

SUMMER 2009 SUGGESTED READING FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS



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TOO GOOD TO MISS!

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

by Douglas Adams

This is a detailed account of Arthur Dent's inter-galactic journey through time and space. Mr. Merritt took this ride and loved the adventure.

Watership Down

by Richard Adams

"Faced with annihilation of its warren, a small group of male rabbits sets out across the English downs in search of a new home." Internal struggles for power surface in this realistically told adventure when the protagonists must coordinate tactics to defeat an enemy rabbit fortress.

Little Women

by Louisa Alcott

A story of the warm, vivacious March family and their four charming daughters. Ms. Hollander calls this one of her favorite classic tales.

Heaven Eyes

by David Almond

This is a powerful and enchanting story from the author of *Skellig* and *Kit's Wilderness*. Orphan Erin Law and two friends run away from their orphanage on a homemade raft down the Ouseburn River.

Wouldn't Take Nothing for my Journey

by Maya Angelou

Morality, manners, friendships, and love are a sampling of subjects covered in essays by the renowned playwright and poet. Ms. Barish and Ms. Kaplan cherish the works of Maya Angelou.

Steal Away

by Jennifer Armstrong

A story of two girls, each thirteen, one white and an orphan, the other black and a slave, who stole away from slavery in the spring of 1855.

True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle

by Avi Newberry Honor Book 1991

An adventure story set in the early 19th century. Thirteen year-old resourceful Charlotte finds herself involved in an exciting situation upon the sailing ship, Seahawk.

Face to Face

by Marion Bauer

Ms. Bauer pens a terrific tale of whitewater rafting on the Colorado River.

Secret of the Underground Room

by John Bellairs

When Father Higgins disappears a discovery of disturbing clues leads to England and an encounter with a long-dead knight.

Story of the Gods and Heroes

by Sally Benson

Benson retells many of the classic Greek and Roman Myths.

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants

by Ann Brashares

Carmen decides to throw away an old pair of jeans, but Libby, Lena and Bridget think they are great and decide that whomever the pants fit the best will get them. When the jeans fit everyone perfectly, a sisterhood and a memorable summer begin. Ms. Escher highly recommends this book for 8th graders and sophisticated 6th and 7th grade readers.

Among the Volcanoes

by Omar Castaneda

A Guatemalan who grew up in the U.S. depicts a bright teenager confronting the problems her family faces in accommodating the old and new.

Panther Glade

by Helen Cavanagh

Bill gains self-confidence when he joins his Aunt Cait, an archaeologist studying the Calusa Indians.

Fireball

by John Christopher

When Simon and Brad investigate the mysterious fireball, they suddenly find themselves in an alternate world, a world where the unrealized possibilities of the actual world have been realized.

From Sea to Shining Sea: A Treasury of American Folklore and Folk Songs

Compiled by Amy L. Cohn

America's story is told in more than 140 folk tales, songs, poems, and essays by diverse voices.

Walk Two Moons

by Sharon Creech

Newberry Winner 1995

After her mother leaves home suddenly, thirteen-year-old Sal and her grandparents take a car trip retracing her mother's route and Sal recounts the story of her friend Phoebe, whose mother also left. Ms. Barish calls this is a must read.

The Midwife's Apprentice

by Karen Cushman

In a small village in medieval England, a young homeless girl acquires a home and a new career when she becomes the apprentice to a sharp tempered midwife. Ms. Winogora calls this an exciting way to see how young ladies lived in Elizabethan times.

Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe

by Daniel Defoe

Robinson Crusoe is shipwrecked and leads a solitary life on an uninhabited island for twenty-four years.

This Lullaby

by Sarah Dessens

Raised by a mother who's had five husbands, eighteen-year old Remy believes in short term, no commitment relationships until she meets Dexter, a rock band musician. Ms. Krulewicz recommends this book for eighth grade students.

The Ear, the Eye and the Arm

by Nancy Farmer

Novel of the future society of Zimbabwe, 2194. General Matsika's three children steal out of their home on forbidden adventure and are abducted. Africa's most unusual detectives are assigned to find them. True, non-stop adventure.

The Tulip Touch

by Anne Fine

By the author of Mrs. Doubtfire, this book moves forward in headlong action and thrilling intensity. The reader will cry out for more.

On the Far Side of the Mountain

by Jean George

Sam's peaceful wilderness life is threatened when his sister runs away and his pet falcon is confiscated. This was my favorite book when I was in 6th grade.

Plain City

by Virginia Hamilton

Hamilton describes a bittersweet portrait of a twelve-year old girl's search for the truth about her own past and her missing father.

Redwall

by Brian Jacques

This is an energetic tale of fantasy, courage, and adventure about rodents in a quest to recover a legendary lost weapon. War erupts and a dark cloud of doom and despair hangs over the ancient stone abbey of Redwall.

The View from Saturday 1997 Newberry Medal Winner

by E. L. Konigsburg

Four students, all with diverse backgrounds develop a strong bond with their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent the sixth-grade class in the academic Bowl competition.

King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table

edited by Sidney Lanier

These stories deal with the legend of the formation of the Round Table, the fellowship and the adventures of the most famous knights. Ms. Hollander loves these tales

Troubling A Star

by Madeline L'Engle

As she tries to stay alive after being left on an iceberg in the Antarctic, sixteen-year-old Vicky recalls the series of events that brought her to the bottom of the world, and involved her in a dangerous mystery. My daughter Molly will read this book this summer.

Letters From a Slave Girl

by Mary Lyons

A collection of fictional letters recreates the life and times of Harriet Ann Jacobs, a young slave who escaped to freedom in the 1840's and who became a published author and abolitionist.

After the Rain

by Norma Mazer

A gentle, sensitive story about Rachel who has to take care of her surly, opinionated grandfather after school, when the doctors discover he has a short time to live.

Monster

by Walter Dean Myers

Monster is what the prosecutor called sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon for his supposed role in the fatal shooting of a convenience store owner. But was Steve really the lookout who gave the “all-clear” to the murderer, or was he just in the wrong place at the wrong time? The reader becomes both juror and witness in this fascinating piece of work. (8th Grade)

Eragon

by Christopher Paoline

When Eragon finds a polished blue stone in the forest, he thinks it is the lucky discovery of a poor farm boy; perhaps it will buy his family meat for the winter. But when the stone brings a dragon hatchling, Eragon realizes he has stumbled upon a legacy nearly as old as the Empire itself. Overnight his simple life is shattered, and he is thrust into a perilous new world of destiny, magic, and power. Paolini began writing this novel at 15 years old. Ms. McCarthy recommends this wonderful fantasy.

The River

by Gary Paulsen

Will Brian survive the wilderness?

The Subtle Knife

by Philip Pullman

A sequel to Pullman's, *The Golden Compass*, this adventure story continues the plot where Lyra sets out to learn the nature of "Dust." This is modern high fantasy at its best. Read *The Golden Compass* first.

Percy Jackson & The Olympians

by Rick Riordan

A three part series of Hilarious and action packed adventures. Riordan begins this trilogy with *The Lightning Thief* which is followed by *The Sea of Monsters* and finishes up with the final book *The Titan's Curse*. A great adventure series for the summer months for everyone.

Erin McEwan, Your Days Are Numbered

by Alan Ritchie

Nothing seems to add up right for Erin McEwan. Her math skills are so bad that she's in danger of flunking 6th grade. A part-time job at a deli gives Erin practical experience with a cash register, and with help of a bookkeeper and her efforts, she is transformed into a number whiz kid.

Harry Potter Collection

Join other middle school children with J.K. Rowling's fourth book in the Harry Potter series. If you haven't read any of Rowling's soon to be classics, start with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. My daughter Molly deeply loves this rich collection of near classics

Holes 1999 Newberry Medal Winner

by Louis Sacar

A great novel that is both funny and serious at the same time. It is a story about crime and punishment. Mr. Sweeney and my son Riley rate this darkly humorous tale four stars.

Betsey Brown

by Ntozake Shange

In the fifties when school integration stirred the nation, Betsey brown, a 13-year-old encounters the awkwardness and responsibilities of adolescence.

Stargirl

by Jerry Spinelli

She was elusive. She was today. She was tomorrow. She was the faintest scent of a cactus flower, the flitting shadow of an elf owl. She is the new girl at Mica Area High School. She is the girl who would change everyone she met. She's Stargirl. Ms. Costello gives it 2 thumbs straight up.

Kidnapped

by Robert L. Stevenson

The adventures of a boy sent into slavery by an avaricious uncle to prevent him from claiming his inheritance.

Gulliver's Travels

by Jonathan Swift

An account of the four voyages of Lemuel Gulliver, a ship's physician, to lands of tiny people and giants, a flying island of wise men and a utopia. Dr. Nelson states "this book offers an entertaining challenge to the young adult advanced reader."

The Well

by Mildred D. Taylor

Ten- year old David Logan's family generously shares their well water with both white and black neighbors in an atmosphere of potential racial violence.

A Gathering of Flowers

by Joyce Carol Thomas

A collection of short stories depicting what it is like to be young in America exploring such diverse cultures as Indian reservations, Latino barrios, urban San Francisco, and more.

Life on the Mississippi

by Mark Twain

Twain's famous account of life on the Mississippi in the old steamboat days and his own experiences as a pilot. Dr. Nelson believes that this a good book for students going into seventh grade, who wish to prepare themselves for the school year reading of Tom Sawyer.

A Jar of Dreams

by Yoshiko Uchida

Aunt Waka, arriving from Japan helps the family to adjust to the United States and especially assists 11-year-old Rinko in accepting herself as a Japanese American.

Flipped

by Wendelin van Draanen

In alternating chapters, two teenagers describe how their feelings about themselves, each other, and their families have changed. Ms. Piantek adds that eighth-graders love this book.

Dragon's Gate (Newberry Honor Book '94)

by Laurence Yep

An account of the lives of the Chinese, who built the transcontinental railroad in the Sierra Mountains during the U.S. Civil War.

NON-FICTION AND BIOGRAPHIES:

Anne Frank

by Gene Brown

A biography of the 13-year-old Jewish girl whose diary, published after her death in a Nazi concentration camp, made her famous all over the world. Ms. Josbeno recommends this powerful story.

Charlie Chaplin

by Pam Brown

Discusses the life of one of the most famous figures in entertainment history, who was often called “the funniest man in the world.

Diego Rivera

by James Cockcroft

A fascinating biography of a great Mexican artist, who portrayed Mexican life and history through his colorful murals.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

by Doris and Harold Faber

Traces the life of the civil rights leader from his boyhood in Atlanta, Georgia, to his tragic assassination, and draws on oral history transcripts to chronicle the many protests, marches, and rallies King led. Ms. Counts calls this an important book for all.

Zlata’s Diary

by Zlata Filipovic

A glimpse of the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina as Zlata, a ten-year-old girl writes about her daily experiences in Sarajevo before and during the time she and her family become war victims. She records her fears sometimes in a cellar where she and her parents hide, and yet there are still seeds of hope. Ms. Barish recommends this work.

Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery (Newberry Honor Book, 1994)

by Russell Freedman

An inspirational photo biography of the great Eleanor Roosevelt, a first lady with a public life and career of her own.

Paul Robeson: The Life and Times of a Free Black Man

by Virginia Hamilton

Hamilton portrays Robeson's college days, his distinguished show business career and describes the difficulties encountered because of his political beliefs.

Blizzard

by Jim Murphy

A fascinating account of the March, 1888 storm that paralyzed the Northeastern United States for four days. Overall, this book is a superb piece of writing and history.

Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary

by Walter Dean Myers

Myers details Malcolm X's life from childhood through his time in prison to his rise as a leader of the Nation of Islam.

The Journey Back

by Johanna Reiss

Having miraculously survived the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust, young Annie de Leeuw and her sister find themselves free to go home to be reunited with the rest of their family. The adjustment is difficult.

Wilma Monocular: Leader of the Cherokee Nation

by Della Yannuzzi

The first contemporary female Indian leader provides lots of interesting details about her life and involvement with Native American civil rights movement, politics, and tribal government.

The Pigman and Me

by Paul Zindel

An autobiography of Paul Zindel's teenage years on Staten Island when his life was enriched by finding his own personal Pigman, or mentor. Ms Schneck calls this an entertaining summer classic.

Ask your Librarian for other suggestions.....HAPPY SUMMER!!!