



## The Guide to Upper Elementary Summer Reading

Students entering 4<sup>th</sup> grade:

**Required Books: 2**

You are required to read **at least two** books this summer. You have **one required book for English class and one required book for advisory**. An advisory is a small group of students who meet every day with one teacher who is their advisor. It's like a family of your own- in school! You'll see your advisor every day in homeroom and his or her job is to help you with anything that you need and to make sure that you are feeling good about school and life. Your advisor will also make sure that you learn everything that you need to know about our school and that you have a wonderful first week and a great year. **During the first two weeks of school, you will be expected to participate in discussions, activities, and projects about the required summer reading books in advisory and in English.** You **MUST** prepare for this work by reading and hopefully, ENJOYING the wonderful books on this list. We're looking forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions about your summer reading.

**Grade 4 Theme: Efficacy**

Choose **ONE** book from the English list and **ONE** book from the Advisory list. We encourage you to read more books on the list, but you're only required to read one from the list.

**Advisory Book (Required—Choose ONE of the following books):**

**Jake Drake Bully Buste by Andrew Clements (Lexile=460)**

A fourth grader looks back over his years in school and his early experiences as a "bully magnet." Even as a preschooler, Jake was the perfect victim-medium sized, moderately smart, and not inclined to tattle to the authorities. He relates how, in second grade, he came up against a SuperBully, Link Baxter, who taunted him on the bus, ruined his schoolwork, and generally made his life miserable.

**Chrissa by Mary Casanova**

Chrissa Maxwell moves to a new school in the middle of the year, and the girls in her fourth-grade class are decidedly unfriendly. On the advice of her grandmother, Chrissa tries first to be nice, and then to ignore the mean girls. But they just won't quit, and when the teasing turns into serious bullying, Chrissa must find the courage to stand strong and speak out.

**English Book Choices: (Required: Choose ONE of the following books):**

**Joshua's Song by Joan Hiatt Harlow (Lexile=520)**

World War I has ended and the influenza epidemic has taken Joshua's father. His mother, formerly one of Boston's elite, is struggling to make ends meet because of her husband's debts. She takes in boarders whom her son must call "uncle" and "aunt" so the neighbors don't know she's running a boarding house, and Joshua must give up his private school and find work.

**Gooney Bird Greene by Lois Lowery (Lexile=590)**

Gooney Bird Greene is new to Watertown Elementary School. She tells fantastic stories, which are "always absolutely true." Her clothes are always unusual, ranging from pajamas with cowboy boots to a pink tutu over green stretch pants. In

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seven chapters, she captivates her classmates with her wild tales about "How Gooney Bird Came from China on a Flying Carpet" and "The Prince, the Palace, and the Diamond Earrings."

**Lenny's Space by Kate Banks (Lexile=470)**

Nine-year-old Lenny Brewster is captivated by the world – the mysteries of machines, the magic of snow, the pure joy of a perfect ride down a slippery slide. He knows a lot, but not how to share it with others. Of course, it doesn't help having an absent father, a preoccupied mother, and a teacher and peers who don't like him. Lenny spends much of his time in the principal's office or alone, absorbed in his ideas. Then he meets Van, a kindred spirit, and Muriel, the canny school therapist. Their simple acceptance of Lenny helps him find his place at last.

**The Gold Cadillac by Mildred Taylor (Lexile=650)**

In *The Gold Cadillac*, an African American family driving South in their new 1950 car encounters suspicion and segregation.

**The Toothpaste Millionaire by Jean Merrill (Lexile=820)**

A young girl describes how her school friend made over a million dollars by creating and marketing a cheaper and better toothpaste.

**Ahyoka and the Talking Leaves by Connie and Peter Roop (Lexile=520)**

Ahyoka, daughter of Sequoyah, the man who created a written Cherokee language in the early 1800s, is portrayed as her father's helper and soul mate in his long-term quest, leaving her mother and home to travel with him after he is ostracized and accused of magic. It is Ahyoka who discovers that letters relate to sounds rather than being representative pictures--the key to creating the syllabic alphabet.

**Helen Keller by Margaret Davidson (Lexile=520)**

A biography of Helen Keller (who was both blind and deaf) and the story of how, with the commitment and lifelong friendship of Anne Sullivan, she learned to talk, read, and eventually graduate from college with honors.

**The Lemonade War by Jacqueline Davies (Lexile=630)**

Evan Treski and his younger sister, Jessie, get along well in many ways. They play together, and their natural talents are complementary. Jessie is a whiz in math and other school subjects, but feelings were her weakest subject. Evan is competent in the social arena, but he is not such a good student. Their relationship changes the summer between Evan's third and fourth grades, when a letter arrives announcing what the boy sees as total disaster for him. He and his bright, skipping-third-grade sister will be in the same class. Thus begins the Lemonade War over which child can make the most money during the last week before school.

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## The Guide to Middle School Summer Reading

Students entering 5<sup>th</sup> grade:

### Required Books: 2

You are required to read at least two books this summer. You have **one required book for English class and one required book for advisory**. An advisory is a small group of students who meet every day with one teacher who is their advisor. It's like a family of your own- in school! You'll see your advisor every day in homeroom and his or her job is to help you with anything that you need and to make sure that you are feeling good about school and life. Your advisor will also make sure that you learn everything that you need to know about our school and that you have a wonderful first week and a great year. **During the first two weeks of school, you will be expected to participate in discussions, activities, and projects about the required summer reading books in advisory and in English.** You **MUST** prepare for this work by reading and hopefully, ENJOYING the wonderful books on this list. We're looking forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions about your summer reading.

### Grade 5 Theme: Discoveries

Choose **ONE** book from the English list and **ONE** book from the Advisory list. We encourage you to read more books on the list, but you're only required to read one from the list.

### **Advisory Book (Required—Choose ONE of the following books):**

#### ***Drita, My Homegirl* by Jenny Lombard (Lexile=690; reading level 4.4)**

When ten-year-old Drita and her family, refugees from Kosovo, move to New York, Drita is teased about not speaking English well, but after a popular student named Maxine is forced to learn about Kosovo as a punishment for teasing Drita, the two girls soon bond.

#### ***The Broken Bike Boy and the Queen of 33<sup>rd</sup> Street* by Sharon Flake (Lexile=590; reading level 3.5)**

A bossy, spoiled, know-it-all is how Queen Marie's subjects would describe her. Royal purple clothing, crowns, and a mirror collection cannot make up for the fact that her classmates hate her, and her teacher openly dislikes her. Then Queen's parents accept Leroy, a poor boy from the projects into their home despite Queen's rude declarations on his smell and the fibs she believes he tells. As Leroy stubbornly sticks by Queen, he helps her climb down from her self-imposed pedestal. She learns that the truth can be told in many different ways and that being nice, while not always easy, is worth it.

### **English Book Choices: (Required: Choose ONE of the following books):**

#### ***Frindle* by Andrew Clements (other books by this author: *The Janitor's Boy*, *The Landry News*, *The Last Holiday Concert*, *Lunch Money*, *No Talking*, and *The Report Card* to name a few) (Lexile=830)**

When he decides to turn his fifth-grade teacher's love of the dictionary around on her, clever Nick Allen invents a new word and begins a chain of events that quickly moves beyond his control.

#### ***Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan) (Lexile=750) (other books by this author: *Becoming Naomi Leon*, and *Paint the Wind*)**

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

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***Dave at Night* by Gail Carson Levine (Lexile=490)**

When orphaned Dave is sent to the Hebrew Home for Boys where he is treated cruelly, he sneaks out at night and is welcomed into the music- and culture-filled world of the Harlem Renaissance.

***Just as Long as We're Together* by Judy Blume (Lexile=600)**

Stephanie's relationship with her best friend, Rachel, changes during her first year in junior high as she tries to conceal a family problem and meets a new girl from California.

***Jack's Black Book* by Jack Gantos (Lexile=710)**

A seventh-grade male, Jack, encounters many obstacles when he tries to succeed in school and write his own novel. Jack's family and teachers do not believe he can do well in anything that requires brains. Continually Jack tries to turn the tough situations he faces into material for an award-winning book. When Jack tries to meet a girl, you'll laugh, when he describes his moments with his silly dog, Beau-Beau III, you'll laugh harder, and when he meets an escaped convict, you'll laugh even harder and louder!

***The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech (Lexile=830, 5.7)**

Thirteen-year-old Sophie and her cousin Cody record their transatlantic crossing aboard the Wanderer, a forty-five foot sailboat, which, along with uncles and another cousin, is en route to visit their grandfather in England.

***My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George (Lexile=810, 7.3)**

A young boy relates his adventures during the year he spends living alone in the Catskill Mountains, including his struggle for survival, his dependence on nature, his animal friends, and his ultimate realization that he needs human companionship.

***Pictures of Hollis Woods* by Patricia Reilly Giff (Lexile=650, 6.4)**

A troublesome twelve-year-old orphan, staying with an elderly artist who needs her, remembers the only other time she was happy in a foster home, with a family that truly seemed to care about her.

***Mr. Chickee's Funny Money* by Christopher Paul Curtis (Lexile=1010)**

Flint Future Detective Club members Steven Carter, his friend Russell, and Russell's dog Zoopy solve the mystery of a quadrillion-dollar bill with the image of James Brown on it.

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## The Guide to Middle School Summer Reading

### Grade 6 Theme: Choices

#### Required Books: 2

You are required to read at least three books this summer. You have **two required books for English class and one required book for Advisory**. **During the first two weeks of school, you will be expected to participate in discussions, activities, and projects about the required summer reading books in advisory and in English.** You **MUST** prepare for this work by reading and, hopefully, ENJOYING the wonderful books on this list. We're looking forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions about your summer reading.

**Choose ONE advisory book and ONE English book.** This summer, you are also encouraged (but not required) to read as many books as possible on the **Suggested Reading** list. If you have read one of the books on the list already and you really like the author, feel free to read other books by that author.

### Sixth Grade Summer Reading List

#### **Advisory Book (required; choose ONE of the two books below):**

##### ***Small Steps* by Louis Sachar (Lexile=690)**

Three years after being released from Camp Green Lake, Armpit is trying hard to keep his life on track, but when his old pal X-Ray shows up with a tempting plan to make some easy money scalping concert tickets, Armpit reluctantly goes along.

##### ***Something Upstairs* by Avi (Lexile=580)**

In this ghost story, 12-year-old Kenny Huldorf moves with his family to Providence, Rhode Island, and finds himself embroiled in the century-old murder of a teenage slave named Caleb. Not only is Kenny haunted by the injustice of the murder, but also by the ghost of Caleb himself, who summons Kenny back in time to the early 19th Century, where the boy must solve Caleb's murder to return to his own century.

#### **English Book (required; choose ONE of the two books below):**

##### ***Loser*- By Jerry Spinelli (Lexile=650)**

Donald Zinkoff is one of the greatest kids you could ever hope to meet. He laughs easily, he likes people, he loves school, he tries to rescue lost girls in blizzards, he talks to old ladies. The only problem is, he's a loser. Until fourth grade, Zinkoff's uncontrollable giggling in class, sloppy handwriting, horrible flute playing, bad grades, clumsiness, and ineptitude at sports go largely unnoticed. When he blows a race for his team, however, his transition to loserdom is complete:

##### ***Feathers*- By Jacqueline Woodson (Lexile=760)**

As sixth-grader Frannie puzzles over the meaning of a line from an Emily Dickinson poem, "Hope is the thing with feathers," lots of questions start coming up. What does the music her deaf brother hears sound like? Why is Mama so tired during the day? How come the new white boy in class named Jesus says he's not white, and could he possibly be the Jesus, as Frannie's friend Samantha thinks? How does it feel to have that kind of faith, anyway? Frannie eventually works out her own answers, finding hope not in Samantha's big miracles but in everyday bits of goodness-the "moments" her teacher tells her to write about.

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## **RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

In addition to the required books, we want you to read tons of books that you choose yourself this summer. Why? **Because successful students read and read and read!** We've attached a list of recommended books so that you can go way above and beyond the three required books that we've listed and so that you can have fun with your summer reading.

### **Modern Fiction:**

#### **Jacob Have I Loved by Katherine Patterson (Lexile=880)**

Sarah Louise Bradshaw knows that she should be proud of her beautiful twin, Caroline, but it's not easy. Since their birth, Louise has watched Caroline take everything from her: her parents' love, her education, and her best friend. Louise dreams of finding the happiness that seems to come so easily for her twin sister, but before she does, she must figure out who she really is outside of her sister's shadow.

#### **Journey of the Sparrows by Fran Leeper Buss (Lexile=660)**

In this inspiring story, Maria, her sister Julia, and young brother, Oscar, are illegal aliens, having been smuggled into the U. S. in crates and shipped in the back of a coyote's truck. They are Salvadorans from a peasant village whose men have been openly murdered or "disappeared." The plot thickens when Maria must make a dangerous return trip to Mexico to get her baby sister, left in the care of friends along the way.

#### **Tangerine by Edward Bloor (Lexile=680)**

So what if he's legally blind? Even with his bottle-thick, bug-eyed glasses, Paul Fisher can see better than most people. He can see the lies his parents and brother live out, day after day. No one listens to Paul, though – until the family moves to Tangerine. In Tangerine, even a blind outcast can become cool. Who knows? Paul might even become a hero!

#### **Killing Mr. Griffin by Lois Duncan (Lexile=720)**

Several students kidnap their English teacher to teach him a lesson, but end up doing much more.

#### **After Tupac and D. Foster (Jacqueline Woodson) (Lexile=750)**

D Foster, Neeka, and an unnamed narrator grow from being 11 to 13 with Tupac Shakur's music, shootings, and legal troubles as the backdrop. Neeka and the narrator have lived on the same block forever and are like sisters, but foster child D shows up during the summer of 1994, while she is out "roaming." D immediately finds a place in the heart of the other girls, and the "Three the Hard Way" bond over their love of Tupac's music.

#### **Chains (Laurie Halse Anderson) (Lexile=780)**

Set in New York City at the beginning of the American Revolution, Chains addresses the price of freedom both for a nation and for individuals. Isabel tells the story of her life as a slave. She was sold with her five-year-old sister to a cruel Loyalist family even though the girls were to be free upon the death of their former owner. She has hopes of finding a way to freedom and becomes a spy for the rebels, but soon realizes that it is difficult to trust anyone.

### **Historical Fiction:**

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**Anacaona: Little Flower by Edwidge Danticat (Lexile=1080)**

Renowned Haitian author, Danticat, writes a gripping story that shows the European invasion from a native Caribbean point of view. In fifteenth-century Haiti, Anacaona is part of a royal line that rules the Taino people. After her coming-of-age ceremony, she marries a neighboring chief and learns battle techniques to defend against warring tribes. Then "pale men" arrive from Europe. Although Anacaona's people win a vicious battle against the Spanish explorers, children who read the epilogue will learn about the ultimate devastation that Europeans brought to the island worlds.

**The Second Mrs. Giaconda by E.L. Konigsburg (Lexile=840)**

The greatest artist of his time, an apprentice with an unlawful heart and an aversion to the truth, and a young duchess whose plain face hides her beautiful soul... Could the complex ways these three lives intertwine hold the key to a historical riddle as enigmatic as the Mona Lisa's smile – why Leonardo da Vinci devoted three years to a painting of the second wife of an unimportant merchant when all the nobles of Europe were begging for a portrait by his hand? Read on to find an intriguing answer to the puzzle behind the most famous painting of all time.

**Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor (Lexile=920)**

This novel tells the story of one African American family, fighting to stay together and strong in the face of brutal racist attacks, illness, poverty, and betrayal in the Deep South of the 1930s. **Try the sequels to Roll of Thunder: The Mississippi Bridge and Let the Circle Be Unbroken.**

**The Year of Impossible Goodbyes by Sook Nyul Choi (Lexile=840)**

This story tells about Choi's last months as a Korean child in Pyongyang under the brutal Japanese rule that oppressed Korea for more than 30 years before 1945, and her harrowing escape with her seven-year-old brother. When the equally oppressive Russians drive out the Japanese, Sookan, her brother, and their mother must flee and undertake a harrowing journey south to the safety of the thirty-eighth parallel. Despite all, Choi's family preserved dignity, familial love, and loyalty to their heritage.

**Mystery:**

**The Ghost in the Tokaido Inn by Dorothy Hoobler (Lexile=740)**

Fourteen-year-old Seikei, son of a tea merchant, longs to be a samurai, although he knows that this is an inherited honor he can never hope to attain. While on a trip, Seikei and his stern father take shelter at the Tokaido Inn where a cruel and oafish samurai, Lord Hakuseki, is also staying. A precious jewel is stolen from the lord, and Seikei risks his life to help solve the mystery.

**Science Fiction & Fantasy:**

**Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer (Lexile=600)**

Twelve-year-old Artemis Fowl is the most ingenious criminal mastermind in history. With two trusty sidekicks in tow, he hatches a cunning plot to divest the fairy folk of their pot of gold. Of course, he isn't foolish enough to believe in all that "gold at the end of the rainbow" nonsense. Rather, he knows that the only way to separate the little people from their stash is to kidnap one of them and wait for the ransom to arrive. But when the time comes to put his plan into action, he doesn't count on the appearance of the extra small, pointy-eared Captain Holly Short of the LEPrecon (Lower Elements Police Reconnaissance) Unit--and her senior officer, Commander Root, a man (sorry, elf) who will stop at nothing to get her back.

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**The Golden Compass by Phillip Pullman (Lexile=930)**

The main character of this fantasy is young Lyra Belacqua, an orphan growing up within the walls of England's famous Oxford University. It quickly becomes clear that Lyra's Oxford is not precisely like a university in our world. For one thing, people there each have a personal *daemon*, a form of their souls in animal form. For another, hers is a universe in which science, religion, and magic are closely joined. Lyra pays little attention to these things at first and spends most of her time causing trouble with her antics. Lyra's carefree existence changes forever when she and her daemon, Pantalaimon, prevent an assassination attempt against her uncle, the powerful Lord Asriel.

**The Eye, the Ear, and the Arm by Nancy Farmer (Lexile=660)**

This story's hero, Tendai, has a sense of humor about his serious mission. In Zimbabwe in the year 2194, the military ruler's 13-year-old son and his younger siblings leave their technologically over controlled home and find themselves on a series of dangerous adventures. Tendai and his siblings encounter mile-high buildings and other miracles of scientific advance; they also find fetid slums and toxic waste dumps. As they're kidnapped by gangsters, forced to slave in a plastic mine, and accused of witchcraft, they're pursued by mutant detectives, who are both bumbling and sensitive and who always seem to be just one step behind rescuing the children.

**Midnight Magic by Avi (Lexile=660)**

Imagine the characters: a nervous king, a playful princess, an evil count, a strange kitchen boy, a magician who doesn't believe in magic, and a servant who knows far too much for his own good! When this bizarre group of people journey on a medieval ghost hunt, fate throws plenty of twists and turns their way.

**A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle (Lexile=740)**

Everyone in town thinks Meg Murry is angry and weird, and that her younger brother, Charles Wallace, is dumb. People are also saying that their physicist father has run off and left their brilliant scientist mother. Spurred on by these rumors and an unearthly stranger, the tesseract-touting Mrs. Whatsit, Meg and Charles Wallace and their new friend Calvin O'Keefe embark on a perilous quest through space to find their father. In doing so, they must travel behind the shadow of an evil power that is darkening the cosmos, one planet at a time.

**Gathering Blue by Lois Lowry (Lexile=920)**

This sequel to **The Giver** takes place in a village with only the most basic technology, where anger, greed, envy, and casual cruelty make ordinary people's lives short and painful.

You can also try **The Messenger** by Lois Lowry, the third book in the series.

**The Dark is Rising by Susan Cooper (Lexile=920)**

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

Try the sequels: **Dawn of Fear** and **The Grey King**.

**Flipped- By Van Draanen (Lexile=720)**

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Juli Baker devoutly believes in three things: the sanctity of trees (especially her beloved sycamore), the wholesomeness of the eggs she collects from her backyard flock of chickens, and that someday she will kiss Bryce Loski. Ever since she saw Bryce's baby blues back in second grade, Juli has been smitten. Unfortunately, Bryce has never felt the same. Frankly, he thinks Juli Baker is a little weird--after all, what kind of freak raises chickens and sits in trees for fun? Then, in eighth grade, everything changes.

***The Lightning Thief- Rick Riordan (Series) (Lexile=740)***

At first glance, Perseus Jackson seems like a loser (readers meet him at a boarding school for troubled youth), but he's really the son of Poseidon and a mortal woman. As he discovers his heritage, he also loses that mother and falls into mortal danger. The gods (still very active in the 21st-century world) are about to go to war over a lost thunderbolt, so Percy and sidekicks Grover (a young satyr) and Annabeth (daughter of Athena) set out to retrieve it. Many close calls and monster-attacks later, they enter Hades's realm (via L.A.). A virtuoso description of the Underworld is matched by a later account of Olympus (hovering 600 floors above Manhattan). There's lots of zippy review of Greek myth and legend, and characters like Medusa, Procrustes, Charon, and the Eumenides get updates. Some of the Labors of Heracles or Odysseus's adventures are recycled, but nothing seems stale, and the breakneck pace keeps the action from being too predictable. Percy is an ADHD, wise-cracking, first-person narrator. Naturally, his real quest is for his own identity.

***Diary of a Wimpy Kid- Jeff Kinney (Books 1, 2 and 3)***

Middle school student Greg Heffley takes readers through an academic year's worth of drama. Greg's mother forces him to keep a diary ("I know what it says on the cover, but when Mom went out to buy this thing I *specifically* told her to get one that didn't say 'diary' on it"), and in it he loosely recounts each day's events, interspersed with his comic illustrations. Kinney has a gift for believable preteen dialogue and narration (e.g., "Don't expect me to be all 'Dear Diary' this and 'Dear Diary' that"), and the illustrations serve as a hilarious counterpoint to Greg's often deadpan voice. The hero's utter obliviousness to his friends and family becomes a running joke. For instance, on Halloween, Greg and his best friend, Rowley, take refuge from some high school boys at Greg's grandmother's house; they taunt the bullies, who then T.P. her house. Greg's journal entry reads, "I do feel a little bad, because it looked like it was gonna take a long time to clean up. But on the bright side, Gramma is retired, so she probably didn't have anything planned for today anyway."

***In The Hand of the Goddess- Tamora Pierce (Lexile=750)***

Alanna of Trebond continues her masquerade as Alan in this, the second book in the Song of the Lioness quartet by Tamora Pierce (Random, 1990). The story spans Alanna's four years as Prince Jonathan's squire. During this time, Alanna participates in her first war, battles against Jonathan's evil uncle, Duke Roger, meets the Great Mother Goddess and experiences first love, all the while maintaining her guise as a boy. Actress Trini Alvarado perfectly captures the essence of Alanna by giving her the uncertainty of a girl on the verge of womanhood combined with the steel determination and strength of a squire preparing for the battle to become a knight. Alvarado uses slight changes in her voice to vividly give life to a large cast of characters.

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## The Guide to Middle School Summer Reading

# 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Summer Reading List

*Instructions:* In addition to your required advisory book, **select any two** of these amazing books and read them over the summer. The books on this list were selected because they cover a range of reading levels, and deal with interesting and complex issues in young adult life. Come to school in the fall prepared to take a short accountability quiz as well as to participate in several book talks, and novel-centered games. We will also be reading many of these books in literature circles over the course of the year.

### **Required Books:** 3

#### **Advisory Book (Choose ONE--required for all 7<sup>th</sup> graders) (Lexile=820)**

##### ***Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli (Lexile=820)**

Orphaned at a young age, Maniac Magee possesses a large heart, an inquisitive mind, and a nearly superhuman athletic ability. After running away from a troubled home life with a bitter aunt and uncle, Maniac takes off on his own making friends and enemies and having many adventures on his way. In addition to being a gripping story, the novel deals with important themes of social justice and equity as Maniac tries to come to terms with the racially segregated city in which he lives.

##### ***The Skin I'm In* by Sharon G Flake (Lexile=670)**

This gripping and realistic story follows a young, African-American teenage girl growing up in a poor urban neighborhood as she struggles to come to terms with the difficult realities of her life and embrace who she is.

#### **English—select any TWO:**

##### ***Monster* by Walter Dean Meyers (Lexile=670)**

This famous and challenging young adult novel is written in the form of a play. It tells story of 16 year old Steve Harm who is on trial for his alleged 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?

##### ***American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang**

Told in graphic novel or comic book format, this winner of the 2007 Printz Award alternates between three interrelated stories about the problems of young Chinese Americans trying to participate in the popular culture. Meet Jin Wang, a teen who faces ridicule and social isolation when his family moves from San Francisco's Chinatown to an exclusively white suburb; Danny, a popular blond, blue-eyed high school jock whose social status is challenged when his goofy, embarrassing Chinese cousin, Chin-Kee, enrolls at his high school; and the Monkey King who, unsatisfied with his current ruler, desperately longs to be elevated to the status of a god.

##### ***145th Street Short Stories* by Walter Dean Meyers (Lexile=760)**

These engrossing and realistic tales follow the residents of a vibrant, interesting, and occasionally tragic neighborhood in Harlem through a collection of linked short stories.

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**Boy by Roald Dahl (1090)**

This hilarious and disturbing non-fiction biography tells the story of author Roald Dahl's childhood. From the stories of sadistic boarding school teachers to the tale of the mouse-in-the-candy-shop, Dahl keeps readers riding an emotional roller coaster.

**Flipped by Wendolin Van Draanen (Lexile=720)**

This novel follows a rocky relationship between two teenagers, the popular and handsome Bryce and the passionate, quirky social outcast Juli. The novel follows the two protagonists as they mature and alternates between their two voices.

**Lush by Natasha Friend (Lexile=550)**

To the outside world, 13-year-old Samantha's family seems perfectly happy. However, they are struggling to keep her architect father's alcoholism a secret, and the balancing act of enabling his addiction and protecting their image is becoming more and more difficult. Sam longs to be able to share her burden with a friend and reaches out by leaving an anonymous autobiographical letter in a library book. Her anger and frustration are clear as she struggles with her love for her dad despite the fact that his promises to clean up never materialize.

**If You Come Softly by Jacqueline Woodson (Lexile=570)**

Two 15 year olds, Jeremiah (Miah) who is black, and Elisha (Ellie) who is white, meet during their first year at an exclusive New York prep school and fall in love. Both teens are also dealing with difficult family situations. Miah's father has left his mother for another woman, and Ellie is trying to fight through her feelings about her mother, who twice abandoned her family for extended periods. The teenagers must also deal with the subtle and not-so-subtle bigotry that they are subject to as a mixed-race couple

**Uglies by Scott Westerfield (Lexile=750)**

The first in a three part trilogy, this challenging novel envisions a future world in which, at the age of 16, every citizen undergoes an operation to make them beautiful. The novel follows its engaging protagonist, Tally Youngblood, as she navigates this complex and dangerous new world.

**Bully by Paul Langan (Lexile=N/A)**

This extremely readable short novel is part of the popular Bluford High Series. It tells the story of a teenage boy who is forced to switch schools when his family moves to a new city. At the new school he is bullied by another high school student. The book follows his attempts to deal with these attacks with maturity and strength.

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### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

In addition to the required books, we want you to read tons of books that you choose yourself this summer. Why? **Because successful students read and read and read!** We've attached a list of recommended books so that you can go way above and beyond the three required books that we've listed and so that you can have fun with your summer reading.

#### Modern Fiction:

##### **Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida by Victor Martinez (Lexile=1000)**

It's not easy for Manuel Hernandez to discover his place in the world, especially when he is constantly bombarded with the hardships of his poor and woefully dysfunctional family. Their tiny sheetrock house in the projects is the scene of angry arguments-even of threats at rifle point. Manny steps onto a battlefield at every turn, whether he is collecting his alcoholic and violent father from the local pool hall, withstanding the ethnic slurs of white school mates, or seeking initiation into a neighborhood gang. As the months pass and some of his wounds heal, Manny slowly begins to understand the sense of self that he can derive from his role within this difficult household.

##### **Jacob Have I Loved by Katherine Patterson (Lexile=880)**

Sarah Louise Bradshaw knows that she should be proud of her beautiful twin, Caroline, but it's not easy. Since their birth, Louise has watched Caroline take everything from her: her parents' love, her education, and her best friend. Louise dreams of finding the happiness that seems to come so easily for her twin sister, but before she does, she must figure out who she really is outside of her sister's shadow.

##### **Journey of the Sparrows by Fran Leeper Buss (Lexile=660)**

In this inspiring story, Maria, her sister Julia, and young brother, Oscar, are illegal aliens, having been smuggled into the U. S. in crates and shipped in the back of a coyote's truck. They are Salvadorans from a peasant village whose men have been openly murdered or "disappeared." The plot thickens when Maria must make a dangerous return trip to Mexico to get her baby sister, left in the care of friends along the way.

##### **Tangerine by Edward Bloor (Lexile=680)**

So what if he's legally blind? Even with his bottle-thick, bug-eyed glasses, Paul Fisher can see better than most people. He can see the lies his parents and brother live out, day after day. No one listens to Paul, though – until the family moves to Tangerine. In Tangerine, even a blind outcast can become cool. Who knows? Paul might even become a hero!

##### **Freak the Mighty by Rodman Philbrick (Lexile=1000)**

Maxwell Kane, a lumbering eighth grader who describes himself as a "butthead goon," has lived with grandparents Grim and Gram ever since his father was imprisoned for murdering his mother. Mean-spirited schoolmates and special ed (for an undetermined learning disability) haven't improved his self-image, so he is totally unprepared for a friendship with Kevin, aka Freak, a veritable genius with a serious birth defect that's left him in braces and using crutches. Max is uplifted by Freak's imagination and booming confidence, while Freak gets a literal boost--hoisted onto Max's shoulders, he shares Max's mobility. Together they become Freak the Mighty, an invincible duo.

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Something more than a high school poetry assignment. Kids are taking a look, leaning in close, asking why and how. Eighteen teenagers take on the risky challenge of exploring their identities. Together and separately their words and lives clash and question, search and shout, creating bonds that intertwine, pull them close, and set them free.

**Killing Mr. Griffin by Lois Duncan (Lexile=720)**

Several students kidnap their English teacher to teach him a lesson, but end up doing much more.

**After Tupac and D. Foster (Jacqueline Woodson) (Lexile=750)**

D Foster, Neeka, and an unnamed narrator grow from being 11 to 13 with Tupac Shakur's music, shootings, and legal troubles as the backdrop. Neeka and the narrator have lived on the same block forever and are like sisters, but foster child D shows up during the summer of 1994, while she is out "roaming." D immediately finds a place in the heart of the other girls, and the "Three the Hard Way" bond over their love of Tupac's music.

**Historical Fiction:**

**Chains (Laurie Halse Anderson) (Lexile=780)**

Set in New York City at the beginning of the American Revolution, Chains addresses the price of freedom both for a nation and for individuals. Isabel tells the story of her life as a slave. She was sold with her five-year-old sister to a cruel Loyalist family even though the girls were to be free upon the death of their former owner. She has hopes of finding a way to freedom and becomes a spy for the rebels, but soon realizes that it is difficult to trust anyone.

**Anacaona: Little Flower by Edwidge Danticat (Lexile=1080)**

Renowned Haitian author, Danticat, writes a gripping story that shows the European invasion from a native Caribbean point of view. In fifteenth-century Haiti, Anacaona is part of a royal line that rules the Taino people. After her coming-of-age ceremony, she marries a neighboring chief and learns battle techniques to defend against warring tribes. Then "pale men" arrive from Europe. Although Anacaona's people win a vicious battle against the Spanish explorers, children who read the epilogue will learn about the ultimate devastation that Europeans brought to the island worlds.

**The Second Mrs. Giaconda by E.L. Konigsburg (Lexile=840)**

The greatest artist of his time, an apprentice with an unlawful heart and an aversion to the truth, and a young duchess whose plain face hides her beautiful soul... Could the complex ways these three lives intertwine hold the key to a historical riddle as enigmatic as the Mona Lisa's smile -- why Leonardo da Vinci devoted three years to a painting of the second wife of an unimportant merchant when all the nobles of Europe were begging for a portrait by his hand? Read on to find an intriguing answer to the puzzle behind the most famous painting of all time.

**The Sign of the Chrysanthemum by Katherine Patterson (Lexile=870)**

Muna, an orphaned Japanese boy, must search for his father, a samurai warrior, during the twelfth-century clan wars in Japan.

**Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor (Lexile=920)**

This novel tells the story of one African American family, fighting to stay together and strong in the face of brutal racist attacks, illness, poverty, and betrayal in the Deep South of the 1930s. **Try the sequels to Roll of Thunder: The Mississippi Bridge and Let the Circle Be Unbroken .**

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**The Year of Impossible Goodbyes by Sook Nyul Choi (Lexile=840)**

This story tells about Choi's last months as a Korean child in Pyongyang under the brutal Japanese rule that oppressed Korea for more than 30 years before 1945, and her harrowing escape with her seven-year-old brother. When the equally oppressive Russians drive out the Japanese, Sookan, her brother, and their mother must flee and undertake a harrowing journey south to the safety of the thirty-eighth parallel. Despite all, Choi's family preserved dignity, familial love, and loyalty to their heritage.

**Copper Sun by Sharon Draper (Lexile=820)**

In this winner of the Corretta Scott King Award, two fifteen-year-old girls--one a slave and the other an indentured servant--escape their Carolina plantation and try to make their way to Fort Moses, Florida, a Spanish colony that gives sanctuary to slaves.

**Mystery:**

**Something Upstairs by Avi (Lexile=580)**

In this ghost story, 12-year-old Kenny Huldorf moves with his family to Providence, Rhode Island, and finds himself embroiled in the century-old murder of a teenage slave named Caleb. Not only is Kenny haunted by the injustice of the murder, but also by the ghost of Caleb himself, who summons Kenny back in time to the early 19th Century, where the boy must solve Caleb's murder to return to his own century.

**The Ghost in the Tokaido Inn by Dorothy Hoobler (Lexile=740)**

Fourteen-year-old Seikei, son of a tea merchant, longs to be a samurai, although he knows that this is an inherited honor he can never hope to attain. While on a trip, Seikei and his stern father take shelter at the Tokaido Inn where a cruel and oafish samurai, Lord Hakuseki, is also staying. A precious jewel is stolen from the lord, and Seikei risks his life to help solve the mystery.

**Down the Rabbit Hole by Peter Abrahams (Lexile=680)**

An avid reader of Sherlock Holmes, Ingrid Levin-Hill, 13, is also a fleet-footed soccer player with a knack for stage acting--skills that come in handy when she finds herself caught in a police investigation following the murder of an eccentric woman. The deceased was associated with the Prescott Players, a local theater troupe in which Ingrid lands the title role in a production of Alice in Wonderland. Plot scenes incorporate play rehearsals, family life, middle school, and soccer games along with plenty of intriguing twists and mounting tension. Taking courage from her crusty grandfather, who refuses to sell his farm to an affluent developer, Ingrid acts with aplomb as she secretly undertakes a series of suspenseful adventures to track down the killer.

*If you like this, try the next book in the Echo Falls Mysteries: **Behind the Curtain by Peter Abrahams (Lexile=650)***

Ingrid Levin-Hill, the eighth-grade Sherlock Holmes lover introduced in *Down the Rabbit Hole* (HarperCollins, 2005), is back for another adventure. She quotes her hero quite often as she tries to sort out details that she observes around her. In trying to figure out why her brother is so moody, why her dad is in jeopardy of losing his job, and why her grandfather's property is so valuable, the teen stumbles upon some of her town's secrets.

**Science Fiction & Fantasy:**

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**Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer (Lexile=600)**

Twelve-year-old Artemis Fowl is the most ingenious criminal mastermind in history. With two trusty sidekicks in tow, he hatches a cunning plot to divest the fairy folk of their pot of gold. Of course, he isn't foolish enough to believe in all that "gold at the end of the rainbow" nonsense. Rather, he knows that the only way to separate the little people from their stash is to kidnap one of them and wait for the ransom to arrive. But when the time comes to put his plan into action, he doesn't count on the appearance of the extra small, pointy-eared Captain Holly Short of the LEPrecon (Lower Elements Police Reconnaissance) Unit--and her senior officer, Commander Root, a man (sorry, elf) who will stop at nothing to get her back.

**The Golden Compass by Phillip Pullman (Lexile=930)**

The main character of this fantasy is young Lyra Belacqua, an orphan growing up within the walls of England's famous Oxford University. It quickly becomes clear that Lyra's Oxford is not precisely like a university in our world. For one thing, people there each have a personal *daemon*, a form of their souls in animal form. For another, hers is a universe in which science, religion, and magic are closely joined. Lyra pays little attention to these things at first and spends most of her time causing trouble with her antics. Lyra's carefree existence changes forever when she and her daemon, Pantalaimon, prevent an assassination attempt against her uncle, the powerful Lord Asriel.

**The Eye, the Ear, and the Arm by Nancy Farmer (Lexile=660)**

This story's hero, Tendai, has a sense of humor about his serious mission. In Zimbabwe in the year 2194, the military ruler's 13-year-old son and his younger siblings leave their technologically over controlled home and find themselves on a series of dangerous adventures. Tendai and his siblings encounter mile-high buildings and other miracles of scientific advance; they also find fetid slums and toxic waste dumps. As they're kidnapped by gangsters, forced to slave in a plastic mine, and accused of witchcraft, they're pursued by mutant detectives, who are both bumbling and sensitive and who always seem to be just one step behind rescuing the children.

**Midnight Magic by Avi (Lexile=660)**

Imagine the characters: a nervous king, a playful princess, an evil count, a strange kitchen boy, a magician who doesn't believe in magic, and a servant who knows far too much for his own good! When this bizarre group of people journey on a medieval ghost hunt, fate throws plenty of twists and turns their way.

**A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle (Lexile=740)**

Everyone in town thinks Meg Murry is angry and weird, and that her younger brother, Charles Wallace, is dumb. People are also saying that their physicist father has run off and left their brilliant scientist mother. Spurred on by these rumors and an unearthly stranger, the tesseract-touting Mrs. Whatsit, Meg and Charles Wallace and their new friend Calvin O'Keefe embark on a perilous quest through space to find their father. In doing so, they must travel behind the shadow of an evil power that is darkening the cosmos, one planet at a time.

**Gathering Blue by Lois Lowry (Lexile=920)**

This sequel to **The Giver** takes place in a village with only the most basic technology, where anger, greed, envy, and casual cruelty make ordinary people's lives short and painful.

You can also try **The Messenger** by Lois Lowry, the third book in the series.

**The Dark is Rising by Susan Cooper (Lexile=920)**

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

Try the sequels: **Dawn of Fear** and **The Grey King**.

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## The Guide to Middle School Summer Reading

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy, Advisory & English Required Books: 2

**Welcome to the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy!** Below is information about your required summer reading for both advisory and English. You'll learn more about these books before the end of the year in English, RR, and Performing Arts. All of the English books on are stories of teens of different genders and from different cultures facing struggles and trying to figure out who they are and who they want to become. The books are also stories of teens showing leadership, even in the face of struggle. **We'll use these stories as the place to start our conversations about identity at the beginning of the year, so come ready to take a brief quiz, to discuss the books, and ready to complete assignments related to the books you've read over the summer.** We'll also be using these books for literature circles later in quarter 1 and throughout the year.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy Theme: Identity & Leadership**

The theme of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy is **LEADERSHIP**. After reading your chosen advisory book, write a two page essay describing what qualities make up a good leader and how the leader in your book did or did not exemplified these qualities. Be sure to use specific evidence and analysis to support your argument. This will be **DUE** the **FIRST ADVISORY PERIOD OF THE SCHOOL YEAR**.

#### **Required for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy Advisory (CHOOSE ONE):**

##### **Warriors Don't Cry by Melba Patillo Beals (memoir) (Lexile=1000)**

Beals, one of the nine black students who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, AR, in 1957, tells an incredible story of faith, family love, friendships, and strong personal commitment. Drawing from the diaries she kept, the author easily puts readers in her saddle oxfords as she struggles against those people in both the white and black communities who would have segregation continue. She shares the physical, mental, and emotional torture and abuse she suffered at the hands of teenagers and adults. She also shares the support, the encouragement, and the help she received from both whites and blacks.

##### **Reaching Out by Francisco Jimenez (memoir) (Lexile 910)**

Jimenez, the son of Mexican immigrants, left behind a life of hard work and poverty when he entered Santa Clara University in 1962. Here, he chronicles his college years and introduces people who befriended him as well as those who had prejudices against Mexicans. Throughout his story, the difficulties of his transition from family life to college life are evident. His fear of failure was mitigated by those who helped him recognize his worth and develop and strengthen his character. The book ends as he is bound for graduate school at Columbia University.

##### **Three Cups of Tea by Sarah L. Thompson (Lexile=910)**

Hiking in the mountains of Pakistan in 1993, Greg Mortenson got lost. He found his way to a small village where the locals helped him recover from his ordeal. While there, he noticed that the students had no building and did all of their schooling out of doors. Motivated to repay the kindness he had received, he vowed to return to the village and help build a school.

##### **Yes We Can by Garen Eileen Thomas (biography) (no Lexile; reading level=8.0)**

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Profiles the life, achievements, and political beliefs of Barack Obama, the 44<sup>th</sup> president of the United States.

**No Easy Walk to Freedom by Barry Denenberg (Lexile-950)**

Tells the story of Nelson Mandela, civil rights worker and member of the African National Congress, who spent twenty-six years in jail for fighting against apartheid in South Africa.

**Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank (diary) (Lexile=1080)**

A thirteen-year-old Dutch-Jewish girl records her impressions of the two years she and seven others spent hiding from the Nazis before they were discovered and taken to concentration camps. Includes entries previously omitted.

**We Beat the Streets by Sampson Davis (Lexile=860)**

Shares anecdotes from the childhoods, teen years, and young adult lives of three men from Newark, New Jersey, who made a pledge to each other in high school to stay safe from drugs, gangs, and crime, and work to become doctors--a goal they have successfully achieved.

**Red Scarf Girl by Ji-li Jiang (Lexile=780)**

The author tells about the happy life she led in China up until she was twelve-years-old when her family became a target of the Cultural Revolution, and discusses the choice she had to make between denouncing her father and breaking with her family, or refusing to speak against him and losing her future in the Communist Party.

**Required for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy English (Choose ONE):**

All of the English books on are stories of teens of different genders and from different cultures facing struggles and trying to figure out who they are and who they want to become. The books are also stories of teens showing leadership, even in the face of struggle. **We'll use these stories as the place to start our conversations about identity at the beginning of the year, so come ready to take a brief quiz, to discuss the books, and ready to complete assignments related to the books you've read over the summer.** We'll also be using these books for literature circles later in quarter 1 and throughout the year.

**The Circuit (Jimenez) (memoir) (Lexile=880)**

Explores a migrant family's experiences moving through labor camps, facing poverty and impermanence, and discusses how they endure through faith, hope, and back-breaking work.

**Bad Boy by Walter Dean Meyers (memoir) (Lexile=970)**

This superb memoir begins simply with an account of Myers's family history and his boyhood. Vivid detail makes the Harlem of the '40s come alive, from the music and children's games to the everyday struggle for survival. As Myers grows older, however, his story also grows in complexity. Soon readers are caught up in his turbulent adolescence and his slow, painful development as a writer. Even while performing poorly in school, the teen endlessly devoured great works of literature, often in secret.

**Before We Were Free by Julia Alvarez (fiction) (Lexile=890)**

In the early 1960s in the Dominican Republic, twelve-year-old Anita learns that her family is involved in the underground movement to end the bloody rule of the dictator, General Trujillo.

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**Hush Jacqueline Woodson (fiction) (Lexile=640)**

When Toswiah Green's father, witness to a murder, does the right thing by testifying against two fellow police officers, he puts his entire family in danger. Now the Greens have fled for their lives, leaving behind all that is comfortable and familiar for the alien existences laid out by the witness protection program.

**The Tequila Worm by Viola Canales (fiction) (Lexile=830)**

From an early age, Sofia has watched the *comadres* in her close-knit barrio community, in a small Texas town, and she dreams of becoming "someone who makes people into a family," as the *comadres* do. The secret, her young self observes, seems to lie in telling stories and "being brave enough to eat a whole tequila worm." Canales follows Sofia from early childhood through her teen years, when she receives a scholarship to attend an exclusive boarding school. Each chapter centers on the vivid particulars of Mexican American traditions--celebrating the Day of the Dead, preparing for a cousin's *quinceanera*. Readers will easily connect with Sofia as she grows up, becomes a *comadre*, and helps rebuild the powerful, affectionate community that raised her.

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**Modern Fiction:**

**La Linea by Ann Jaramillo (fiction) (Lexile =650)**

When fifteen-year-old Miguel's time finally comes to leave his poor Mexican village, cross the border illegally, and join his parents in California, his younger sister's determination to join him soon imperils them both.

**Crossing the Wire by Will Hobbs (fiction) (Lexile= 670)**

Fifteen-year-old Victor Flores journeys north in a desperate attempt to cross the Arizona border and find work in the United States to support his family in central Mexico.

**Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida by Victor Martinez (Lexile=1000)**

It's not easy for Manuel Hernandez to discover his place in the world, especially when he is constantly bombarded with the hardships of his poor and woefully dysfunctional family. Their tiny sheetrock house in the projects is the scene of angry arguments-even of threats at rifle point. Manny steps onto a battlefield at every turn, whether he is collecting his alcoholic and violent father from the local pool hall, withstanding the ethnic slurs of white school mates, or seeking initiation into a neighborhood gang. As the months pass and some of his wounds heal, Manny slowly begins to understand the sense of self that he can derive from his role within this difficult household.

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In this winner of the Coretta Scott King Award, two fifteen-year-old girls--one a slave and the other an indentured servant--escape their Carolina plantation and try to make their way to Fort Moses, Florida, a Spanish colony that gives sanctuary to slaves.

**Fire From the Rock by Sharon Draper (historical fiction) (Lexile =830)**

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Sylvia Patterson's life suddenly changes with the integration of Little Rock's Central High in 1957 when she is selected to be one of the first black students to attend the previously all white school.

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Set in New York City at the beginning of the American Revolution, Chains addresses the price of freedom both for a nation and for individuals. Isabel tells the story of her life as a slave. She was sold with her five-year-old sister to a cruel Loyalist family even though the girls were to be free upon the death of their former owner. She has hopes of finding a way to freedom and becomes a spy for the rebels, but soon realizes that it is difficult to trust anyone.

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Muna, an orphaned Japanese boy, must search for his father, a samurai warrior, during the twelfth-century clan wars in Japan.

If you like this book, try **The Master Puppeteer**, also by Patterson.

**Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor (Lexile=920)**

This novel tells the story of one African American family, fighting to stay together and strong in the face of brutal racist attacks, illness, poverty, and betrayal in the Deep South of the 1930s. Nine-year-old Cassie Logan, growing up protected by her loving family, has never had reason to suspect that any white person could consider her inferior or wish her harm. However, during the course of one devastating year when her community begins to be ripped apart by angry night riders threatening African Americans, she and her three brothers come to understand why the land they own means so much to their Papa.

Try the sequels to **Roll of Thunder: The Mississippi Bridge** and **Let the Circle Be Unbroken** .

**The Year of Impossible Goodbyes by Sook Nyul Choi (Lexile=840)**

This story tells about Choi's last months as a Korean child in Pyongyang under the brutal Japanese rule that oppressed Korea for more than 30 years before 1945, and her harrowing escape with her seven-year-old brother. When the equally oppressive Russians drive out the Japanese, Sookan, her brother, and their mother must flee and undertake a harrowing journey south to the safety of the thirty-eighth parallel. Despite all, Choi's family preserved dignity, familial love, and loyalty to their heritage.

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**Mystery:**

**Something Upstairs by Avi (Lexile=580)**

In this ghost story, 12-year-old Kenny Huldorf moves with his family to Providence, Rhode Island, and finds himself embroiled in the century-old murder of a teenage slave named Caleb. Not only is Kenny haunted by the injustice of the murder, but also by the ghost of Caleb himself, who summons Kenny back in time to the early 19th Century, where the boy must solve Caleb's murder to return to his own century.

**The Ghost in the Tokaido Inn by Dorothy Hoobler (Lexile=740)**

Fourteen-year-old Seikei, son of a tea merchant, longs to be a samurai, although he knows that this is an inherited honor he can never hope to attain. While on a trip, Seikei and his stern father take shelter at the Tokaido Inn where a cruel and oafish samurai, Lord Hakuseki, is also staying. A precious jewel is stolen from the lord, and Seikei risks his life to help solve the mystery.

**Down the Rabbit Hole by Peter Abrahams (Lexile=680)**

An avid reader of Sherlock Holmes, Ingrid Levin-Hill, 13, is also a fleet-footed soccer player with a knack for stage acting-skills that come in handy when she finds herself caught in a police investigation following the murder of an eccentric woman. The deceased was associated with the Prescott Players, a local theater troupe in which Ingrid lands the title role in a production of Alice in Wonderland. Plot scenes incorporate play rehearsals, family life, middle school, and soccer games along with plenty of intriguing twists and mounting tension. Taking courage from her crusty grandfather, who refuses to sell his farm to an affluent developer, Ingrid acts with aplomb as she secretly undertakes a series of suspenseful adventures to track down the killer.

*If you like this, try the next book in the Echo Falls Mysteries: **Behind the Curtain by Peter Abrahams (Lexile=650)***

Ingrid Levin-Hill, the eighth-grade Sherlock Holmes lover introduced in *Down the Rabbit Hole* (HarperCollins, 2005), is back for another adventure. She quotes her hero quite often as she tries to sort out details that she observes around her. In trying to figure out why her brother is so moody, why her dad is in jeopardy of losing his job, and why her grandfather's property is so valuable, the teen stumbles upon some of her town's secrets.

**Science Fiction & Fantasy:**

**Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer (Lexile=600)**

Twelve-year-old Artemis Fowl is the most ingenious criminal mastermind in history. With two trusty sidekicks in tow, he hatches a cunning plot to divest the fairy folk of their pot of gold. Of course, he isn't foolish enough to believe in all that "gold at the end of the rainbow" nonsense. Rather, he knows that the only way to separate the little people from their stash is to kidnap one of them and wait for the ransom to arrive. But when the time comes to put his plan into action, he doesn't count on the appearance of the extra small, pointy-eared Captain Holly Short of the LEPrecon (Lower Elements Police Reconnaissance) Unit--and her senior officer, Commander Root, a man (sorry, elf) who will stop at nothing to get her back.

**The Golden Compass by Phillip Pullman (Lexile=930)**

The main character of this fantasy is young Lyra Belacqua, an orphan growing up within the walls of England's famous Oxford University. It quickly becomes clear that Lyra's Oxford is not precisely like a university in our world. For one thing, people there each have a personal *daemon*, a form of their souls in animal form. For another, hers is a universe in which

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science, religion, and magic are closely joined. Lyra pays little attention to these things at first and spends most of her time causing trouble with her antics. Lyra's carefree existence changes forever when she and her daemon, Pantalaimon, prevent an assassination attempt against her uncle, the powerful Lord Asriel.

**The Eye, the Ear, and the Arm by Nancy Farmer (Lexile=660)**

This story's hero, Tendai, has a sense of humor about his serious mission. In Zimbabwe in the year 2194, the military ruler's 13-year-old son and his younger siblings leave their technologically over controlled home and find themselves on a series of dangerous adventures. Tendai and his siblings encounter mile-high buildings and other miracles of scientific advance; they also find fetid slums and toxic waste dumps. As they're kidnapped by gangsters, forced to slave in a plastic mine, and accused of witchcraft, they're pursued by mutant detectives, who are both bumbling and sensitive and who always seem to be just one step behind rescuing the children.

**Midnight Magic by Avi (Lexile=660)**

Imagine the characters: a nervous king, a playful princess, an evil count, a strange kitchen boy, a magician who doesn't believe in magic, and a servant who knows far too much for his own good! When this bizarre group of people journey on a medieval ghost hunt, fate throws plenty of twists and turns their way.

**A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle (Lexile=740)**

Everyone in town thinks Meg Murry is angry and weird, and that her younger brother, Charles Wallace, is dumb. People are also saying that their physicist father has run off and left their brilliant scientist mother. Spurred on by these rumors and an unearthly stranger, the tesseract-touting Mrs. Whatsit, Meg and Charles Wallace and their new friend Calvin O'Keefe embark on a perilous quest through space to find their father. In doing so, they must travel behind the shadow of an evil power that is darkening the cosmos, one planet at a time.

**Gathering Blue by Lois Lowry (Lexile=920)**

This sequel to **The Giver** takes place in a village with only the most basic technology, where anger, greed, envy, and casual cruelty make ordinary people's lives short and painful.

You can also try **The Messenger** by Lois Lowry, the third book in the series.

**The Dark is Rising by Susan Cooper (Lexile=920)**

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

Try the sequels: **Dawn of Fear** and **The Grey King**.

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