

2018 Middle School Summer Reading Suggestions

This list of recently released titles includes a wide variety of books to appeal to the interests and reading levels of many students. Parents are encouraged to review book selections with their children in order to help them make appropriate choices. Students may read books from this list over the summer or find a comparable book on their own they are interested in! Many of the authors listed offer other great titles. You will find many of these books at local public libraries, Amazon, or other bookstores. Also, be sure to check out Overdrive for eBooks and audiobooks.

Anthony, Lawrence – *The Elephant Whisperer: My Life with the Herd in the African Wild*

This posthumous memoir propels readers straight into uncharted territory: the Thula Thula game reserve in South Africa. In the late nineties, conservationist Anthony, who owned Thula Thula, was asked to take in a herd of elephants that had been labeled “troubled”—if Anthony did not take them, or if he could not contain them, they would be shot. What began as a rocky relationship blossomed into a truly spectacular bond. The goal was not to tame the herd—they were, and remain, wild elephants—but they had to learn to tolerate humans, and the connection they forged with Anthony in the process was singular.

Applegate, Katherine – *Wishtree*

Red has stood her ground for more than a century, watching over the houses in her neighborhood and befriending the animals that call her hollows home. Each May, her branches are strung with wishes, a tradition stemming from an Irish immigrant who once lived on the property. Red sees all, including an act of hate—the word “leave” scrawled into her trunk, aimed at new renters, a Muslim family. After so many years of keeping quiet, Red and the animals take action, aiming to connect Samar, a young Muslim girl, with her neighbor Stephen. Meanwhile, Red’s owner considers cutting her down.

Bartok, Mira – *Wonderling*

Welcome to the Home for Wayward and Misbegotten Creatures, an institution run by evil Miss Carbunkle, a cunning villainess who believes her terrified young charges exist only to serve and suffer. Part animal and part human, the groundlings toil in classroom and factory, forbidden to enjoy anything regular children have, most particularly singing and music. For the Wonderling, an innocent-hearted, one-eared, fox-like eleven-year-old with only a number rather than a proper name -- a 13 etched on a medallion around his neck -- it is the only home he has ever known. But unexpected courage leads him to acquire the loyalty of a young bird groundling named Trinket, who gives the Home's loneliest inhabitant two incredible gifts: a real name -- Arthur, like the good king in the old stories -- and a best friend. Using Trinket's ingenious invention, the pair escape over the wall and embark on an adventure that will take them out into the wider world and ultimately down the path of sweet Arthur's true destiny.

Gidwitz, Adam – *The Inquisitor's Tale*

In 1242 France, weary travelers at an inn trade stories about three miraculous children and their dog, Gwenforte, who has returned from the dead. The children-Jeanne, a peasant girl who has visions of the future; William, an oblate of partial African heritage with uncanny strength; and Jacob, a Jewish boy with the power to heal the sick and injured—are the subject of much rumor and debate. Are they saints, frauds, or in league with the devil?

Hale, Shannon – *Real Friends*

From early on, young Shannon feels like the odd one out, so when she meets Adrienne in kindergarten, she latches on hard. As they grow older, Adrienne climbs to the top of the popularity heap, and while Shannon is usually included among the popular crowd, she feels more like a hanger-on. As the story progresses and Shannon’s anxiety becomes more evident, each chapter focuses on a pivotal relationship and movingly demonstrates the shifting loyalties, petty jealousies, and tiny moments of short-lived

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triumph common to childhood friendships. Not even Shannon is without fault. Her own tunnel vision occasionally leads her to treat others regrettably, too. [Graphic Novel]

Harris, Neil Patrick – *The Magic Misfits*

When street magician Carter runs away, he never expects to find friends and magic in a sleepy New England town. But like any good trick, things change instantly as greedy B.B. Bosso and his crew of crooked carnies arrive to steal anything and everything they can get their sticky fingers on. After a fateful encounter with the local purveyor of illusion, Dante Vernon, Carter teams up with five other like-minded illusionists. Together, using both teamwork and magic, they'll set out to save the town of Mineral Wells from Bosso's villainous clutches. These six *Magic Misfits* will soon discover adventure, friendship, and their own self-worth.

Hatnett, Sonya – *The Children of the King*

Shortly before the London Blitz, 12-year-old Cecily and 14-year-old Jeremy are sent to live in the countryside with their uncle, Peregrine. They take in an evacuee, 10-year-old May, who comes from a less privileged background but is very much her own person. Jeremy longs to return to London and prove himself by contributing to the war effort. Immature Cecily tags along after May to the nearby ruins of a castle, where two strangely dressed boys (fifteenth century ghosts) sometimes appear. From time to time, Peregrine entrances Jeremy, Cecily, and May with his episodic telling of an intense, occasionally violent tale from English history, a narrative that informs each child's experiences.

Jamieson, Victoria – *All's Faire in Middle School*

Eleven-year-old Imogene (Impy) has grown up with two parents working at the Renaissance Faire, and she's eager to begin her own training as a squire. First, though, she'll need to prove her bravery. Luckily, Impy has just the quest in mind-she'll go to public school after a life of being homeschooled! But it's not easy to act like a noble knight-in-training in middle school. Impy falls in with a group of girls who seem really nice (until they don't) and starts to be embarrassed of her thrift shop apparel, her family's unusual lifestyle, and their small, messy apartment. Impy has always thought of herself as a heroic knight, but when she does something really mean in order to fit in, she begins to wonder whether she might be more of a dragon after all. [Graphic Novel]

Kelly, Erin Entrada – *Hello, Universe*

****2018 John Newberry Medal Winner****

The universe comes together unexpectedly when a unique set of circumstances cause four tweens to cross paths. Central to the story is Virgil, an 11-year-old Filipino American whose grandmother, Lola, helps him to come out of his shell and face the world. When Virgil and his pet guinea pig, Gulliver, end up trapped in a well in the woods at the hands of a bully, Chet, it is up to the stars to align before it's too late. Coming together like spokes on a wheel, everyone converges in the woods-Valencia, a Deaf girl on whom Virgil has a crush; Kaori, an adolescent fortune-teller and free spirit; Kaori's sister, Gen, her jump-roping apprentice; a feral dog Valencia has befriended; and a snake, which is the only thing Chet fears. Unlikely friendships are formed and heroism abounds as the group of young people try to find their way in the world.

Kibuishi, Kazu – *Amulet Series*

After the tragic death of their father, Emily and Navin move with their mother to the home of her deceased great-grandfather, but the strange house proves to be dangerous. Before long, a sinister creature lures the kids' mom through a door in the basement. Em and Navin, desperate not to lose her, follow her into an underground world inhabited by demons, robots, and talking animals. Eventually, they

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enlist the help of a small mechanical rabbit named Miskit. Together with Miskit, they face the most terrifying monster of all, and Em finally has the chance to save someone she loves. [Graphic Novels]

Korman, Gordon – *Masterminds*

Tiny Serenity, New Mexico, is idyllic as it gets—everyone has a job and a home, the kids are well behaved, and the genial community spirit is intoxicating. Sure, it's boring, and it's suspicious that a town of 185 people has its own helicopter-equipped security force, but 13-year-old Eli is content. That is, until his misbehaving friend Randy gets sent away. Eli's sure there's something screwy going on, and his suspicions are confirmed when he and his friends investigate the town's factory. Using their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, they discover that it's not traffic cones they manufacture there, but the truth. (Look for others in the series!)

Larson, Hope – *Compass South*

In this fast-paced, high-energy tale, 12-year-old twins Alex and Cleo Dodge find adventure-and trouble-as they search for their father and, at times, each other. The siblings join the Black Hook Gang, but Alex is soon arrested for stealing. The twins leave town, yet there's still more excitement to come. Has the key to finding a lost pirate treasure been in their possession all along? [Graphic Novel]

Mafi, Tahereh – *Whichwood*

Our story begins on a frosty night . . . Laylee can barely remember the happier times before her beloved mother died. Before her father, driven by grief, lost his wits (and his way), and she was left as the sole remaining *mordeshoorin* in the village of Whichwood, destined to spend her days scrubbing the skins and souls of the dead in preparation for the afterlife. It's become easy to forget and easier still to ignore not only her ever-increasing loneliness, but the way her overworked hands are stiffening and turning silver, just like her hair. Soon, a pair of familiar strangers appear, and Laylee's world is turned upside down, as she rediscovers color, magic, and the healing power of friendship.

McDougall, Sophia – *Mars Evacuees*

Alice Dare's mother is a pilot, fighting the Morrors in space, and her father works on a submarine, laying mines. Just 15 years in the future, the world is slowly freezing, making it more comfortable for the invading Morrors, but worse for humankind. Sooner than expected, Alice is evacuated to Mars, and enrolled as a cadet in the Exo-Defense Force, under the watchful eyes of a variety of robots and in the blustery command of Colonel Dirk Cleaver, who is determined to whip the children into a fearsome fighting force. Mars has undergone intensive terraforming and now sports a somewhat breathable atmosphere and the beginnings of plant life, along with a low gravity bounciness that is hard to resist. With new friends Carl and Josephine, Alice participates in drills, has some fun, and steps into a leadership role when the adults on the base disappear. Determined to get help, Alice, Josephine, and Carl steal a Flying Fox and cross paths with a Morrор their own age. (Look for the sequel, *Space Hostages!*)

Milford, Kate – *Greenglass House*

It is wintertime at Greenglass House. The creaky smuggler's inn is always quiet during this season, and twelve-year-old Milo, the innkeepers' adopted son, plans to spend his holidays relaxing. However, on the first icy night of vacation, out of nowhere, the guest bell rings. Then rings again. And again. Soon Milo's home is bursting with odd, secretive guests, each one bearing a strange story that is somehow connected to the rambling old house. As objects go missing and tempers flare, Milo and Meddy, the cook's daughter, must decipher clues and untangle the web of deepening mysteries to discover the truth about Greenglass House--and themselves. (Read the rest of the series!)

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Mull, Brandon – *Dragonwatch*

After narrowly averting a demon apocalypse in the previous series, Fablehaven sibs Seth and Kendra face a new threat to the world. No good deed goes unpunished, it seems, and so cautious Kendra and her irrepressibly reckless little brother find themselves challenged by wily, scenery-chewing Celebrant, king of the very dragons who were so instrumental in quelling the demons. The dragons are now hot to break out of their own long confinement, and a hidden talisman is all that can restore the mysteriously weakened magic barriers that have kept them in check. Time for quests and tests! “The unworthy will not survive. Death is likely. Off you go,” a cheery guardian bids. With help from Calvin, a gigantic (i.e., thumb-sized) nipsie, and other motley allies, the young heroes survive hazards ranging from slavering dire bears to the clinically depressed Somber Knight to find the talisman and sneak it past a draconic blockade...only to learn that dragonkind is in general revolt and other sanctuaries have already fallen.

Roy, Jennifer Rozines – *Playing Atari with Saddam Hussein*

At the start of 1991, eleven-year-old Ali Fadhil was consumed by his love for soccer, video games, and American television shows. Then, on January 17, Iraq's dictator Saddam Hussein went to war with thirty-four nations led by the United States. Over the next forty-three days, Ali and his family survived bombings, food shortages, and constant fear. Ali and his brothers played soccer on the abandoned streets of their Basra neighborhood, wondering when or if their medic father would return from the war front. Cinematic, accessible, and timely, this is the story of one ordinary kid's view of life during war.

Shetterly, Margot Lee – *Hidden Figures: The Untold True Story of Four African American Women Who Helped Launch Our Nation into Space*

Before John Glenn orbited the earth or Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, a group of dedicated female mathematicians known as “human computers” used pencils, slide rules, and adding machines to calculate the numbers that would launch rockets, and astronauts, into space. This book brings to life the stories of Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson, and Christine Darden, four African-American women who lived through the Civil Rights era, the Space Race, the Cold War, and the movement for gender equality, and whose work forever changed the face of NASA and the country.

Thompson, Ben – *Guts and Glory: The American Revolution*

This fourth book in the action-packed Guts & Glory series takes readers through the exciting and fascinating history of the American Revolution. Perfect for history buffs, reluctant readers, and fans of *Hamilton*! From George Washington crossing the icy Delaware, to Molly Pitcher fearlessly firing her cannon, the people of the American Revolution were some of the bravest and most inspiring of all time. Jump into a riot in the streets of Boston, join the Culper Spy Ring as they steal secrets in the dead of night, and watch the signing of the Declaration of Independence in this accessible, illustrated guide to the birth of the United States. History buff and popular blogger Ben Thompson's extensive research and irresistible storytelling make history come alive in this fourth book in the unforgettable Guts & Glory series.

Wolk, Lauren – *Beyond the Bright Sea*

Crow lives on a tiny island in the Elizabeth Islands off Cape Cod with her adoptive father, Osh. He and Miss Maggie, who lives on nearby Cuttyhunk, are her only companions, as other locals shun her. But, Crow wasn't born on Osh's island; she washed ashore there twelve years earlier in 1913, a newborn baby alone in a skiff. She has always wondered about her origins, but not until she sees a fire ablaze on Penikese, an uninhabited island that once housed a leper colony, does an overwhelming “tide of curiosity” about her origins rise within her. Who were her birth parents? Why did they send her away? Were they lepers? What did they name her? She doesn't expect her questions to lead her and those she loves into the fearful danger that ensues.

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Great Authors!

Kwame Alexander	Katherine Applegate	Holly Black	Chris Colfer	Kate DiCamillo
Jeanne DuPrau	John Flanagan	S.E. Golden	Tim Green	Nathan Hale
Jeff Kinney	Gordon Korman	Mike Lupica	Brandon Mull	Jennifer Nielsen
Lauren Oliver	James Patterson	Renee Russell	Rick Riordan	Tui Sutherland