

1. The Wednesday Wars by Gary Schmidt

The Wednesday Wars is a wonderfully witty and compelling story about a teenage boy's mishaps and adventures over the course of the 1967–68 school year in Long Island, New York.

2. Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli

In a celebration of nonconformity, Jerry Spinelli weaves a tense, emotional tale about the fleeting, cruel nature of popularity--and the thrill and inspiration of first love.

3. The Crossover by Kwame Alexander

Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

4. The Girl Who Drank the Moon by Kelly Barnhill

One year, Xan accidentally feeds a baby moonlight instead of starlight, filling the ordinary child with extraordinary magic. Xan decides she must raise this girl, whom she calls Luna, as her own. As Luna's thirteenth birthday approaches, her magic begins to emerge--with dangerous consequences.

5. The War that Saved my Life by Kimberly Brubaker-Bradley

Ten-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.

6. Alabama Moon by Watt Key

As the spirited and resourceful Moon encounters constables, jails, institutions, lawyers, true friends, and true enemies, he adapts his wilderness survival skills and learns to survive in the outside world, and even, perhaps, make his home there.

7. Clean Getaway by Nic Stone

Set against the backdrop of the segregation history of the American South, take a trip with New York Times bestselling Nic Stone and an eleven-year-old boy who is about to discover the world hasn't always been a welcoming place for kids like him, and things aren't always what they seem--his G'ma included.

8. Shuri: A Black Panther Novel

Shuri is a skilled martial artist, a genius, and a master of science and technology. But, she's also a teenager. And a princess. This story follows Shuri as she sets out on a quest to save her homeland of Wakanda.

9. Inside out and Back Again by Thannhai Lai

For all the ten years of her life, Hà has only known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, and the warmth of her friends close by. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. Hà and her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope.

10. Words on Fire by Jennifer Nielsen

Danger is never far from Audra's family farm in Lithuania. She always avoids the occupying Russian Cossack soldiers, who insist that everyone must become Russian -- they have banned Lithuanian books, religion, culture, and even the language. But Audra knows her parents are involved in something secret and perilous.

11. Stepsister by Jennifer Donnelly

Isabelle should be blissfully happy – she’s about to win the handsome prince. Except Isabelle isn’t the beautiful girl who lost the glass slipper and captured the prince’s heart. She’s the ugly stepsister who’s cut off her toes to fit into Cinderella’s shoe ... which is now filling with blood.

12. Blood and Germs: The Civil War Battle Against Wounds and Disease by Gail Jarrow (Nonfiction)

Acclaimed author Gail Jarrow, recipient of a 2019 Robert F. Sibert Honor Award, explores the science and grisly history of U.S. Civil War medicine, using actual medical cases and first-person accounts by soldiers, doctors, and nurses.

13. Akata Witch by Nnedi Okorafor

Akata Witch transports the reader to a magical place where nothing is quite as it seems. Will Sunny be able to overcome the killer with powers stronger than her own, or will the future she saw in the flames become reality?

14. The Hunger Games Series by Suzanne Collins

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. The Capitol is harsh and cruel and keeps the districts in line by forcing them all to send one boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live TV.

15. Chasing King’s Killer by James L. Swanson (Nonfiction)

In his meteoric, thirteen-year rise to fame, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led a mass movement for Civil Rights -- with his relentless peaceful, non-violent protests, public demonstrations, and eloquent speeches. But as violent threats cast a dark shadow over Dr. King's life, Swanson hones in on James Earl Ray, a bizarre, racist, prison escapee who tragically ends King's life.

16. The Faithful Spy by John Hendrix (Nonfiction)

Interweaving handwritten text and art, John Hendrix tells the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his fight against the oppression of the German people during World War II.

17. City of Ghosts by Victoria Schwab

Cassidy Blake's parents are The Inspectors, a (somewhat inept) ghost-hunting team. But Cass herself can REALLY see ghosts. In fact, her best friend, Jacob, just happens to be one.

18. Ivy Aberdeen’s Letter to the World by Ashley Herring Blake

When a tornado rips through town, twelve-year-old Ivy Aberdeen's house is destroyed and her family of five is displaced. Ivy feels invisible and ignored in the aftermath of the storm--and what's worse, her notebook filled with secret drawings of girls holding hands has gone missing.

19. The Other Half of Happy by Rebecca Balcarcel

Chronicle brings us poet Rebecca Balcarcel's middle grade novel about a biracial girl who's navigating between the Anglo and Guatemalan sides of her family, a burgeoning crush and a cool new friend, and trying to figure out what's going on with her little brother, who is becoming remote and hard to reach, all while trying to determine just who she is.

20. Maybe He Just Likes You by Barbara Dee

Barbara Dee explores the subject of #MeToo for the middle grade audience in this novel about experiencing harassment and unwanted attention from classmates.

21. It Wasn't Me by Dana Alison Levy

The Breakfast Club meets middle school mystery in this story of six very different seventh graders forced together in the aftermath of a vandalism incident.

22. As Brave As You by Jason Reynolds

When two brothers decide to prove how brave they are, everything backfires—literally. Genie's summer is full of surprises. The first is that he and his big brother, Ernie, are leaving Brooklyn for the very first time to spend the summer with their grandparents all the way in Virginia—in the COUNTRY! The second surprise comes when Genie figures out that their grandfather is blind. Thunderstruck and—being a curious kid—Genie peppers Grandpop with questions about how he covers it so well.

23. Holes by Louis Sachar

Stanley Yelnats is sent to a juvenile corrections camp in the Texas desert where he has to dig a hole each day the depth and width of his shovel. Somehow, he manages to make his first real friend, find a treasure, and a new sense of himself in spite of it all.

24. Spirit Hunters by Ellen Oh

Harper Raine is the new seventh grader in town who must face down the dangerous ghosts haunting her younger brother. A riveting ghost story and captivating adventure, this tale will have you guessing at every turn!

25. My Life as an Icecream Sandwich by Ibi Zoboi

Ebony-Grace Norfleet, the sci-fi-obsessed granddaughter of one of the first black engineers to integrate NASA. Set in Harlem in the early days of hip-hop, *My Life as an Ice Cream Sandwich* is a moving and hilarious story of a girl finding a place and a voice in a world that's changing at warp speed.

26. The One Safe Place by Tania Unsworth

In this near-future dystopia with echoes of "The Giver" and "Among the Hidden," Tania Unsworth has created an unsettling page-turner; fast-paced, smooth, filled with dread that's wholly satisfying and startlingly original.

27. White Rose by Kip Wilson

The true story of Sophie Scholl, a young activist who put her life on the line as she tried to rally her fellow Germans against a fascist regime. Told as a novel in verse.

28. My Family Divided by Diane Guerrero (Nonfiction)

Before her incredible activism and work on immigration reform, Diane Guerrero was a young girl living in Boston. One day, while Guerrero was at school, her undocumented immigrant parents were taken from their home, detained, and deported. Guerrero's life, which had been full of the support of a loving family, was turned upside down.

29. Unbound by Ann E. Burg

From the award-winning author of *All the Broken Pieces* and *Serafina's Promise* comes a new novel-in-verse that is a gripping, transcendent story about a little-known piece of slave history.

30. Blended by Sharon Draper

Being split between Mom and Dad is more than switching houses, switching nicknames, switching backpacks: it's also about switching identities. If you're only seen as half of this and half of that, how can you ever feel whole?

31. Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Twelve-year-old Jerome is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat. As a ghost, he observes the devastation that's been unleashed on his family and community in the wake of what they see as an unjust and brutal killing.

32. Black Brother, Black Brother by Jewell Parker Rhodes

From award-winning and bestselling author, Jewell Parker Rhodes comes a powerful coming-of-age story about two brothers, one who presents as white, the other as black, and the complex ways in which they are forced to navigate the world, all while training for a fencing competition.

33. I am Princess X by Cherie Priest

Best friends, big fans, a mysterious webcomic, and a long-lost girl collide in this riveting novel, perfect for fans of both Cory Doctorow and Sarah Dessen; illustrated throughout with comics.

34. Small Spaces by Katherine Arden

New York Times bestselling adult author of *The Bear and the Nightingale* makes her middle grade debut with a creepy, spellbinding ghost story destined to become a classic.

35. Seance Tea Party by Reimena Yee

After watching her circle of friends seemingly fade away, Lora is determined to still have fun on her own, so when a tea party leads Lora to discovering Alexa, the ghost that haunts her house, they soon become best friends.

36. All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of all thirteen Thai Boys' soccer team by Christina Soontornvat (Nonfiction)

A unique account of the amazing Thai cave rescue told in a heart-racing, you-are-there style that blends suspense, science, and cultural insight.

37. The Impossible Climb by Mark Synnott (Adapted for Young Readers Version) (Nonfiction)

Now adapted for a younger audience, *The Impossible Climb* tells the gripping story of how a quiet kid from Sacramento, California, grew up to capture the attention of the entire globe by redefining the limits of human potential through hard work, discipline, and a deep respect for the natural world.

38. Becoming Muhammed Ali by James Patterson and Kwame Alexander

Fully authorized by and written in cooperation with the Muhammad Ali estate, and vividly brought to life by Dawud Anyabwile's dynamic artwork, *Becoming Muhammad Ali* captures the budding charisma and youthful personality of one of the greatest sports heroes of all time.

39. March 1 by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell (Nonfiction)

March is a vivid first-hand account of John Lewis' lifelong struggle for civil and human rights, meditating in the modern age on the distance traveled since the days of Jim Crow and segregation. Rooted in Lewis' personal story, it also reflects on the highs and lows of the broader civil rights movement.

Rising 7th - Summer Reading Recommendations - 2021