

Friends School Haverford
2016
Summer Reading for Students Entering Grade 7 or 8

We feel it is important for your child to read regularly over the summer. This list suggests just a few good books and authors.

Please consider reading aloud as a family, or asking your student to read to you while you drive or do some household task. Many children of this age are reluctant to pick up books that are not in their favorite genre or format, and a read-aloud can introduce those children to new tastes in a pleasant, social way. When reading aloud, try to choose books you like, perhaps your old favorites. Be sure to discuss the books together. Listening to recorded books, either in a family setting (such as in a car during a long trip) or alone, is another excellent (and usually painless) way for students to further their comprehension and vocabulary skills.

Encourage any reading your student enjoys; don't assume that he/she is "beyond" picture books, many of which have advanced vocabulary and plots that require mature inference skills. Many comic books and "graphic novels" have complicated plots and vocabulary, as well. Magazines, either those listed at the end of this document, or others your family may already receive, can be another new discovery for children of this age. Some students may be happy to read entire books on an ebook reader (such as a Kindle or Nook) who will resist the same books in a traditional format. Try to offer many different types of reading.

If your student is ready for more mature topics, consider the Printz award books, which you will find at

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/bookawards/printzaward/previouswinners/winners>

**CHAPTER BOOKS, NONFICTION, and COLLECTIONS of
POETRY or TALES**

Ames, Mildred: **Anna to the Infinite Power**. This science fiction story about an alternate future of overpopulation and government repression focuses on a girl who discovers she is the clone of a dead scientist, and on the brother who learns the truth.

Anderson, M.T.: **Whales on Stilts**. A ridiculous story about a girl whose father works for a mad scientist.

Avi: **Something Upstairs**. A ghost mystery set in Providence, R.I., focusing on the early 19th-century murder of a teenaged slave.

Balliett, Blue: **Chasing Vermeer** and sequels. Mystery thrillers with an art history twist.

Bauer, Joan: **Hope Was Here**. Hope and her aunt are moving to a new town, where they shortly find themselves involved in politics and the local causes. Hope has an intense personal work ethic and philosophy that make her an unusually fully-drawn character.

- Bloor, Edward: **Tangerine**. A boy uses a move to a new community to delve into his dark family history, and to break free from the secrets that kept him from pursuing his own dreams.
- Boyce, Frank: **Framed**. A number of mysteries, some serious and some humorous, focus on a small Welsh town and a down-on-their-luck family. A very witty and enjoyable book, particularly good for reading aloud.
- Brooks, Bruce: **The Moves Make the Man**. An African-American boy in the first wave of his community's school integration, striving to be judged by his abilities.
- Card, Orson Scott: **Ender's Game**. Science fiction about a boy being groomed to save the human race in an interstellar war. Adventurous, very popular with this age group, and thoughtful about the moral issues of war and the military.
- Cebulash, Mel: **Ruth Marini** trilogy. This fictional account of a first woman to play major league baseball focuses on the mechanics and behind-the-scenes realities of the game.
- Codell, Esme: **Vive la Paris**. Paris's growing friendship with her elderly piano teacher helps her cope with the problems in her life, and to take on family responsibilities.
- Colfer, Eoin: The **Artemis Fowl** series. Artemis is a bratty boy genius with ambitions to be an archcriminal at the beginning of this fine fantasy/science fiction adventure series; somehow he always ends up doing the right thing, and changes in the process.
- Chrichton, Michael: **The Andromeda Strain**. The measured pace of this science fiction classic is not for everyone, but it still has the power to intrigue and is a gripping adventure of medical science.
- Curtis, Christopher P. **Elijah of Buxton**. Elijah lives in a community of escaped slaves in the mid-1800s. He doesn't get much respect, until he finds himself having an adventure out of the relative safety of his own well-known surroundings.
- Dendy, Leslie and Boring, Mel: **Guinea Pig Scientists**. Accounts of ten brave scientists who, for the good of humanity, experimented on themselves. The earliest scientist profiled is from the 1770s, the latest from the 1980s.
- Deriso, Christine: **Talia Talk**. Talia's mother, a media personality, just can't seem to stop herself from talking about Talia on the air - which complicates Talia's life and her relationship with her mother.
- Dickinson, Peter: **Eva**. In a near future, Eva is horribly injured in an accident - and her memory is transplanted to the body and brain of a chimpanzee. An interesting and thoughtful exploration into what it means to be human.
- Duane, Diane: **So You Want To Be a Wizard?** Magical adventure in a modern city setting.
- Fardell, John: **The 7 Professors of the Far North**. Crazy science adventure. One of my (physicist) husband's favorite read-alouds *ever*.
- Farmer, Penelope: **Charlotte Sometimes**. A time travel story that doesn't try to make many big statements, but focuses on the problems of the girl who has to cope with finding herself in her own time or decades in the past, seemingly at random. A classic.
- Farrell, Jeanette: **Invisible Enemies**. An account of humanity's struggle against seven of the worst infectious diseases to plague us throughout history.

- Fine, Anne: **Alias Madam Doubtfire**. This seriocomic story about a disorganized father desperate to stay connected to his children after a divorce is not the farce that the film version suggests, but a novel that keeps its humor while showing the poignant situation of a divided family.
- Frazier, Sundee: **Brendan Buckley's Universe and Everything in It**. Brendan is biracial, and when he discovers he has a grandfather he never knew about – one who lives nearby and has a lot in common with him – he can't resist going to meet him.
- Gilbreth, Frank and Carey, Ernestine Gilbreth: **Cheaper by the Dozen**. This memoir of life in the large family of a pair of American industrial engineering pioneers is fascinating and funny, and gives a real glimpse of life in the early 20th century.
- Going, K.L.: **The Liberation of Gabriel King**. Gabriel is afraid of nearly everything, and his best friend, Frita, helps him face and overcome his fears. But she has a fear, too, that she needs help with. Set in rural Georgia in the 1970s.
- Greene, Bette: **Philip Hall Likes Me. I Reckon Maybe**. An outstanding book about middle-grade relationships and the importance of self-respect.
- Griffin, Peni: **The Ghost Sitter**. An excellent short ghost mystery about a dead girl who, even “from the beyond”, gives comfort to living babies and toddlers.
- Guiberson, Brenda Z.: Disasters: **Natural and Man-Made Catastrophes through the Centuries**. Ten chapters, each recounting a historic disaster, from smallpox to Hurricane Katrina.
- Haddon, Mark: **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime**. An excellent story about an autistic boy persevering to solve the mysteries around him, and to be reunited with his mother.
- Hamilton, Virginia: **The House of Dies Drear**. A mystery about a supposedly haunted house, with hidden rooms and an unexpected history.
- Hartman, Rachel: **Seraphina**. This fantasy adventure about a half-dragon girl trying to pass as human, getting caught up with major events in her world, will challenge and delight our more advanced readers.
- Heinlein, Robert: **Have Space Suit, Will Travel**. This old piece of middle grade science fiction is a good adventure story in its own right, but it also can lead to some great discussions about what informed people thought space travel would be like – before it ever happened!
- Hiaasen, Carl: **Hoot**. Long popular for his adult thrillers, Hiaasen has published several fine books for the middle grades, all with his trademark Florida setting. This book is wonderful in too many ways for me to list here.
- Hodgman, Ann: **The House of a Million Pets**. Fine memoir about a woman with too many pets, many of them quite unusual.
- Hoffman, Alice: **Aquamarine**. Two friends find a mermaid in a very unexpected place. A little charmer from an author who usually writes for adults.
- Honey, Elizabeth: **Remote Man**. A boy from Australia finds himself coping, not only with his mother's clinical depression, but also with a gang of international wildlife poachers. Adventurous and gripping.

- Hopkins, Lee Bennett, ed.: **Got Geography!** A collection of poems about geography.
- Herriot, James: **All Creatures Great and Small.** Herriot's many years as a country vet in England yielded a trove of stories, and he put most of his best ones in this first volume of his somewhat fictionalized memoirs.
- Ibbotson, Eva: **Which Witch?** The chief evil wizard must marry, but whom? He puts together a sort of pageant of evil witches, one of whom is secretly – gasp – *good!*
- Jennings, Richard: **Scribble.** When his best friend dies after a long illness, she leaves Lawson her bad little dog, Scribble. Then Lawson starts seeing ghosts. But the one ghost he really *wants* to see isn't appearing! A quirky, humorous and touching story.
- Jones, Diana Wynn: **Howl's Moving Castle.** The animated version diverges almost completely from this fabulous fantasy novel about an eccentric young wizard with no heart and Sophie, trapped in an elderly body, trying to reverse the spell on her before she dies of old age about 75 years too soon.
- Krull, Kathleen: **Lives of the Musicians.** Kathleen Krull has a knack for making short biographies fascinating - and usually amusing! She has written several books of them - *Lives of the Artists, Lives of the Athletes, etc.*, so if you like one, try the others.
- Lang, Andrew: **The Blue Fairy Book** etc. More than a century ago, Lang and his wife gathered tales from various scholarly collections and rewrote them for a younger audience. These are also available at no cost for the Kindle and other readers, or to read on a computer, as they are long out of copyright. The reading level is rather high.
- Lewis, C.S.: **The Chronicles of Narnia.** There is a lot to enjoy about these fantasy adventures, and if your middle grade student had trouble getting into them before, now is the time to try again.
- Mahy, Margaret: **The Haunting.** Set in New Zealand. A boy is haunted, and gradually family secrets come out.
- Mahy, Margaret: **The Changeover.** A girl, in order to save her beloved little brother from the clutches of a sort of child-stalking vampire, goes to a magical local family for help. This creepy but touching story has a lot to say about family, different kinds of love, and the responsibility of power.
- Nelson, Theresa: **Earthshine.** Our heroine prefers to live with her father and his same-sex partner, rather than with her mother and her new husband – but her father is very ill with AIDS, and she knows her mother would not understand her determination to stay with him until the end.
- Nix, Garth: **Sabriel.** If your student craves creepy, this is the novel for him/her – but be aware that it is VERY creepy. Sabriel is the last of a family of heroic necromancers whose task in life is to guard the living from the evil dead.
- Norton, Andre: **Moon of Three Rings.** A classic of science fiction for middle schoolers. I loved it when I was this age, and your student may love it too.
- Peck, Richard: **Voices after Midnight.** A fine ghost/time travel thriller. Richard Peck (not to be confused with Robert Peck) has a lively, witty writing style that I just love.

- Pratchett, Terry: **The Wee Free Men.** Tiffany is different from her shepherding family – she sees things they don't. In this delightfully funny magical adventure, she rescues her candy-sodden brother from the queen of elves with the help of a horde of little blue men.
- Pyle, Howard: **The Wonder Clock.** Pyle was a famous local artist over a century ago, very important in the development of American illustration. He also wrote several extremely popular books, including versions of the King Arthur stories and Robin Hood that are still standards today. **The Wonder Clock** is a collection of 24 tales in the folktale style, masterfully illustrated.
- Ritter, Lawrence: **The Glory of Their Times.** A set of brief memoirs by baseball players of the 1900-1920 era, collected back when some of them were still alive to interview. If your student is at all interested in baseball, this is a fascinating glimpse into its formative years.
- Rovetch, Gerda: **There Was a Man Who Loved a Rat.** These poems are very quirky, and kids love them!
- Sanderson, Brandon: **Alcatraz vs. the Evil Librarians.** A fun adventure story, but obviously pure fantasy. There is no such thing as an evil librarian.
- Schade, Susan: **Travels of Thelonius** and sequels. Thelonius is an intelligent chipmunk in a postapocalyptic future. He is swept out of his community by a flood and has many science-fictiony adventures. This series is about half-and-half comic book style picture narrative and regular prose.
- Schmidt, Gary D.: **The Wednesday Wars.** This is one of my “Wow” books. It looks like a normal historical family/school adventure, set in the 1960s, until you get to a certain place in the book... and then you see why it won a Newbery Honor.
- Sharp, Margery: **The Rescuers.** This fairly sophisticated mouse adventure has wonderful illustrations by Garth Williams that really enhance the reading experience. The vocabulary is quite difficult for most elementary schoolers, but your middle schooler may find it exhilarating.
- Shields, Carol. **Brain Juice: Science Fresh Squeezed.** Intriguing little poems about science topics.
- Sleator, William: **Others See Us.** When Jared suddenly gains the power to read minds, he realizes that things in his family are not as they seem.
- Stanley, Diane: **A Time Apart.** When Ginny's mother needs to undergo chemotherapy, she sends Ginny away – much against her wishes – to England, to live with the father she doesn't remember. But it turns out he is leading a group of researchers living under Iron Age conditions as part of their scholarship, and Ginny has to become part of their experiment in ancient living!
- Stevenson, James: **Sweet Corn.** Stevenson, a famous artist, draws pictures of things in his daily life and writes poems that bring them from the ordinary into the wonderful. This poem collection and its sequels are not to be missed.
- Thompson, Kate: **The New Policeman.** Set in Ireland, this modern magical mystery is a complicated and surprising story.

Tolkien, J.R.R.: **The Hobbit**. This great classic may still be a lot for a middle school student to handle independently, so consider reading it aloud in turns or getting an audio version for a trip.

Turner, Megan: **The Thief**. Nothing is what it seems in this story about deception, intrigue, loyalty, and the workings of the gods. Set in a sort of alternative Greece, this adventure has one of the best endings I have ever encountered. There are sequels for the enthusiastic.

Van Draanen, Wendelin: The **Sammy Keyes** series. This fine series of mysteries is a little too sophisticated for younger readers, but will appeal to middle schoolers.

Waugh, Sylvia: **The Mennymys**. The Mennymys are a family of sentient, life-sized dolls, made by a lonely old woman who is now dead, and trying to get along unnoticed in human society.

Williams-Garcia, Rita: **One Crazy Summer**. One of the most decorated books of the past few years, this story of three girls sent to live with the mother who abandoned them, set in 1968, manages to be important historical fiction and a fine gripping piece of drama as well.

Wolff, Virginia: **Make Lemonade**. LaVaughn is an ambitious and realistic heroine, who realizes that judging people by what they have done with their lives isn't necessarily simple.

Yolen, Jane: **The Devil's Arithmetic**. A time travel adventure in Hitler's concentration camps, gripping and ultimately affirming.

MAGAZINES

Kids Discover. **Kids Discover** is a very popular magazine of fast, interesting facts, focusing on one topic per month.

Calliope and **Cobblestone**. History magazines, **Calliope** of world history, **Cobblestone** of U.S. history. Each focuses on one culture or topic each month.

Cricket. **Cricket** is a literary magazine for 9-12 year olds, full of high-quality fiction and poetry. If your student is ready for more of a challenge, consider **Cicada**, for teens.

Muse. **Muse** magazine was conceived as Smithsonian magazine junior.

Odyssey. Science and technology magazine for 9-14 year olds.

Sports Illustrated for Kids. Need I say more?

The Week. This is the news weekly the school library subscribes to. Many of our middle schoolers are familiar with it, and enjoy leafing through it. I particularly like it because it tries to present the most cogent arguments from various viewpoints about each issue, citing the sources for those who want to read more.

Zoobooks. Each issue of **Zoobooks** takes an in-depth, non-fiction look at one animal or animal family.

The report of the Commission on Reading, Becoming a Nation of Readers, states, "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.