

Top Ten Lists for Middle School Readers!

Titles are noted for general reading level by stars: *easy **average ***challenging.

Look for the *series* note: if you see it, the author has written more!

Action and Adventure

** *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz... After the death of the uncle who had been his guardian, fourteen-year-old Alex Rider is coerced to continue his uncle's dangerous work for Britain's intelligence agency, MI6. *series*

** *The Recruit* by Robert Muchamore... James is recruited into CHERUB, a secret division of MI5 which consists of teenage spies. He successfully completes his training and goes on his first mission. *series*

** *Ranger's Apprentice: The Ruins of Gorlan* by John Flanagan... When fifteen-year-old Will is rejected by battleschool, he becomes the reluctant apprentice to the mysterious Ranger Halt, and winds up protecting the kingdom from danger. *series*

** *Jimmy Coates: Assassin?* by Joe Craig... While escaping from the strange men that are after him in London, Jimmy discovers he possesses many unusual talents for an eleven-year-old boy. *series*

* *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen... After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce. *series*

** *Soldier Boys* by Dean Hughes... Two boys, one German and one American, are eager to join their respective armies during World War II, and their paths cross at the Battle of the Bulge. Pay attention to the wartime propaganda on both sides!

* *Boy At War* by Harry Mazer... While fishing with his friends off Honolulu on December 7, 1941, teenaged Adam is caught in the midst of the Japanese attack and through the chaos of the subsequent days tries to find his father, a naval officer who was serving on the U.S.S. Arizona when the bombs fell. *series*

** *Code Orange* by Caroline B. Cooney... While conducting research for a biology class paper on infectious diseases, Mitty finds an envelope containing 100-year-old smallpox scabs and fears that he has infected himself and all of New York City, and attracted the attention of terrorists who want to use the disease as a weapon.

** *Flash Flood* by Chris Ryan... Ben's on a trip to London to meet his mum. But an accident at the Thames Barrier, combined with a tidal surge and a dramatic thunderstorm - and suddenly his trip turns into something totally different as the Barrier is breached and London is flooded. With streets underwater, communications down, rats pouring up out of

the sewers and thousands of people in a state of panic, survival becomes a key issue. But as Ben tries to get across London to meet his mother, little does he know that two terrorists have a similar rendezvous. *series*

** *Silverfin* by Charlie Higson... Young James Bond attends school at the prestigious Eton boarding school, and teams up with Red to investigate the mystery of the disappearance of a boy, Alfie Kelly, Red's cousin, allegedly linked to a madman with a plot for global domination. *series*

Chick Lit

* *Confessions of a Closet Catholic* by Sarah Littman... Justine Silver, a teenaged middle child, questions her Jewish faith when her Catholic best friend, Mary Catherine McAllister gives up chocolate for Lent, but when her grandmother suffers a stroke, Jussy has to face her relationship with religion. Mrs. Petersen loved this one!

* *You Are So Not Invited to My Bat Mitzvah* by Fiona Rosenbloom... As her bat mitzvah approaches, Stacy Adelaide Friedman of White Plains, New York, has a lot on her mind--her parents have separated, her mother dresses her like an American Girl doll, her younger brother is embarrassing, and she is totally in love with Andy Goldfarb.

** *The Girl Who Invented Romance* by Caroline B. Cooney... While waiting for her first big romance and observing the sometimes rocky love affairs of her parents and brother, sixteen-year-old Kelly develops a board game called Romance.

** *A Girl Like Moi: The Fashion-Forward Adventures of Imogene* by Lisa Barham... Fashion-obsessed Imogene's dreams of a summer in Paris are put aside when she is forced to get a job and support herself, but when she lands a dream job as an intern at a New York fashion forecasting agency, she realizes she has gotten the chance of a lifetime and does her best to make the most of it. Lots of Greenwich humor and fashion name-dropping!

** *If You Come Softly* by Jacqueline Woodson... After meeting at their private school in New York, fifteen-year-old Jeremiah, who is black and whose parents are separated, and Ellie, who is white and whose mother has twice abandoned her, fall in love and then try to cope with peoples' reactions.

** *Flavor of the Week* by Tucker Shaw... Cyril, an overweight boy who is good friends with Rose but wishes he could be more, helps his best friend Nick woo her with culinary masterpieces which Cyril himself secretly creates. Includes recipes from the story. A modern teenage take on the famous French story, Cyrano de Bergerac.

** *I'd Tell You That I Love You But Then I'd Have to Kill You* by Ally Carter... As a sophomore at a secret spy school and the daughter of a former CIA operative, Cammie is sheltered from "normal teenage life" until she meets a local boy while on a class surveillance mission.

* *Bloomability* by Sharon Creech... Thirteen-year-old Dinnie finds her world expanding after her aunt and uncle take her from New Mexico to Lugano, Switzerland, to attend an international school. Very funny and perfect for going into 6th grade.

** *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer... When seventeen-year-old Bella leaves Phoenix to live with her father in Forks, Washington, she meets an exquisitely handsome boy at school for whom she feels an overwhelming attraction and who she comes to realize is not wholly human. *series* One of the top ten checked-out books at both CMS and EMS!

*** *A Great and Terrible Beauty* by Libba Bray... After the suspicious death of her mother in 1895, sixteen-year-old Gemma returns to England, after many years in India, to attend a finishing school where she becomes aware of her magical powers and ability to see into the spirit world. *series* This one gets amazing student reviews.

Classics

*** *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien... Bilbo Baggins, a respectable, well-to-do hobbit lives comfortably in his hobbit-hole until the day the wandering wizard Gandalf chooses him to share in an adventure from which he may never return.

*** *Lord of The Rings Trilogy: Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers and Return of the King* by J.R.R. Tolkien... The penultimate epic fantasy that tells the tale of Bilbo Baggins' nephew, Frodo, and his friends, whose quest to destroy the Ring of Power takes them all through Middle Earth. Mrs. Petersen LOVES this!

*** *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie... Originally published as *Ten Little Indians*. Ten strangers--each with a sordid past--are summoned by an absent millionaire to a private island off the coast of Devon and begin to die one by one upon arrival.

*** *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury... A bookburning official in a future fascist state finds out that books are a vital part of a culture he never knew. He clandestinely pursues reading, until he is betrayed.

*** *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells... Relates the adventures of a scientist who invents a machine that transports him into the future.

*** *War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells... An intellectually-superior race from Mars invades the Earth with plans to enslave human beings. When this was broadcast as a radio play for the first time in the 1930's, it caused panic as people were not sure if this was real or not!

*** *Dracula* by Bram Stoker... Wealthy Transylvanian nobleman, Count Dracula, is revealed as a vampire.

*** *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley... Victor Frankenstein discovers the secret of generating life from lifeless matter and creates a monster who, scorned for being ugly, swears revenge on his creator and the human race.

*** *The Hessian* by Howard Fast... When his entire brigade is wiped out by the colonists, a sixteen-year-old German drummer boy survives with the aid of a Quaker family and the local doctor.

*** *Fantastic Voyage* by Isaac Asimov... Five people are miniaturized and sent on a rescue mission through a man's body where they have sixty minutes to reach and break up a blood clot in his brain.

Fantasy

*** *The Looking Glass Wars* by Frank Beddor... When she is cast out of Wonderland by her evil aunt Redd, young Alyss Heart finds herself living in Victorian Oxford as Alice Liddell and struggles to keep memories of her kingdom intact until she can return and claim her rightful throne. *series* The current sequel is *Seeing Redd*.

** *Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan... Percy, expelled from six schools for being unable to control his temper, learns the truth from his mother that his father is the Greek god Poseidon. He is sent to Camp Half Blood where he is befriended by a satyr and the demigod daughter of Athena who join him in a journey to the Underworld to retrieve Zeus's lightning bolt and prevent a catastrophic war. *series* This is also one of the top checked out books at CMS and EMS!

** *Everlost* by Neal Shusterman... When Nick and Allie are killed in a car crash, they end up in Everlost, or limbo for lost souls, where, although Nick is satisfied, Allie will stop at nothing--even skinjacking--to break free.

*** *Here There Be Dragons* by James A Owen... Three young men are entrusted with the Imaginarium Geographica, an atlas of fantastical places to which they travel in hopes of defeating the Winter King whose bid for power is related to the First World War raging in the Real World. *series* Sequel is *The Search for the Red Dragon*.

* *Dealing With Dragons* by Patricia Wrede... Bored with traditional palace life where she is supposed to be doing needlepoint and dancing instead of cooking and swordfighting, Princess Cimorene goes off to live with a group of dragons and soon becomes involved with fighting against some disreputable wizards. *series*

** *Artemis Fowl* by Eoin Colfer... Twelve-year-old millionaire, genius, and criminal mastermind Artemis Fowl finds himself in over his head after he kidnaps a dangerous fairy. *series*

* *Magyk* by Angie Sage... Jenna learns that she is a princess found as a baby by the man she believed was her father and now she and Septimus, who was taken at birth by the midwife, are being threatened by the evil wizard, DomDaniel who intends to finish off the entire royal line. *series*

*** *The Amulet of Samarkand* by Jonathan Stroud... Nathaniel, a young magician's apprentice, becomes caught in a web of magical espionage, murder, and rebellion, after he summons the djinni Bartimaeus and instructs him to steal the Amulet of Samarkand from the powerful magician Simon Loveland. Bartimaeus is 5,000 years old and incredibly sarcastic and snarky! *series*

* *Children of the Lamp: The Akhenaten Adventure* by P.B. Kerr... When twelve-year-old twins John and Philippa Gaunt develop extraordinary magical gifts, they travel to London to meet their wildly eccentric djinn-uncle, Nimrod, who teaches them to harness their new powers and sends them on a mission. *series*

*** *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini... In Alagaesia, a fifteen-year-old boy of unknown lineage named Eragon finds a mysterious stone that is actually a dragon's egg. When the dragon, Saphira, hatches, Eragon becomes the last of the Dragon Riders, and the only hope of all of the residents of Alagaesia for overthrowing the evil King Galbatorix. *series* Sequel is *Eldest*, third in the series is coming out in September.

Historical Fiction

** *Elijah of Buxton* by Christopher Paul Curtis... Eleven-year-old Elijah Freeman, the first free-born child in Buxton, Canada, which is a haven for slaves fleeing the American South in 1859, uses his wits and skills to try to bring to justice the lying preacher who has stolen money that was to be used to buy a family's freedom.

** *Red Moon at Sharpsburg* by Rosemary Wells... Even though the odds are against her and the Civil War has ruined her home and given her a view of the darker side of humanity, thirteen-year-old India Moody continues to aspire to become a scientist and attend Oberlin College.

** *Black Duck* by Janet Taylor Lisle... Years afterwards, Ruben Hart tells the story of how, in 1929 Newport, Rhode Island, his family and his best friend's family were caught up in the violent competition among groups trying to control the local rum-smuggling trade.

*** *Leonardo's Shadow* by Christopher Grey... Fifteen-year-old Giacomo--servant to Leonardo da Vinci--helps his procrastinating master finish painting "The Last Supper" while also trying to find clues to his parentage and pursue his own career as an artist in late fifteenth-century Milan.

** *When My Name Was Keoko* by Linda Sue Park... With national pride and occasional fear, a brother and sister face the increasingly oppressive occupation of Korea by Japan during World War II, which threatens to suppress Korean culture entirely.

** *Incantation* by Alice Hoffman... During the Spanish Inquisition, sixteen-year-old Estrella, brought up a Catholic, discovers her family's true Jewish identity, and when their secret is betrayed by Estrella's best friend, the consequences are tragic.

* *Legend of Bass Reeves* by Gary Paulsen... The story of Bass Reeves ,who was born a slave and later became one of the most respected and long-lived federal marshals in Oklahoma and Texas.

** *Airman* by Eoin Colfer... In the 1890s on an island off the Irish coast, Conor Broekhart is falsely imprisoned and passes the solitary months by scratching designs of flying machines into the walls, including one for a glider with which he dreams of escape.

*** *A Northern Light* by Jennifer Donnelly... Sixteen-year-old Mattie, determined to attend college and be a writer against the wishes of her father and boyfriend, takes a job at a hotel in 1906 where the death of a guest renews her determination to live her own life.

*** *Or Give Me Death* by Ann Rinaldi... With their father away most of the time advocating independence for the American colonies, the children of Patrick Henry try to raise themselves, manage the family plantation, and care for their mentally ill mother.

Horror

* *Cirque du Freak: A Living Nightmare* by Darren Shan... Two boys who are best friends visit an illegal freak show, where an encounter with a vampire and a deadly spider forces them to make life-changing choices. *series*

** *Full Tilt* by Neal Shusterman... When sixteen-year-old Blake goes to a mysterious, by-invitation-only carnival he somehow knows that it could save his comatose brother, but soon learns that much more is at stake if he fails to meet the challenge presented there by the beautiful Cassandra.

*** *Edgar Allen Poe's Tales of Mystery and Madness*, illustrated by Gris Grimly... Published in 2004, this is a collection of four classic Poe short horror stories. The illustrations are nothing short of hilarious genius, and they truly make this book a success. Highly recommended by Mrs. Ball!

** *The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon* by Stephen King... Nine-year-old Trisha McFarland, lost in the woods after she wanders off to escape the bickering between her mom and her brother, boosts her courage by imagining that her hero, Boston Red Sox relief pitcher Tom Gordon, is with her, helping her survive an unknown enemy.

** *The Chronicles of Vladimir Tod: Eighth Grade Bites* by Heather Brewer... Thirteen-year-old half-vampire Vladimir Tod struggles to navigate the ups and downs of eighth grade while keeping his untested powers and impulses under control. *will be a series*

** *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman... Looking for excitement, Coraline ventures through a mysterious door into a world that is similar, yet disturbingly different from her own, where she must challenge a gruesome entity in order to save herself, her parents, and the souls of three others.

* *House of Stairs* by William Sleator... Five sixteen-year-old orphans of widely varying personality characteristics are involuntarily placed in a house of endless stairs as subjects for a psychological experiment on conditioned human response.

** *Midnighters: The Secret Hour* by Scott Westerfeld... Upon moving to Bixby, Oklahoma, fifteen-year-old Jessica Day learns that she is one of a group of people who have special abilities that help them fight ancient creatures living in an hour hidden at midnight; creatures that seem determined to destroy Jess. *series*

Humor

* *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney... Greg records his sixth grade experiences in a middle school where he and his best friend, Rowley, undersized weaklings amid boys who need to shave twice daily, hope just to survive, but when Rowley grows more popular, Greg must take drastic measures to save their friendship. Lots of cartoon illustrations! This has been constantly checked out all year at EMS. Sequel is *The Roderick Rules*.

* *A Long Way From Chicago* by Richard Peck... Joey tells the stories of his annual summer trips to rural Illinois with his sister, Mary Alice, during the Great Depression to visit their larger-than-life grandmother. Grandma Dowdell is one tough cookie, and she is pretty funny, too! In the sequel, Mary Alice goes to live with Grandma Dowdell for a year, and it's a laugh riot!

** *Something to Blog About* by Shana Norris... Libby Fawcett figures her life can't get much worse after she lights her hair on fire in front of her entire chemistry class, including Seth, the boy she's had a secret crush on for years, until her mother announces she is dating the father of Libby's arch-enemy, who plays a nasty trick on Libby that makes her the laughing stock of the whole school.

** *Son of the Mob* by Gordon Korman... Mrs. Ball calls this one "the Sopranos go to high school." Seventeen-year-old Vince's life is constantly complicated by the fact that he is the son of a powerful New Jersey Mafia boss, and he's dating the daughter of the FBI agent who's out to get his dad. Lots of mob humor (all of his various "uncles" and their nicknames). Vince is the family civilian who is expected to avoid the family business and

go to college and med school or law school, so he's got one foot in each world! Sequel is *Son of the Mob: Hollywood Hustle*.

** *The Teacher's Funeral: A Comedy in Three Parts* by Richard Peck... Mrs. Ball loves the first line: "If your teacher has to die, August isn't a bad time of year for it." Russell's elderly teacher (gasp! she was at least 40!) dies just before the beginning of the book, and his older sister Tansy is hired by the school board in their small town to run the one-room schoolhouse. Russell and his friends decide to do whatever they have to do to get her to quit, and the results are hysterically funny!

* *Harris and Me* by Gary Paulsen... An 11-year-old boy spends a summer with distant relatives on their Minnesota farm, and discovers what an extraordinary prankster his wild cousin Harris is.

* *No More Dead Dogs* by Gordon Korman... Eighth-grade football hero Wallace Wallace is sentenced to detention attending rehearsals of the school play where, in spite of himself, he becomes wrapped up in the production and begins to suggest changes that improve not only the play but his life as well.

* *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key* by Jack Gantos... To the constant disappointment of his mother and his teachers, Joey has trouble paying attention or controlling his mood swings when his prescription meds wear off and he starts getting worked up and acting wired.
series

*** *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams... Seconds before Earth is demolished to make room for a galactic freeway, an earthman is saved by his friend. Together they journey through the galaxy.

*** *The Wee Free Men* by Terry Pratchett... Tiffany, a young witch-to-be in the land of Discworld, teams up with the Wee Free Men, a clan of six-inch-high blue toughs, to rescue her baby brother and ward off a sinister invasion from Fairyland. *series*

Mystery

*** *Montmorency: Thief, Liar, Gentleman?* by Eleanor Updale... In Victorian London, after his life is saved by a young physician, a thief utilizes the knowledge he gains in prison and from the scientific lectures he attends as the physician's case study exhibit to create a new, highly successful, double life for himself. *series*

** *Down the Rabbit Hole: An Echo Falls Mystery* by Peter Abrahams... Like her idol Sherlock Holmes, eighth grader Ingrid Levin-Hill uses her intellect to solve a murder case in her hometown of Echo Falls. Sequel is *Behind the Curtain*.

** *Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery* by John Feinstein... After winning a basketball reporting contest, eighth graders Stevie and Susan Carol are sent to cover the Final Four tournament, where they discover that a talented player is being blackmailed into throwing

the final game. The sequels include *Cover Up*, where Stevie and Susan Carol go to the Super Bowl, and *Vanishing Act*, where they report from the US Open tennis championships.

* *The Man With The Red Bag* by Eve Bunting... Twelve-year-old Kevin, who is traveling with his grandmother on a sightseeing trip to different national parks and monuments, suspects that a man in his tour group might be carrying a bomb.

*** *The Traitor's Gate* by Avi... When his father is arrested as a debtor in 1849 London, fourteen-year-old John Huffman must take on unexpected responsibilities, from asking a distant relative for help to determining why people are spying on him and his family.

* *The Case of the Missing Marquess: An Enola Holmes Mystery* by Nancy Springer... Enola Holmes, much younger sister of detective Sherlock Holmes, must travel to London in disguise to unravel the disappearance of her missing mother.

* *Snatched* by Pete Hautman and Mary Logue... Too curious for her own good, Roni, crime reporter for her high school newspaper, teams up with Brian, freshman science geek, to investigate the beating and kidnapping of a classmate.

** *Chasing Vermeer* by Blue Balliett... When seemingly unrelated and strange events start to happen and a precious Vermeer painting disappears, eleven-year-olds Petra and Calder combine their talents to solve an international art scandal. Sequel is *The Wright 3*.

* *The Sisters Grimm: The Unusual Suspects* by Michael Buckley... Although filled with anger over her parents' disappearance, eleven-year-old Sabrina Grimm--along with her grandmother, sister, and several fairy-tale characters--tries to discover who has killed her teacher.

Nonfiction

*** *Left for Dead* by Peter Nelson... This is the story of the sinking of the U.S.S. Indianapolis at the end of World War II, the Navy cover-up and unfair court martial of the ship's captain, and how teenager Hunter Scott helped the survivors set the official record straight fifty-five years later.

*** *Flags of Our Fathers* by James Bradley... James Bradley examines the lives of the six young men who raised the American flag over Iwo Jima in February 1945 and were immortalized by a famous photograph--one of whom was Bradley's father. We recommend the edition for young people.

** *Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon* by Catherine Thimmesh... Chronicles the Apollo 11 mission, the spaceflight that landed the first man on Earth's moon on July 20, 1969, emphasizing the contributions and reactions of the thousands of people who made the mission successful.

** *Promises To Keep: How Jackie Robinson Changed America* by Sharon Robinson... A biography of baseball legend Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play in the major leagues, as told by his daughter.

* *Guts: the True Stories Behind Hatchet and the Brian Books* by Gary Paulsen... The author relates incidents in his life and how they inspired parts of his books about the character, Brian Robeson.

** *My Life as a Furry Red Monster : What Being Elmo Has Taught Me About Life, Love, and Laughing Out Loud* by Kevin Clash... The master puppeteer behind the Elmo character on "Sesame Street" shares the lessons he's learned from his famous alter ego, the best friend of children all over the world.

*** *Something Out of Nothing: Marie Curie and Radium* by Carla Killough McClafferty... Chronicles the life of Marie Curie, discussing her childhood in Poland, schooling in France, discovery of the element radium, efforts to create mobile X-ray units during World War I, and eventual death from radium poisoning.

*** *The Power of One : Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine* by Judith Bloom Fradin & Dennis Brindell Fradin... Daisy Bates was a civil rights activist, journalist, and organizer who acted as a mentor to the nine African-American students who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957.

*** *5,000 miles to Freedom : Ellen and William Craft's Flight from Slavery* by Judith Bloom Fradin and Dennis Brindell Fradin... A detailed account of Ellen and William Craft's daring escape from slavery in 1848, and describes the institution of slavery in the South along with the abolitionist movement and the Underground Railroad.

** *A Girl's Life Online* by Katherine Tarbox... The author recalls her experiences as a thirteen-year-old who began an online chatroom relationship with someone who posed as a teenage boy but turned out to be an internet predator. She offers advice and insight on online safety and common sense, and internet predators.

Poetry

** *Shakespeare Bats Cleanup* by Ron Koertge... When a fourteen-year-old baseball player catches mononucleosis, he discovers that keeping a journal and experimenting with poetry not only helps fill the time, it also helps him deal with life, love, and loss.

** *Jump Ball: A Basketball Season in Poems* by Mel Glenn... The story of a high school basketball team's season through a series of poems from the perspective of the players, their friends, families, teachers, and coaches.

** *Girl Coming in For a Landing : A Novel in Poems* by April Halprin Wayland... A collection of poems recounting the ups and downs of one adolescent girl's school year.

* *Troy Thompson's Excellent Poetry Book* by Gary Crew and Craig Smith... (yes, the title really is spelled that way) Sixth grader Troy Thompson and his teacher, Ms. Kranke, face a challenging year of learning about poetry with humor and feeling.

** *If the Shoe Fits : Voices From Cinderella* by Laura Whipple... An illustrated collection of thirty-three poems in which people, animals, and things that play a role in "Cinderella" present their perspectives on the events of the story.

* *The Blood-Hungry Spleen and Other Poems About Our Parts* by Allan Wolf ; illustrated by Greg Clarke... More than three dozen poems describe individual parts of the body and what they do for us and for some parts, such as the face, the verses describe how we communicate nonverbally with other people.

* *Science Verse* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith... A story about a teacher who tells his class that they can hear the poetry of science in everything and a student is struck with a curse where he hears nothing but science verses that sound very much like some well-known poems.

** *Jazmin's Notebook* by Nikki Grimes... Jazmin, an African-American teenager who lives with her older sister in a small Harlem apartment in the 1960s, finds strength in writing poetry and keeping a record of the events in her sometimes difficult life.

** *Middle School Is Worse Than Meatloaf : A Year Told Through Stuff* by Jennifer Holm... Ginny makes a to do list for her seventh grade year, which includes landing a role in the school play, trying to make friends, ignoring her horoscope, and going to see her grandpa Joe in Florida; but she always seems to come up short in accomplishing any of it. This has some poems in it, but the story is told through all of the "stuff" that Ginny collects through the year! It's an interesting alternative format to tell a story.

Science Fiction

*** *Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton... An account of the attempt, through a hair-raising twenty-four hours on a remote jungle island where a billionaire has financed the creation of a genetics lab which recreates dinosaur species from millions of years ago, for a theme park which gets out of control. Mrs. B says this is much bloodier than the movie -- don't read this one right after lunch! Sequels: *Lost World* and *Jurassic Park III*.

*** *Epic* by Conor Kostick... Gamers will LOVE this one! On New Earth, a world in which your status is based on your performance in a global video role-playing game, fourteen-year-old Erik persuades his friends to aid him in some unusual gambits in order to save Erik's father from exile and safeguard the futures of each of their families.

** *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card... Ender, who is the result of government-sponsored genetic experimentation, may be the military genius Earth needs in its war against an alien

enemy. This is the story of Ender's training at the Battle School space station from age six on. *series*

** *House of the Scorpion* by Nancy Farmer... In a future where human clones are regarded as property and not people with any rights, Matt enjoys special status as the youngest and last clone of El Patrón, the 142-year-old drug lord whose corrupt drug empire is nestled between Mexico and the United States. But Matt's special status will only last until his parts are needed, and if he wants to live, he must escape.

* *Hidden Talents* by David Lubar... Thirteen-year-old Martin, a new student at an alternative school for misfits and problem students, falls in with a group of boys with psychic powers and discovers something surprising about himself. Sequel is *True Talents*.

* *Maximum Ride* by James Patterson... After the mutant Erasers abduct the youngest member of their group, the "bird kids," who are the result of genetic experimentation, take off in pursuit and find themselves struggling to understand their own origins and purpose. *series*

** *Diary of Pelly D* by L.J. Adlington... Toni V, a construction worker on a futuristic colony, finds the diary of a teenage girl whose life has been turned upside-down by holocaust-like events, and he begins to question his own beliefs.

** *Life As We Knew It* by Susan Beth Pfeffer... Through journal entries sixteen-year-old Miranda describes her family's struggle to survive after a meteor hits the moon, causing worldwide tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

* *This Place Has No Atmosphere* by Paula Danziger... Aurora loves her life on Earth in the twenty-first century, until she learns that her family is moving to the colony on the moon.

* *Atherton: House of Power* by Patrick Carman... Edgar, an eleven-year-old orphan, finds a book that reveals significant secrets about Atherton, the strictly divided world on which he lives, even as geological changes threaten to shift the power structure that allows an elite few to live off the labor of others.

*** *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld... Tally is faced with a difficult choice when her new friend Shay decides to risk life on the outside rather than submit to the forced operation that turns sixteen year old girls into gorgeous beauties, and realizes that there is a whole new side to the pretty world that she doesn't like. *series*

Sports

** *Heat* by Mike Lupica... Pitching prodigy Michael Arroyo is on the run from social services after being banned from playing Little League baseball because rival coaches doubt he is only twelve years old and he has no parents to offer them proof. Mrs. Ball says this is the best baseball book she's read in a long time.

** *Throwing Like a Girl* by Weezie Kerr Mackie... After moving from Chicago to Dallas in the spring of her sophomore year, fifteen-year-old Ella finds that joining the softball team at her private school not only helps her make friends, it also provides unexpected opportunities to learn and grow.

** *Travel Team* by Mike Lupica... After he is cut from his travel basketball team - the very same team that his father once led to national prominence- twelve-year-old Danny Walker forms his own team of cast-offs that might have a shot at victory.

** *Dairy Queen* by Catherine Gilbert Murdock... After spending her summer running the family farm and training the quarterback for her school's rival football team, sixteen-year-old D.J. decides to go out for the sport herself, not anticipating the reactions of those around her. Sequel is *The Off Season*. Mrs. Vigliano recommends this one!

*** *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher... Intellectually and athletically gifted, TJ, a multiracial, adopted teenager, shuns organized sports and the gung-ho athletes at his high school until he agrees to form a swimming team and recruits some of the school's less popular students.

*** *Crackback* by John Coy... Miles barely recalls when football was fun after being sidelined by a new coach, constantly criticized by his father, and pressured by his best friend to take performance-enhancing drugs.

*** *Keeper* by Mal Peet... South American journalist Paul Faustino begins his interview with World Cup Soccer star El Gato and learns a fantastic story of a young, lonely boy growing up in the middle of a rain forest who wandered upon a mysterious soccer field and an apparition that appeared to him daily.

** *Pinned* by Alfred C. Martino ... Dealing with family problems, girls, and their own competitive natures, high school seniors Ivan Korske and Bobby Zane face each other in the final match of the New Jersey State Wrestling Championship.

* *Football Genius* by Tim Green... Troy, a sixth-grader with an unusual gift for predicting football plays before they occur, attempts to use his ability to help his favorite team, the Atlanta Falcons, but he must first prove himself to the coach and players.

* *The Million Dollar Putt* by Dan Gutman... Assisted by his neighbor, Birdie, blind thirteen-year-old Ed "Bogie" Bogard will win one million dollars if he can sink a ten-foot putt in Hawaii's fifth annual Angus Killick Memorial Tournament.

Young Adult/Realistic

* *The Face on the Milk Carton* by Caroline B. Cooney... A photograph of a missing girl on a milk carton leads Janie on a search for her real identity. *series*

* *Small Steps* by Louis Sachar... Sequel to *Holes*. Three years after being released from Camp Green Lake, Armpit is trying hard to keep his life on track, but when his old pal X-Ray shows up with a tempting plan to make some easy money scalping concert tickets, Armpit reluctantly goes along.

** *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli... Stargirl, a teen who animates quiet Mica High with her colorful personality, suddenly finds herself shunned for her refusal to conform.

** *The Killing Sea* by Richard Lewis... In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in Sumatra, two teenagers, American Sarah and Acehnese Ruslan, meet and continue together their arduous climb inland, where Ruslan hopes to find his father and Sarah seeks a doctor for her brother.

*** *Memoirs of a Teenage Amnesiac* by Gabielle Zevin... After a nasty fall down the front steps of her high school, Naomi realizes that she has no memory of the last four years. This includes her parents' divorce and remarriage, and why the people in her life are her friends, when some of them aren't really decent friends at all! Naomi re-evaluates a lot of her life.

*** *Notes From the Midnight Driver* by Jordan Sonnenblick... After a drunk driving incident in which no one is hurt except his neighbor's garden gnome statue, Alex is assigned to perform community service at a nursing home, where he befriends a cantankerous old man who has some lessons to impart about jazz guitar playing, love, and forgiveness.

** *Red Midnight* by Ben Mikaelson... After soldiers kill his family, twelve-year-old Santiago and his four-year-old sister flee Guatemala in a kayak and try to reach the United States.

** *Homecoming* by Cynthia Voigt... Abandoned first by their father, and then also by their mother in a shopping mall parking lot, four children begin an epic journey on foot following Route 1 from Bridgeport down into Maryland in search of a home.

** *Schooled* by Gordon Korman... Cap lives in isolation with his grandmother, a former hippie; but when she falls from a tree and breaks her hip, Cap is sent to a foster home where he has his first experience in a public school.

*** *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers... While on trial as an accomplice to a murder, sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon records his experiences in prison and in the courtroom in the form of a film script as he tries to come to terms with the course his life has taken.

*** *The Gospel According to Larry* by Janet Tashjian... Seventeen-year-old Josh, a loner-philosopher who wants to make a difference in the world, tries to maintain his secret identity as the author of a web site that is receiving national attention. Sequel is *Vote For*

Larry: Not yet eighteen years old, Josh, a.k.a. Larry, comes out of hiding and returns to public life, this time to run for President as an advocate for issues of concern to youth and to encourage voter turnout. Great for election year reading!

** *All of the Above* by Shelly Pearsall... Five urban middle school students, their teacher, and other community members relate how a school project to build the world's largest tetrahedron affects the lives of everyone involved.