

Summer Reading

Academy of the Sacred Heart
Middle School



Dear Sacred Heart Parents,

Here you will find your child's summer reading assignments as well as additional suggested titles to read over the course of their summer break. Every student must complete their **REQUIRED** reading which is assigned based on their incoming grade level as well as *two* additional **FREE CHOICE** novels. We know how hard it can be to choose a *just right* book, so we're including some suggestions in this packet for you to browse through together! Each title in our catalog is accompanied with a book review written by a student or faculty member. If you have any questions, please feel free to email!

What's Included:

Cover: Parent Letter

PGS 2-5: Required Reading

PGS 6-13: Student Book Recommendations

Back Cover: Summer Reading Challenge

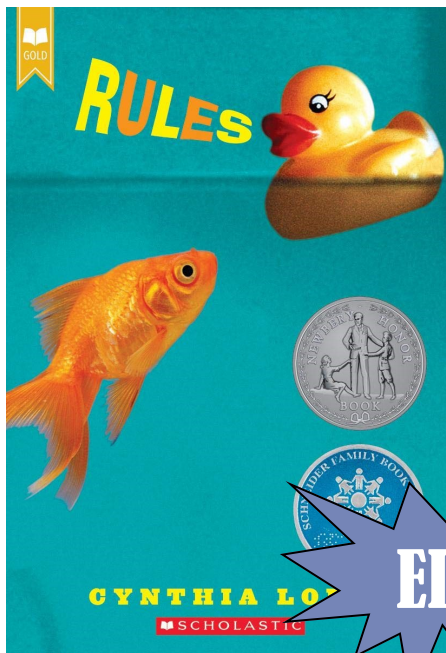
Ms. Diane Aiken

MS Librarian

daiken@ashrosary.org



Incoming 5th Grade Required Reading



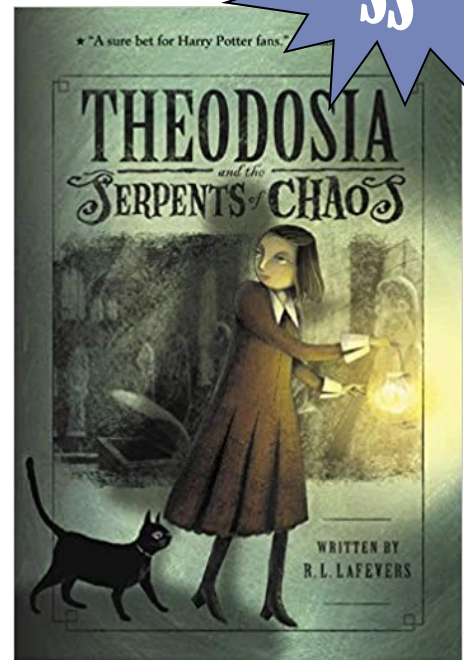
***Rules* by Cynthia Lord**

Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to "keep your pants on in public" -- in order to head off David's embarrassing behaviors. But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a surprising, new sort-of friend, and Kristi, the next-door friend she's always wished for, it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal?

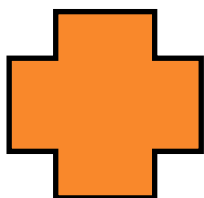
ISBN: 9780439443838

***Theodosia and the Serpents of Chaos* by R. L. LaFevers**

Theodosia Throckmorton has her hands full at the Museum of Legends and Antiquities in London. Her father may be head curator, but it is Theo - and only Theo - who is able to see all the black magic and ancient curses that still cling to the artifacts in the museum. Sneaking behind her father's back, Theo uses old, nearly forgotten Egyptian magic to remove the curses and protect her father and the rest of the museum employees from the ancient, sinister forces lurking in the museum's dark hallways. When Theo's mother returns from her latest archaeological dig bearing the Heart of Egypt - a legendary amulet belonging to an ancient tomb - Theo learns that it comes inscribed with a curse so black and vile that it threatens to crumble the British Empire from within and start a war too terrible to imagine. Theo will have to call upon everything she's ever learned in order to prevent the rising chaos from destroying her country — and herself.



ISBN: 9780618999767



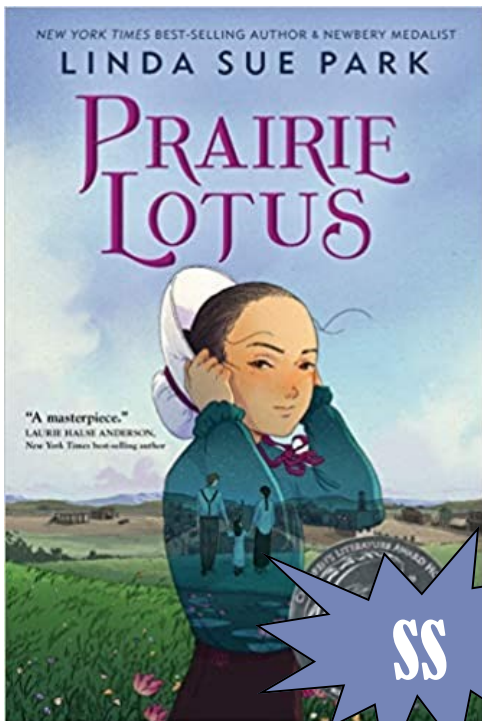
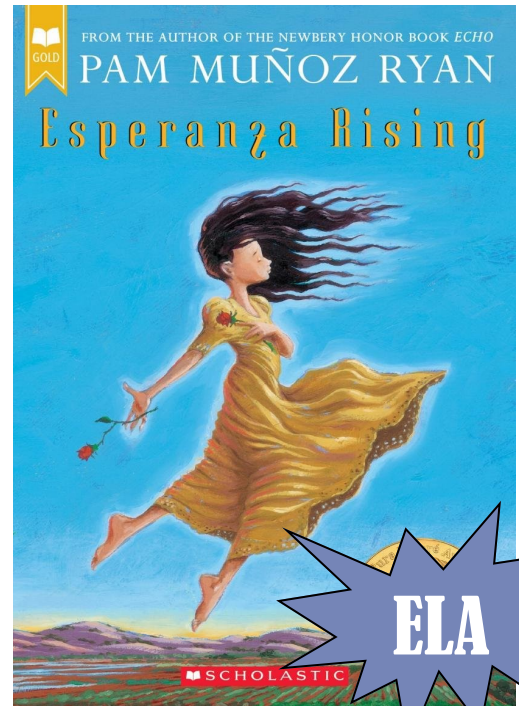
Two Free Choice Novels

Incoming 6th Grade Required Reading

Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Esperanza thought she'd always live a privileged life on her family's ranch in Mexico. She'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home filled with servants, and Mama, Papa, and Abuelita to care for her. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California and settle in a Mexican farm labor camp. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard work, financial struggles brought on by the Great Depression, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When Mama gets sick and a strike for better working conditions threatens to uproot their new life, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances because Mama's life, and her own, depend on it.

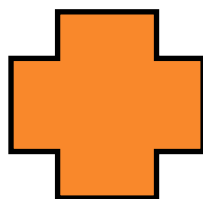
ISBN: 9780439120425



Prairie Lotus by Linda Sue Park

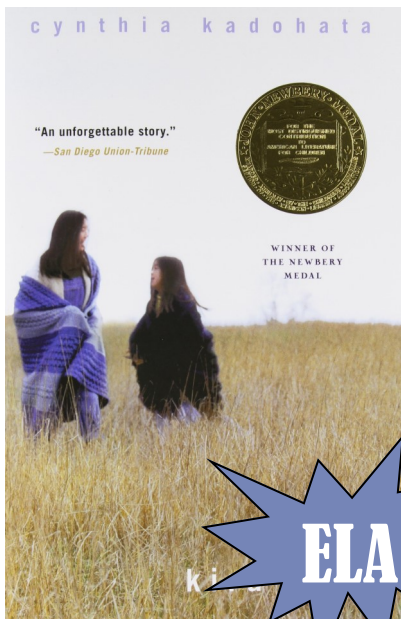
This is a powerful, touching, multilayered book about a girl determined to fit in and realize her dreams: getting an education, becoming a dressmaker in her father's shop, and making at least one friend. Acclaimed, award-winning author Linda Sue Park has placed a young half-Asian girl, Hanna, in a small town in America's heartland, in 1880. Hanna's adjustment to her new surroundings, which primarily means negotiating the townspeople's almost unanimous prejudice against Asians, is at the heart of the story. Narrated by Hanna, the novel has poignant moments yet sparkles with humor, introducing a captivating heroine whose wry, observant voice will resonate with readers.

ISBN: 9781328781505



Two Free Choice Novels

Incoming 7th Grade Required Reading



***Kira-Kira* by Cynthia Kadohata**

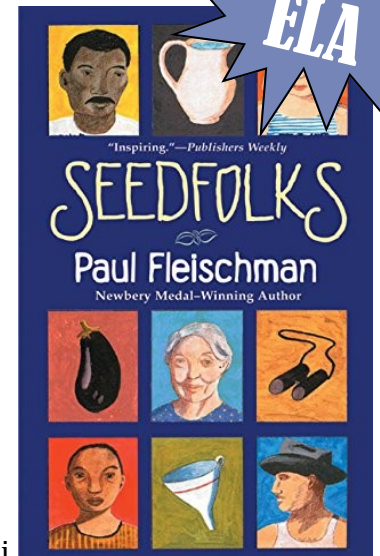
kira-kira (kee ra kee ra): glittering; shining. That's how Katie Takeshima's sister, Lynn, makes everything seem. The sky is *kira-kira* because its color is deep but see-through at the same time. The sea is *kira-kira* for the same reason. And so are people's eyes. When Katie and her family move from a Japanese community in Iowa to the Deep South of Georgia, it's Lynn who explains to her why people stop on the street to stare. And it's Lynn who, with her special way of viewing the world, teaches Katie to look beyond tomorrow. But when Lynn becomes desperately ill, and the whole family begins to fall apart, it is up to Katie to find a way to remind them all that there is always something glittering -- *kira-kira* -- in the future.

ISBN: 9780689856402

***Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman**

A Vietnamese girl plants six lima beans in a Cleveland vacant lot. Looking down on the immigrant-filled neighborhood, a Romanian woman watches suspiciously. A school janitor gets involved, then a Guatemalan family. Then muscle-bound Curtis, trying to win back Lateesha. Pregnant Maricela. Amir from India. A sense of community sprouts and spreads. Newbery-winning author Paul Fleischman uses thirteen speakers to bring to life a community garden's founding and first year.

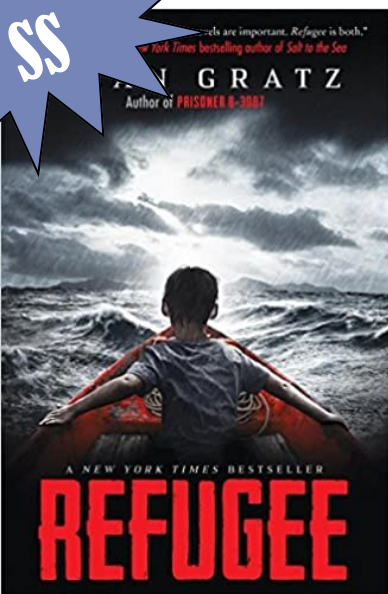
ISBN: 9780064472074



***Refugee* by Alan Gratz**

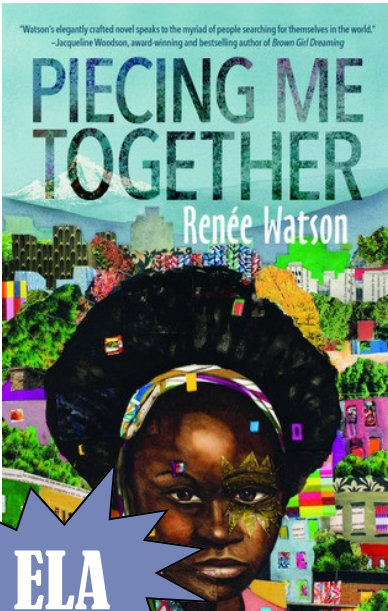
JOSEF is a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world. ISABEL is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety in America. MAHMOUD is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe. All three kids go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers -- from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But there is always the hope of *tomorrow*. And although they are separated by continents and decades, shocking connections will tie their stories together in the end.

ISBN: 9780545880831



Two Free Choice Novels

Incoming 8th Grade Required Reading



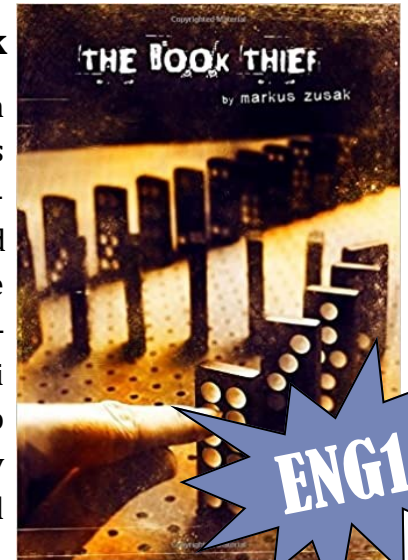
***Piecing Me Together* by Renée Watson**

Jade believes she must get out of her poor neighborhood if she's ever going to succeed. Her mother tells her to take advantage of every opportunity that comes her way. And Jade has: every day she rides the bus away from her friends and to the private school where she feels like an outsider. But some *opportunities* she doesn't really welcome, like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for "at-risk" girls. Just because her mentor is black and graduated from the same high school doesn't mean she understands where Jade is coming from. Jade wants to speak, to create, to express her joys and sorrows, her pain and her hope. Maybe there are some things she could show other women about understanding the world and finding ways to be real, to make a difference.

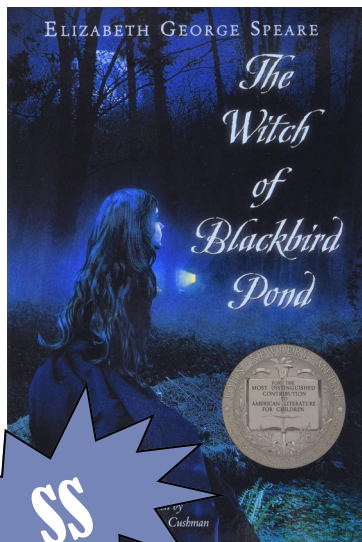
ISBN: 1681191059

***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak**

It is 1939, Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still. By her brother's graveside, Liesel's life is changed when she picks up a single object, partially hidden in the snow. It is *The Gravedigger's Handbook*, left behind there by accident, and it is her first act of book thievery. So begins a love affair with books and words, as Liesel, with the help of her accordion-playing foster father, learns to read. Soon she is stealing books from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library, wherever there are books to be found. But these are dangerous times. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jew in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened up, and closed down.



ISBN: 0375831002



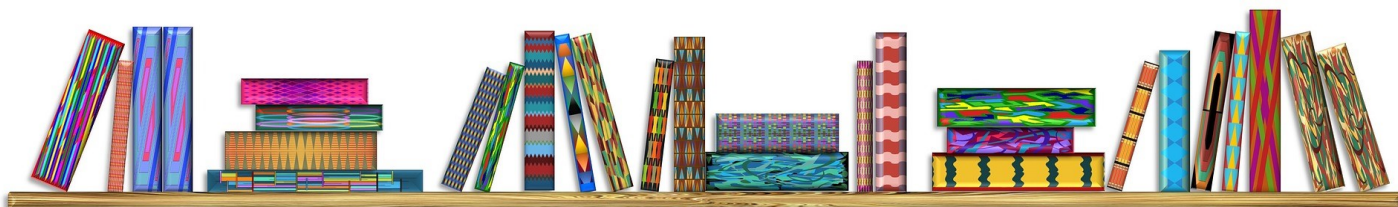
***The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare**

Sixteen-year-old Kit is marked by suspicion and disapproval from the moment she arrives on the unfamiliar shores of colonial Connecticut in 1687. Alone and desperate, she has been forced to leave her beloved home on the island of Barbados and join a family she has never met. Torn between her quest for belonging and her desire to be true to herself, Kit struggles to survive in a hostile place. Just when it seems she must give up, she finds a kindred spirit. But Kit's friendship with Hannah Tupper, believed to be a witch, proves more taboo than she could have imagined and ultimately forces Kit to choose between her heart and her duty.

ISBN: 9780547550299



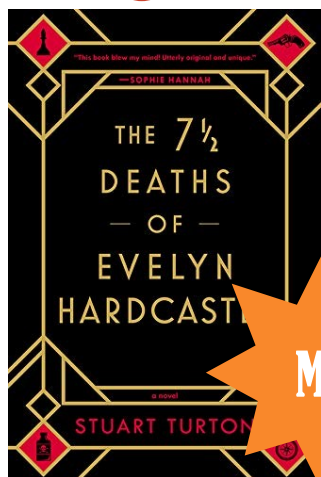
Two Free Choice Novels



BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



Mystery, Well-Written, Dark



The 7½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle by Stuart Turton

Aiden Bishop knows the rules: Evelyn Hardcastle will die every day until he can identify her killer and break the cycle. But every time the day begins again, Aiden wakes up in the body of a different guest at Blackheath Manor, (and some of his hosts are more helpful than others). This novel is a breathlessly addictive mystery that follows one man's race against time to find a killer, with an astonishing time-turning twist that means nothing and no one are quite what they seem.

— Lillian Richards, 8th Grade

"Very compelling and mysterious.. It will keep you on the edge of your seat!"

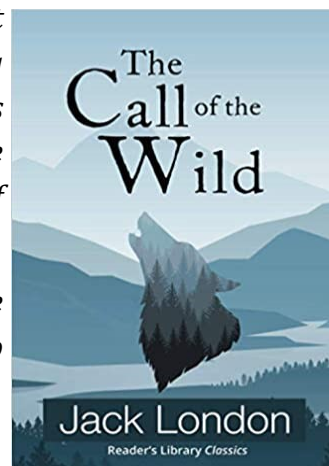
Moving, Beautiful, Meaningful *The Call Of The Wild* by Jack London

"This is a beautiful story about a dog named Buck who is taken captive and sold to many different owners.

Throughout the book, he finds that he belongs in the mountains, under the pine trees with his ancestors, his kin. I was moved to tears, I laughed, I felt as though I was a little dog running along with Buck and sharing his story. It changes your perspective and is an amazing classic full of heartache and joy, all for Buck.

PS: Do NOT watch the movie before reading the book. The book is so much better!"

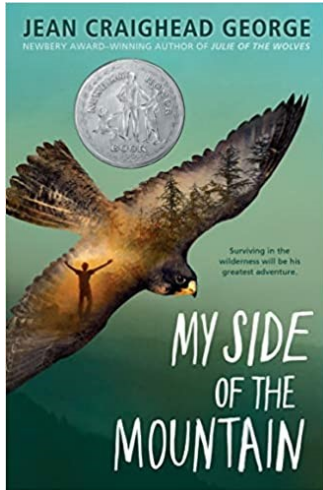
— Sophia Mondino, 5th Grade



Books with the MC (Mature Content) symbol next to them are recommended for older readers (ages 12+).



Adventure, Funny, Exciting Surprising, Fun, Dramatic



***My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George**

"This book is about a 12 year-old boy who decides to run away from home and survive in the woods by himself. His parents don't think he can do it and will just come running back home, but he proves

them wrong. He makes/hunts his own food, carves out a tree to live in, makes a bed, and so much more. In the process, he meets a hurt falcon who he trains, feeds and nurses back to health. He is there for almost 3 years! You can get lost in this book for hours, and it almost makes you want to runaway into the woods!"

— Charlotte Fitzgibbons, 6th grade

***Iron Hearted Violet* by Kelly Barnhill**

Princess Violet is plain, reckless, and quite possibly too clever for her own good. Particularly when it comes to telling stories. One day, she and her best friend, Demetrius, stumble upon a hidden room and find a peculiar book, a *forbidden* book. It tells a story of an evil being, the Nybbas, imprisoned in their world. The story cannot be true--*not really*. But then the whispers start. Violet and Demetrius, along with an ancient, scarred dragon—the last dragon in existence, in fact— may hold the key to the Nybbas's triumph or its demise. It all depends on how they tell the story. After all, stories make their own rules.



— Caroline McCammon, 7th Grade

"I loved how the book was magical and showed your typical fairy tale in a different light. Princess Violet doesn't need a prince to save her and like a normal person, she sometimes needs help or makes the wrong decision. It has elements of adventure and surprise that you won't see coming."



***Twins* by Varian Johnson & Shannon Wright**

Francine and Maureen are identical twins, and they are very much opposites of each other. Maureen is quiet and shy, whereas Francine is more outspoken and extroverted, or as their dad likes to say; "Francine is the talker and Maureen is the thinker." When the twins were younger, they would dress the same and were practically inseparable. This year however, Francine thought things should be different. Later in the book, a lot of tension builds up as the

twins compete with each other to be student council president. I really enjoyed this book for many reasons; because the story is very realistic and in general, I really like realistic fiction. Another thing I like about this book is that even if you don't have a twin, you can relate, whether it is competing against another sibling, or even a classmate or a friend. The book also had a good message: I could interpret it as, your family will always be there for you, even if there is conflict, and I think the book conveyed this message well."

— Cecelia Ryan, 8th Grade

EXCITING, INTRIGUING, SURPRISING

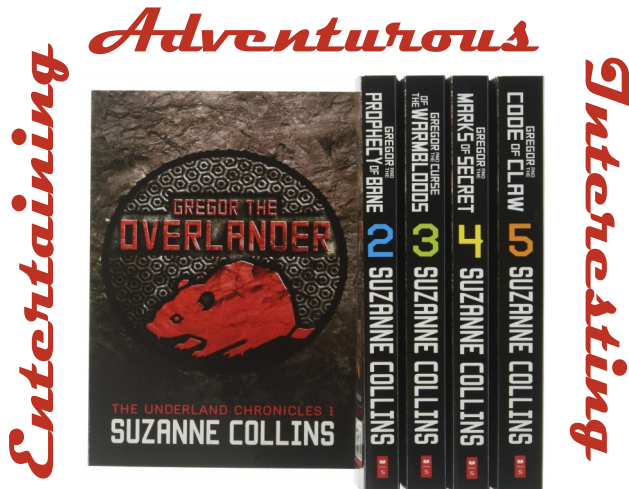
***I Am Defiance* by Jenni L. Walsh**

"I loved this book because the genre is historical fiction. It's about a 12 year old girl named Brigitte who lives with her dad and her older sister because her mom passed away when she was a baby. They are Nazis living in Germany, but they have to hide the fact that Brigitte's sister Angelika has polio. Brigitte was raised with a Nazi's perspective, thinking that each Jewish person was a nuisance. But then Brigitte



— Lily Tran, 6th Grade

realizes that her family are actually Anti-Nazi's after hearing her dad and sister talk about bombings happening near their town. Her family needs to flee Germany and travel to Switzerland without getting caught, but something gets in the way of it. People should read this book because it helps us realize that we are all equal no matter what. In the beginning of the book it shows a Nazi's perspective, but towards the end, it shows an Anti-Nazi's perspective."

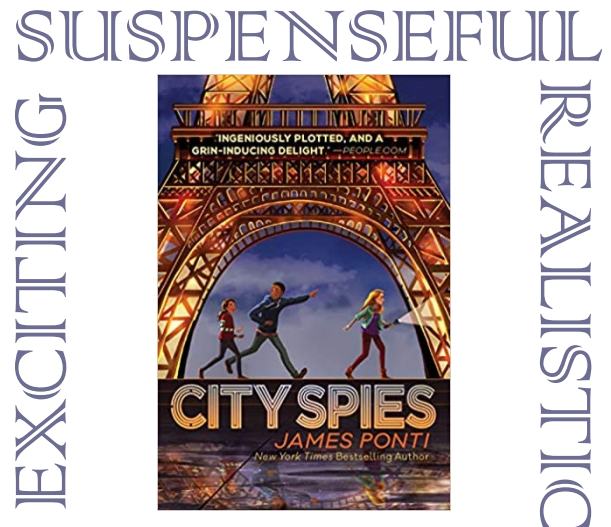


***Gregor the Overlander* series by Suzanne Collins**

When Gregor follows his little sister through a grate in the laundry room of their New York apartment building, he hurtles into the dark Underland beneath the city. There, a conflict is brewing between the humans and the giant creatures that live below. Gregor must find his place in the frightening prophecies he encounters, the strength to protect his family, and the courage to stand up against an army of giant rats.

— Evangeline Wendt, 5th Grade

"When I read this book, I would think about it all week long... I couldn't get my mind off what was going to happen next!"



***City Spies* by James Ponti**

"Twelve year old Sara has a computer talent for hacking. Her recent hacks include breaking into the juvenile justice system of New York City to expose her foster parents as frauds. Now awaiting a court trial, a mysterious man shows up as her attorney. He offers Sara a chance at a new life as a spy for M-16, British Intelligence. But Sara needs to train super fast. They have a mission in 3 weeks, and a new global threat awaits. This book shows what it's really like to be a spy, not like on TV. It really keeps you on the edge of your seat and not wanting to put it down."

— Emmeline Singer, 7th Grade

Exciting. Factual. Surprising

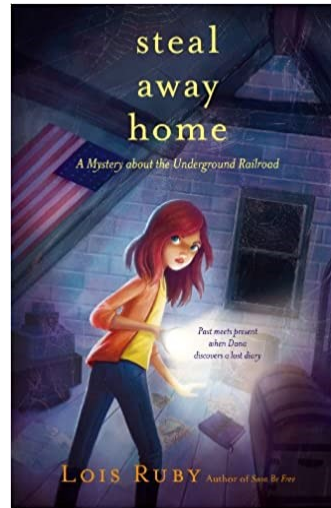


Weird but True! **USA: 300 Fascinating Facts** **about the Fifty States by National Geographic Kids**

Get ready to explore wacky wonders, facts, stats, tidbits, and trivia about America's 50 states and territories! Did you know that there is a floating post office in Michigan? Or that a library book checked out by George Washington was returned to a New York City library 221 years late? Maybe you'd be amazed to discover that the ink used to print U.S. paper money is magnetic? In this latest and greatest edition, you'll encounter all kinds of bizarre people, places, events, and things!

— **Caroline McCammon, 5th Grade**

"I loved learning about all the facts and seeing the crazy visuals. It was also fun seeing what makes each of the states unique!"



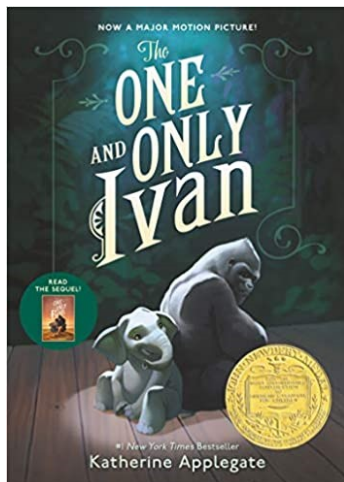
Steal Away Home **by Lois Ruby**

When twelve-year-old Dana Shannon starts to strip away wallpaper in her family's old house, she's unprepared for the surprise that awaits her. A hidden room—containing a human skeleton! How did such a thing get there? And why was the tiny room sealed up? With the help of a diary found in the room, Dana learns her house was once a station on the Underground Railroad. The woman whose remains Dana discovered was Lizbet Charles, a conductor and former slave. As the scene shifts between Dana's world and 1856, the story of the families that lived in the house unfolds. But as pieces of the puzzle begin to fall into place, one haunting question remains—why did Lizbet Charles die?

★ **Ms. David, SS Teacher**

"It's important that we learn about history in the world, but it's especially important that we learn about history in our own country."

SAD, HAPPY, HEART-WARMING



The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate

Having spent 27 years behind the glass walls of his enclosure in a shopping mall, Ivan has grown accustomed to humans watching him. He hardly ever thinks about his life in the jungle. Instead, Ivan occupies himself with television, his friends Stella and Bob, and painting. But when he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from the wild, he is forced to see their home, and his art, through new eyes.

— **Luisa Nicolosi, 6th Grade**

"I love this book because it reminds me of real life Ivan and all the other animals that just want to be in the real world, not locked in a cage."

MYSTERIOUS, HISTORICAL, INTERESTING



Emotional, Hopeful, Realistic

Another Kind of Hurricane by Tamara Ellis Smith

A hurricane, a tragic death, two boys, one marble. How they intertwine is at the heart of this beautiful, poignant book. When 10-year-old Zavion loses his home in Hurricane Katrina, he and his father are forced to flee to Baton Rouge. And when Henry, a 10-year-old boy in northern Vermont, tragically loses his best friend, Wayne, he flees to ravaged New Orleans to help with hurricane relief efforts—and to search for a marble that was in the pocket of a pair of jeans donated to the Red Cross.

— Colette English, 6th Grade

EXCITING, HEROIC, MYSTERIOUS

The Rising of the Shield Hero: Volume 01 by Aneko Yusagi

Naofumi Iwatani, an uncharismatic Otaku who spends his days on games and manga, suddenly finds himself summoned to a parallel universe! He discovers he is one of four heroes equipped with legendary weapons and tasked with saving the world from its prophesied destruction. As the Shield Hero, the weakest of the heroes, all is not as it seems. Naofumi is soon alone, penniless, and betrayed. With no one to turn to, and nowhere to run, he is left with only his shield. Now, Naofumi must rise to become the legendary Shield Hero and save the world!

— Londyn Walton, 5th Grade



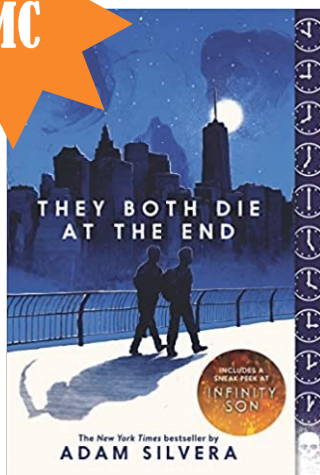
Nail-Biting,

They Both Die at the End by Adam Silvera

MC

Thrilling, Funny

On September 5th, a little after midnight, Death-Cast calls Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio to give them some bad news: They're going to die today. Mateo and Rufus are total strangers, but for different reasons, they're both looking to make a new friend on their End Day. The good news: there's an app for that. It's called the Last Friend, and through it, Rufus and Mateo are about to meet up for one last great adventure—to live a lifetime in a single day.



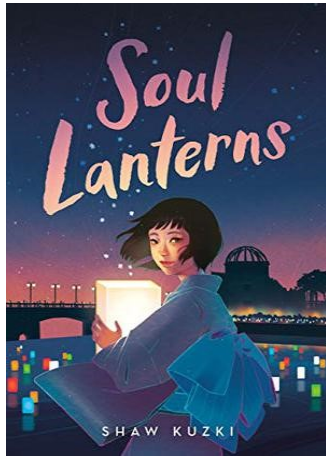
"This book was an elegant example of how we need to value our lives while we are still on Earth, because we are not fortunate enough to get a call on the day of our death. This book taught me an extremely important lesson that will stick with me forever."

— Bradlee Gross, 8th Grade

"I really enjoyed this book because it showed how two complete strangers can make the most of a tragic day and form a strong friendship. It surprised me by not only telling a sad story, but also showing how it is important to spend time with your loved ones and cherish it."

— Isabella Jacobs, 8th Grade

Moving, Uplifting Historical



Soul Lanterns by Shaw Kuzki

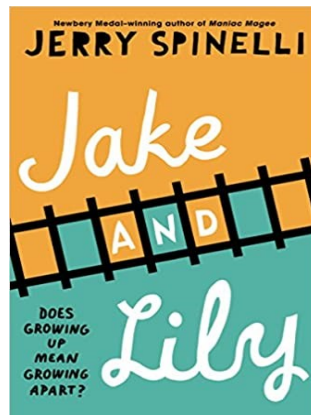
Nozomi lives in the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Every year since the bombing took place, she joins her family at the lantern-floating ceremony to honor those lost. People write the names of their deceased loved ones, along with messages of peace, on paper lanterns and set them afloat on the river. This year, Nozomi realizes that her mother always releases one lantern with no name. She begins to ask questions, and when complicated stories of loss and loneliness unfold, Nozomi and her friends come up with a creative way to share their loved ones' experiences. By opening people's eyes to the struggles they all keep hidden, the project teaches the entire community new ways to show compassion.



Ms. Aiken, MS Librarian

"Perfect for historical fiction fans, this book is incredibly moving and beautifully told."

Funny, Weird, Teenage, Heartfelt, Exciting



Jake and Lily by Jerry Spinelli

Jake and Lily are twins. Despite their slightly different interests and temperaments, they feel exactly the same—like two halves of one person. But the year they turn eleven, everything changes. Their parents announce it's time for separate bedrooms. Jake starts hanging out with a pack of boys on the block. And Lily is devastated, not to mention angry. Who is she without Jake? And as her brother falls under the influence of the neighborhood bully, he also must ask himself—who is the real Jake?

— **Caroline Balart,
6th Grade**

"You should read this book because it will definitely get you to laugh out loud and you'll never know what's going to happen next!"



A Silent Voice series by Yoshitoki Oima

"This series follows a former bully, Shoya Ishida, on his journey to make amends with the victim of his harassment, Shouko Nishimiya. In elementary school, Shouko became a target for Shoya's bullying because she was born deaf. Now, in high school, Shoya has made it his goal to right all of his past wrongs, starting with becoming friends with Shouko. I've really enjoyed this series so far, and I would definitely recommend it. I really like how it talks about deeper topics like anxiety and depression because it shows struggles that young people commonly face. It is a fairly accurate portrayal of real teenage experiences. I think it also acts as a realistic representation of consequence and regret. It is an example how being at war with yourself is normal and how the fight can be won."

— **Phoebe Kleehammer,
8th Grade**

Fun, Entertaining, Colorful, Interesting

The Babysitter's Club series by Ann M. Martin, adapted by Raina Telgemeier and Gale Galligan

Join Kristy, Mary Anne, Claudia, Stacey, Dawn, and Mallory on their baby-sitting adventures! No matter what comes up -- cranky toddlers, huge dogs, scary neighbors, prank calls -- you can count on the BSC to save the day!

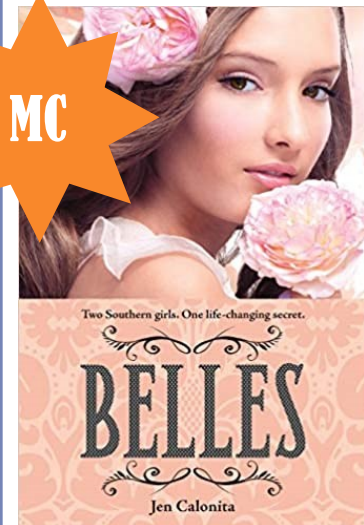


"There are 8 books and each one is about a different member of the club and told from their perspective."

— **Molly Screen, 5th Grade**

"This series is easy to follow, has cool and very different characters, and has different point of views."

— **Sarah Wanek, 5th Grade**



Belles by Jen Calonita

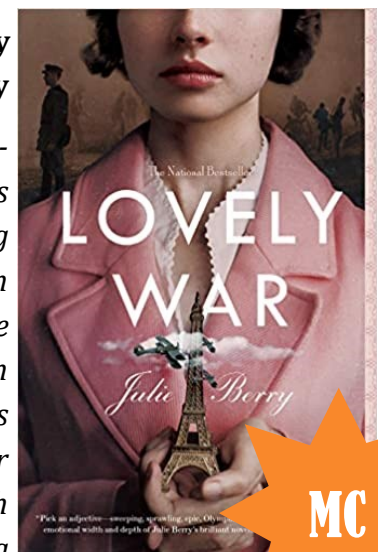
Raised in a run-down house on the wrong side of the tracks, Izzie has always loved her life by the beach. But when the grandmother she lives with needs to move into a nursing home, a social worker places Izzie with a politically prominent uncle and his privileged family, taking her away from everything she's ever known. Unfortunately, it isn't going so well. Her cousin Mirabelle isn't thrilled to share her life with an outsider, and in addition to dealing with all the rumors and backstabbing, a secret is unfolding that will change Izzie's and Mira's lives forever.

— **Ellie Brennan, 6th Grade**

Mystical, Historical, Romantic

"This isn't your typical historical fiction novel! In an effort to win forgiveness from her husband Hephaestus, the Greek goddess Aphrodite tells the story of four young people finding love and struggling to survive during World War I. Aphrodite calls on the gods Apollo, Hades, and Ares to fill in the parts of the story they had a hand in creating. Through the words of the Greek gods, readers learn about Aubrey, a talented American jazz musician from Harlem who fights both the Germans and the racial prejudice of his fellow Americans; Collete, a Belgian woman who is trying to survive her past and possesses a singing voice like no other; James, the perfect British soldier trained to be a sniper; and Hazel, a piano virtuoso who is figuring out what she wants in her life."

Lovely War by Julie Berry



★ **Ms. Nadell, 8th Grade ELA Teacher**

MC

Nail-Biting, Thrilling, Funny



Stalking Jack the Ripper by Kerri Maniscalco

"This book is a YA mystery revolving around Audrey Rose Wadsworth, a Victorian lady determined to make a place for herself among a society dominated by men by prying secrets from the dead. When women are found killed in gruesome ways, she begrudgingly partners with Thomas Cresswell to solve the case and catch the murderer. As she tries to navigate her way through a misogynist work environment and catch the world's first serial-killer, she also tries to navigate matters of the heart and her personal life. It's a great window into a woman's life of the time and presents the progression of female rights (and the lack of) in a mild and easily digested manner."

— **Caroline Boyd, 7th Grade**

Wonder by R.J. Palacio

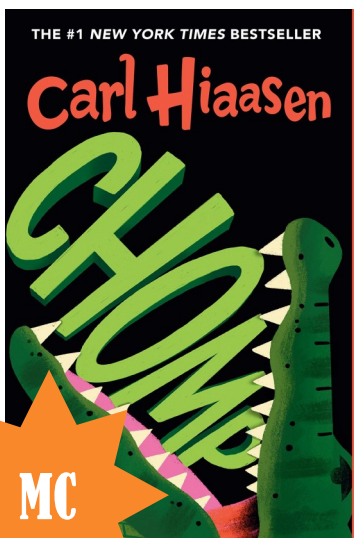
August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can't get past Auggie's extraordinary face.



*Inspirational,
Thoughtful, Real*

"I like this book because it made me think of how others are treated and reminded me about the importance of a strong community."

★ **Mrs. Friedrichs,
Middle School Division Head**



Chomp by Carl Hiaasen

When Wahoo Cray's dad, a professional animal wrangler, takes a job with a reality TV show called *Expedition Survival*, Wahoo figures he'll have to do a bit of wrangling himself to keep his father from killing Derek Badger, the show's inept and egotistical star. But the job keeps getting more complicated: Derek Badger insists on using wild animals for his stunts; and Wahoo's acquired a shadow named Tuna—a girl who's sporting a shiner courtesy of her father and needs a place to hide out. They've only been on location in the Everglades for a day before Derek gets bitten by a bat and goes missing in a storm. Search parties head out and promptly get lost themselves. And then Tuna's dad shows up with a gun . . . It's anyone's guess who will actually survive Expedition Survival!

— **Sissy Smallpage, 5th Grade**

"There are a lot of parts in this book where there is so much suspension that you feel as if you are literally in the story with the characters, sharing the moment!"

Exciting, Adventurous, Funny

MC

MC

Summer Reading Challenge

This summer, we will be hosting a **SUMMER READING CHALLENGE!** Students are encouraged to compete against each other to see which **grade level** can read the most books throughout the summer break. As a special treat, the winning grade will have an **ICE CREAM PARTY** at the beginning of the new school year! To **submit a book** that you have read for the competition (required reading counts too), simply fill out the Google form sent to your *school* email address.



HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!