle Isle Conservatory. Stop at Pewabic Pottery while you are in the neighborhood and drive through Indian Village.

... go to Detroit's River Walk- a three-mile walkway along the Detroit River. You can see a map of the world outside of the Renaissance Center's Winter Garden; see the statues that commemorate the Underground Railroad.

... travel to Mexicantown for a great meal.

... get up early on a Saturday morning and go to a farmer's market at Detroit's Eastern Market, or in Royal Oak, or Pontiac.

...take advantage of the largest theatre district outside of New York---including the Fisher Theatre, The Fox, The Gem, The Music Hall and others.

... do a tour of Detroit's great architecture like the Fisher Building, The Guardian Building, the Penobscot, and the Masonic Temple (the largest Masonic Temple in the world.)

... visit the Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak.

... head to Dearborn and tour the Arab-American Museum.

... visit Detroit's Motown Museum.

... go to The Henry Ford at Greenfield Village, the Rouge Plant Tour, or the Holocaust Memorial (for older students).

... a little farther afield there are science museums in Ann Arbor (The Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum) and Toledo (COSI). Ann Arbor boasts the Arboretum and Toledo also has a fine art museum.

... visit Frankenmuth.

... stay at home and play "Rice Bowl" on the computer. The program builds vocabulary while players earn rice for developing countries.

Enjoy your summer vacation!

The Kensington Hall Faculty