

Recommended Reading 2025

SEVENTH GRADE ENTERING EIGHTH GRADE

***Absolutely Truly* by Heather Vogel Frederick** - Truly Lovejoy is accustomed to change. Her father's military career means they move often. But the kind of change that comes when her father loses an arm in Afghanistan and decides to move the family to middle-of-nowhere Pumpkin Falls to take over the family bookstore is a little more than Truly can handle. ©2014 Grade Level 7-8

***Ali Cross* by James Patterson** - Ali Cross has always looked up to his father, former detective and FBI agent Alex Cross. While solving some of the nation's most challenging crimes, his father always kept his head and did the right thing. Can Ali have the same strength and resolve? ©2010 Grade Level 5-7

***As Brave as You* by Jason Reynolds** - 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! ©2016 Grade Level 6-8. Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book, Schneider Family Book Award

***The Boy in the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible...on Schindler's list* by Leon Leyson** - The only memoir published by a former Schindler's list child, perfectly captures the innocence of a small boy who goes through the unthinkable. Leon Leyson (born Leib Lezjon) was only ten years old when the Nazis invaded Poland and his family was forced to relocate to the Krakow ghetto. ©2015 Grade Level 6-9

***The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba** - a memoir by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer about a young boy in Malawi who, facing a devastating drought, learns to build a windmill from scrap materials using his knowledge gained from library books. ©2009 Grade Level 6-8. CCBC Choices, Junior Library Guild Selections, Outstanding Science Trade Book

***Code Girls the True Story of the American Girls Who Broke Code in WWII* by Lizz Mundy** - More than ten thousand women served as codebreakers during World War II, recruited by the U.S. Army and Navy. While their brothers and boyfriends took up arms, these women moved to the nation's capital to learn the top secret art of code breaking. ©2018 Grade Level 8–Up

***Code Orange* by Caroline B. Cooney** - a New York City teenager, Mitty Blake, who discovers old smallpox scabs in an antique textbook. Mitty's subsequent fear of contracting the disease leads him to be targeted by terrorists who plan to weaponize the virus, forcing him to become a hero in order to save his city. ©2005 Grade Level 7-12

***The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen** - a young Jewish girl, Hannah, is magically transported to 1940s Poland during the Holocaust. Initially apathetic to her family's history, Hannah finds herself thrust into the horrors of the concentration camp, forcing her to confront the past and the lessons it holds. ©1988 Grade Level 6-8

***Endurance Young Readers Edition* by Scott Kelly** - Discover the extreme challenges of long-term spaceflight, the pressures of living in close quarters with people from many countries, the extremely dangerous risk of colliding with space junk and the unnerving feeling of not being able to help if tragedy strikes at home. ©2018 Grade Level 8-9

***Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan** - The novel focuses on Esperanza, the only daughter of wealthy Mexican parents, and the events that occur after her father's murder and her subsequent move to California due to the actions of Esperanza's uncles, Tio Luis and Tio Marco. ©2002 Grade Level 8-9. Jane Addams Children's Book Award for Older Children, California Young Readers Medal Nominee for Middle School/Junior High, Judy Lopez Memorial Award for Children's Literature,, Pura Belpré Award for Narrative

***Father Damien and the Bells* by Arthur & Elizabeth Sheehan** - tells the story of Father Damien, a priest who dedicated his life to caring for lepers on the island of Molokai in the 1800s. ©2004 Grade Level 4–10

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***Flygirl* by Sherri L. Smith** - All Ida Mae Jones wants to do is fly. Her daddy was a pilot, and years after his death she feels closest to him when she's in the air. But as a young black woman in 1940s Louisiana, she knows the sky is off limits to her, until America enters World War II, and the Army forms the WASP-Women Airforce Service Pilots. ©2010 Grade Level 8-9

***Half Moon Summer* by Elaine Vickers** - Two seventh graders, Drew and Mia, forge a powerful friendship while training for a half-marathon. Drew, facing his father's diagnosis, and Mia, dealing with her family's financial struggles, find solace and support in each other's company, discovering that friendship can sustain them through life's toughest challenges. ©2023 Grade Level 5-8. **Whitney Award finalist for Best Middle Grade Novel, Triple Crown Award finalist**

***The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien** - Tells the story of Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit who reluctantly joins a group of dwarves and a wizard on a quest to reclaim their treasure from a dragon. This adventure leads Bilbo on a journey of self-discovery, where he finds courage and resourcefulness he never knew he possessed. ©1937 Grade Level 7-12. **Nominated for the Carnegie Medal, 1938 received the New York Herald Tribune prize for best juvenile fiction**

***I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives* by Caitlin Alifirenka** - It started as an assignment. Everyone in Caitlin's class wrote to an unknown student somewhere in a distant place. ©2015 Grade Level 6-8

***In Honor of Broken Things* by Paul Acampora** Three unlikely friends become partners in heartbreak and hope during a middle school pottery class in this powerful, poignant novel—perfect for fans of Gordon Korman and Lynda Mullaly Hunt. Through art, football, failure, faith, and trust, the friends help one another to piece things back together again. ©2022 Grade level 6-8

***A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story* by Linda Sue Park** - The girl, Nya, is fetching water from a pond that is two hours' walk from her home: she makes two trips to the pond every day. The boy, Salva, becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan, refugees who cover the African continent on foot as they search for their families and for a safe place to stay. ©2011 Grade Level 6-8

***A Night Divided* by Jennifer A. Nielsen** - With the rise of the Berlin Wall, Gerta finds her family suddenly divided. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. Gerta knows it is dangerous to watch the wall, yet she can't help herself. ©2018 Grade Level 7-8

***Okay for Now* by Gary Schmidt** - Follows Doug Swieteck, a struggling teenager, as he navigates a difficult period in his life, including a new school, an abusive father, and his brother's return from the Vietnam War. ©2013 Grade Level 6-8

***Projekt 1065* by Alan Gratz** - a historical fiction novel set during World War II, following Michael O'Shaunessey, a young Irish spy in Nazi Germany. Michael infiltrates the Hitler Youth, using his photographic memory to steal blueprints for a secret Nazi jet plane, Projekt 1065, and help downed Allied airmen. ©2016 Grade Level 5-8. **2016 Parents' Choice Award for Historical Fiction, 2018 Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award**

***Refugee* by Alan Gratz** - Historical novel that braids the stories of three young refugees in three different time periods and settings: 1938 Berlin, 1994 Cuba, and 2015 Syria. The circumstances of all the kids and families are dire, and their journeys are fraught with imminent danger. ©2017 Grade Level 7-8

***Remember Us* by Jacqueline Woodson** - a young girl named Sage who grapples with the changing world around her, particularly the devastating fires burning down her Bushwick neighborhood in the 1970s. ©2023 Grade Level 5-8

***Resistance* by Jennifer Nielsen** - Chaya Lindner is a teenager living in Nazi-occupied Poland. Simply being Jewish places her in danger of being killed or sent to the camps. After her little sister is taken away, her younger brother disappears, and her parents all but give up hope, Chaya is determined to make a difference. ©2018 Grade Level 8-9

***Sunshine* by Jarrett J. Krosoczka** - a graphic novel memoir exploring the author's experiences in high school volunteering at a camp for children with serious illnesses. ©2023 Grade Level 7-9. **2023 Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Nonfiction**

***Terror at Bottle Creek* by Watt Key** - In this gritty, realistic wilderness adventure, thirteen-year-old Cort is caught in a battle against a Gulf Coast hurricane. Cort's father is a local expert on hunting and swamp lore in lower Alabama who has been teaching his son everything he knows. But when a deadly Category 3 storm makes landfall, Cort must unexpectedly put his all skills-and bravery-to the test. ©2016 Grade Level 6-9

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***You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen* by Carole Brown Weatherford** - *I WANT YOU!* says the poster of Uncle Sam. But if you're a young black man in 1940, he doesn't want you in the cockpit of a war plane. Yet you are determined not to let that stop your dream of flying. ©2016 Grade Level 8-10, Jane Addams Children's Book Award for Older Children, California Young Readers Medal Nominee for Middle School/Junior High,, Judy Lopez Memorial Award for Children's Literature, Pura Belpré Award for Narrative

***Where the Water Takes Us* by Alan Barillaro** - the story of Ava, who is sent to stay with her grandparents while her mother is on bed rest during a difficult twin pregnancy. Ava grapples with anxiety and feels a strong sense of impending doom for her mom. ©2023 Grade Level 5-8