

2016 Middle School Summer Reading

Students in grades six through eight are required to choose TWO books to read from the master list below. Middle school teachers and administrators will also read one of these choices. When we return to school in the fall, each teacher will host a book discussion group for students who have read that particular selection. Though students will read two books, they will only choose one book to participate in a discussion group for.

This model seeks to encourage students to read for the sake of reading, involve teachers across content areas, and cross grade levels to group students in discussion groups.

***Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson** (historical fiction, 780L)

As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom.

***The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander** (sports, 750L)

Josh and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood. He's got mad beats too, beats that tell his family's story in verse. But both brothers must come to grips with growing up, on and off the court, as they realize breaking the rules can come at a terrible price, resulting in a game-changer for their entire family.

***The Iron Trial* by Holly Black and Cassandra Clare** (fantasy, 830L)

Most kids would do anything to pass the Iron Trial. Not Callum Hunt. He wants to fail. All his life, Call has been warned by his father to stay away from magic. If he succeeds at the Iron Trial and is admitted into the Magisterium, he is sure it can only mean bad things for him. So he tries his best to do his worst, and fails at failing. Now the Magisterium awaits him. It's a place that's both sensational and sinister, with dark ties to his past and a twisty path to his future.

***Now is the Time for Running* by Michael Williams** (realistic fiction/sports, 650L)

Just down the road from their families, Deo and his friends play soccer in the dusty fields of Zimbabwe, cheered on by Deo's older brother, Innocent. It is a day like any other... until the soldiers arrive and Deo and Innocent are forced to run for their lives, fleeing the wreckage of their village for the distant promise of safe haven in South Africa. Along the way, they face the prejudice and poverty that greet refugees everywhere, but

eventually Deo finds hope, joining dozens of other homeless, displaced teens on the World Cup Street Soccer team--a possible ticket out of extreme hardship to a new life.

***Outcasts United: The Story of a Refugee Soccer Team That Changed a Town* by Warren St. John**
(sports, 980L)

With conviction and skill, Jordanian Luma Mufleh established and coached three soccer teams known as the Fugees. Her players were haunted by memories of war-torn homelands and personal tragedies and were struggling to adjust to life in the United States. However, her high expectations and willingness to help families impacted her young players. Despite challenges to locate a practice field, minimal funding for uniforms and equipment, and zero fans on the sidelines, the Fugees practiced hard and demonstrated a team spirit that drew admiration from referees and even their competitors.

***The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the Fight for Civil Rights* by Steven Sheinkin** (history, 950L)

On July 17, 1944, a massive explosion rocked the segregated Navy base at Port Chicago, California, killing more than 300 sailors who were at the docks, critically injuring off-duty men in their bunks, and shattering windows up to a mile away. On August 9th, 244 men refused to go back to work until unsafe and unfair conditions at the docks were addressed. When the dust settled, fifty were charged with mutiny, facing decades in jail and even execution.

***Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance* by Jennifer Armstrong** (history/adventure, 1090L)

In August 1914, Ernest Shackleton and 27 men sailed from England in an attempt to become the first team of explorers to cross Antarctica from one side to the other. Five months later and still 100 miles from land, their ship, Endurance, became trapped in ice. The expedition survived another five months camping on ice floes, followed by a perilous journey through stormy seas to remote and unvisited Elephant Island.

***Shipwreck Island* by S.A. Bodeen** (adventure, 660L)

Sarah Robinson is deeply troubled in the wake of her dad's second marriage. She now has to deal with a new stepmom and two stepbrothers. Even though they've moved from Texas to California to start life as a blended family, none of the kids seems remotely happy about it. Sarah's dad and stepmom decide to take the whole family on a special vacation to break the ice. They'll fly to Tahiti, charter a boat, and go sailing for a few days. It sounds great...until it all goes horribly wrong.

***Taking Flight: From War Orphan to Star Ballerina* by Michaela DePrince** (memoirs/performing arts, 940L)

Michaela DePrince was known as girl Number 27 at the orphanage, where she was abandoned at a young age and tormented as a "devil child" for a skin condition that makes her skin appear spotted. But it was at the orphanage that Michaela would find a picture of a beautiful ballerina en pointe that would help change the course of her life. At the age of four, Michaela was adopted by an American family, who encouraged her love

of dancing and enrolled her in classes. She went on to study at the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at the American Ballet Theatre and is now the youngest principal dancer with the Dance Theatre of Harlem.

***Terrible Typhoid Mary: A True Story of the Deadliest Cook in America* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti** (medicine, 980L)

This well-researched biography of Mary Mallon, also known as Typhoid Mary, begins in 1906, when Mallon was hired as a cook for a wealthy family vacationing in Oyster Bay, Long Island. The outbreak of typhoid that swept through the household a few weeks later turned out to be a pivotal event that forever changed her life.

***Trapped: How the World Rescued 33 Miners from 2,000 Feet Below the Chilean Desert* by Marc Aronson** (history, 1070L)

In early August 2010, the unthinkable happened when a mine collapsed in Copiapo, Chile, trapping 33 miners 2,000 feet below the surface. For sixty-nine days they lived on meager resources with increasingly poor air quality. When they were finally rescued, the world watched with rapt attention and rejoiced in the amazing spirit and determination of the miners. What could have been a terrible tragedy became an amazing story of survival.

***Unwind* by Neal Shusterman** (science fiction/fantasy, 740L)

In a society where unwanted teens are salvaged for their body parts, three runaways fight the system that would "unwind" them.

Connor's parents want to be rid of him because he's a troublemaker. Risa has no parents and is being unwound to cut orphanage costs. Lev's unwinding has been planned since his birth, as part of his family's strict religion. Brought together by chance, and kept together by desperation, these three unlikely companions make a harrowing cross-country journey, knowing their lives hang in the balance. If they can survive until their eighteenth birthday, they can't be harmed -- but when every piece of them, from their hands to their hearts, are wanted by a world gone mad, eighteen seems far, far away.

***The War that Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley** (historical fiction, 580L)

Nine-year-old Ada has never left her one-room apartment. Her mother is too humiliated by Ada's twisted foot to let her outside. So when her little brother Jamie is shipped out of London to escape the war, Ada doesn't waste a minute—she sneaks out to join him. So begins a new adventure of Ada, and for Susan Smith, the woman who is forced to take the two kids in. As Ada teaches herself to ride a pony, learns to read, and watches for German spies, she begins to trust Susan—and Susan begins to love Ada and Jamie. But in the end, will their bond be enough to hold them together through wartime?

***When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead** (mystery, 750L)

By sixth grade, Miranda and her best friend, Sal, know how to navigate their New York City neighborhood. They know where it's safe to go, like the local grocery store, and they know whom to avoid, like the crazy guy on the corner. The apartment key that Miranda's mom keeps hidden for emergencies is stolen. And then Miranda finds a mysterious note scrawled on a tiny slip of paper: "I am coming to save your friend's life, and my own. I must ask two favors. First, you must write me a letter." The notes keep coming, and Miranda slowly realizes that whoever is leaving them knows all about her, including things that have not even happened yet. Each message brings her closer to believing that only she can prevent a tragic death. Until the final note makes her think she's too late.

***Witches: The Absolutely True Tale of Disaster in Salem* by Rosalyn Schanzer** (history, 1190L)

In the little colonial town of Salem Village, Massachusetts, two girls began to twitch, mumble, and contort their bodies into strange shapes. The doctor tried every remedy, but nothing cured the young Puritans. He grimly announced the dire diagnosis: the girls were bewitched! And then the accusations began.

The riveting, true story of the victims, accused witches, crooked officials, and mass hysteria that turned a mysterious illness affecting two children into a witch hunt that took over a dozen people's lives and ruined hundreds more unfolds in chilling, novelistic detail.