

A READING LIST FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

7TH AND 8TH GRADE (5^{ème} et 4^{ème})

Alcott, Louisa May

Little Women

Published in 1868, *Little Women* follows the lives, loves and tribulations of four sisters growing up during the American Civil War. The story is based on Alcott's own childhood experiences. The novel stars Jo, Meg, Beth and Amy and explores the rich nuances of family relationships.

Amos Fortune

Free Man

Based on the true story of a man who was born in Africa, captured when he was fifteen, sold as a slave in America, and freed when he was fifty-nine. Amos Fortune's life illustrates the triumph of a patient and peaceful man who values freedom, responsibility, and the respect each human being owes to others.

Bagnold, Enid

National Velvet

The timeless story of spirited Velvet Brown and her beloved horse : fourteen-year-old Velvet is determined to turn her untamed horse into a champion and personally ride him to victory in the world's greatest steeplechase, the Grand National.

Bradbury, Ray

Fahrenheit 451

A classic novel of censorship and defiance, as resonant today as it was when it was first published nearly 50 years ago.

Christopher, John

The White Mountains

A science fiction saga about the interplanetary Tripods and Masters who threaten all life on earth.

Cisneros, Sandra

The House on Mango Street

The story of Esperanza, a young girl growing up in the Hispanic quarter of Chicago, for whom life is an endless landscape of concrete and rundown tenements. Her story is written in a series of vignettes, as she tries to rise above the hopelessness of her surroundings and come into her own power.

Cleaver, Vera

Where the Lilies Bloom

Mary Call has promised her dying father to keep her brother and sisters together forever on the mountain, and never to take any help from strangers. She is determined to keep her word, no matter what. At first she is sure she can manage as the riches of the mountains will surely keep the family clothed and fed. When winter comes, fast and furious, Mary Call has to learn that the land where the lilies bloom is also a cruel and unforgiving place, and it may take more than a promise to keep her family together.

Collier, James and Christopher

My Brother Sam Is Dead

All his life, Tim Meeker has looked up to his brother Sam, who is smart and brave – and is now a part of the American Revolution. Not everyone in town wants to be a part of the rebellion. Most are supporters of the British – including Tim and Sam's father. With the war soon raging, Tim knows he'll have to make a choice – between the Revolutionaries and the Redcoats . . . and between his brother and his father.

Cooper, James Fenimore

The Last of the Mohicans

The Last of the Mohicans takes place in 1757 during the French and Indian War and recounts the story of an unarmed massacre, the kidnapping of two sisters, and their rescue by Hawk-Eye and his two Mohican friends Uncas and Chingachook.

Cormier, Robert

The Chocolate War

The world of an all-boys Catholic School is turned upside down when freshman Jerry Renault refuses to sell chocolates for the school's annual fundraiser. Jerry challenges the power structure of his school, and becomes a nonconformist hero for some — and a target of hatred for others.

Defoe, Daniel

Robinson Crusoe

Published as a fictional memoir in 1719, *Robinson Crusoe* remains a popular adventure narrative : the story of a man stuck on a deserted island has become familiar to nearly everyone in the Western world.

Dickens, Charles

A Christmas Carol

Ebenezer Scrooge, a mean old miser, is given a second chance to do right after being haunted by three ghosts on Christmas Eve.

Douglas, Frederick

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass is one of the most celebrated writers in the African American literary tradition, and his first autobiography is the one of the most widely read North American slave narratives.

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan

Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

Dr. Watson chronicles some of the more interesting detective cases that he and his good friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, have encountered during their association.

Eckert, Allan W.

Incident at Hawk's Hill

The story of a farm boy living in the prairie country of Manitoba: a strange, silent boy who cannot communicate well with people but has a great affinity for animals.

Forbes, Esther

Johnny Tremain

A story of the American Revolution through the eyes of a boy.

Forester, C.S.

The Horatio Hornblower Series

The Hornblower books were the original series of sea stories set in the Napoleonic Wars, that last great conflict of the Age of Sail. Many young people have read them and dreamed of adventures on the briny deep.

Frost, Robert

Poems

Though his work is principally associated with the life and landscape of New England, Frost is a very modern poet in his adherence to language as it is actually spoken, in the psychological complexity of his portraits, and in the degree to which his work is infused with layers of ambiguity and irony.

George, Jean Craighead

Julie of the Wolves

This novel of adventure and suspense presents the clash between traditional Inuit values and those of the modern westernized world. When Julie decides that running away is her only alternative to a frightening situation, she becomes lost in the frozen Arctic tundra. Her knowledge of traditional Inuit ways and her understanding of the starkness and beauty of nature enable her to survive with a wolf pack.

Hamilton, Virginia

M.C. Higgins the Great

M.C. dreams of escape for himself and his family. One day, two strangers are making their way toward Sarah's Mountain. One has the ability to make M.C.'s mother famous, and the other has a freedom that M.C. has never even considered...

Hesse, Karen

Out of the Dust

Fifteen-year-old Billie Jo has a great deal to forgive -- her father for causing the accident that killed her mother; her mother for leaving when Billie Jo needed her most; and herself for being the cause of her own sorrow. In a series of poems, Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the dust bowl years of the Depression.

Hilton, James

Goodbye, Mr. Chips

A novel about an educator who has shepherded generations from boyhood to manhood. It is also about an old world being left behind and a new, tumultuous yet exciting one taking its place.

Hinton, S.E.

The Outsiders

A novel about teenage gangs and alienated youth in Tulsa during the 1960's that portrays a dark adolescent world.

Hunt, Irene

Across Five Aprils

Shots fired far away spark a civil war that will have painful repercussions for an Illinois family. This well-researched historical tale novel shows how war affects ordinary people and changes their lives forever.

Hunter, Mollie

A Stranger Came Ashore

Robbie, a twelve year-old boy, becomes convinced that the stranger befriended by his family is one of the Selkie Folk and tries to get help against his magical powers from the local wizard.

Keith, Harold

Rifles for Watie

The story of a lesser known part of the Civil War, the Western campaign.

Keller, Helen

Story of My Life

Helen Keller was both blind and deaf ; this chronicle describes the transformation of Helen's life brought about by the arrival of Anne Sullivan, her teacher and mentor, when she succeeded in conveying to Helen the "mystery of language."

Kipling, Rudyard

Kim

A panoramic celebration of India, presenting a magnificent picture of its landscapes, both urban and rural, and a fascinating array of native characters who, for the most part, are warm, generous and tolerant. An adventure story of the British Empire.

LeGuin, Ursula K.

A Wizard of Earthsea

The adventures of a budding young wizard.

L'Engle, Madeleine

A Wrinkle in Time

Meg Murry, her little brother Charles, and their mother are having a midnight snack on a dark and stormy night when an unearthly stranger appears at their door, claiming that she has been blown off course. She tells them that there is such a thing as a "tesseract," which actually is a wrinkle in time. The story tells of the adventures of Meg, Charles, and Calvin O'Keefe as they search for Meg's father, a scientist who disappeared while trying to solve the tesseract issue.

Lester, Julius

To Be a Slave

This work is a collection of actual interviews with former slaves. It covers every aspect of the life of a slave, from their capture in Africa, their trip through the Middle Passage, and then their life of servitude in their new "home."

London, Jack

The Call of the Wild

The mythopoetic story of Buck, a sledge dog in the Klondike, and his journey of transformation.

Lowry, Lois

Number the Stars

Ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen and her best friend Ellen Rosen often think of life before the war. It's now 1943 and their life in Copenhagen is filled with school, food shortages, and the Nazi soldiers marching through town. When the Jews of Denmark are "relocated," Ellen moves in with the Johansens and pretends to be one of the family. Soon Annemarie is asked to go on a dangerous mission to save Ellen's life.

Lowry, Lois

The Giver

Given his lifetime assignment at the Ceremony of Twelve, Jonas becomes the receiver of memories shared by only one other in his community and discovers the terrible truth about the society in which he lives.

Malory, Sir Thomas

Le Morte d'Arthur

This unique and splendid version of the Arthurian legend tells an immortal story of love, adventure, chivalry, treachery, and death.

Mazer, Harry

The Last Mission

Fifteen-year-old Jack Raab is eager to fight Hitler when he enlists in the Air Corps during World War II, but seeing his best friend killed when their plane is shot down makes him wonder if there is any meaning to all the deaths.

McBride, James

The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother

James Mc Bride writes of the inner confusions he felt as a black child of a white mother and of the love and faith with which his mother surrounded their large family. The result is a powerful portrait of growing up, a meditation on race and identity, and a poignant, beautifully crafted hymn from a son to his mother.

McCaffrey, Anne

Dragonsong

The first volume in the series, is the enchanting tale of how Menolly of Half Circle Hold became Pern's first female Harper, and rediscovered the legendary fire lizards who helped to save her world.

O'Dell, Scott

Island of the Blue Dolphin

A story of survival, based upon the true story of an American Indian girl who was left upon an abandoned island near the coast of Southern California. She lived there for 18 years, alone. While she waited for rescue, she kept herself alive by building shelter, finding food, and fighting her enemies—the wild dogs.

O'Hara, Mary

My Friend Flicka

No matter how hard he tries, 12-year-old Ken McLaughlan cannot meet the expectations of his father, a Wyoming rancher. His luck begins to change when he is given a rambunctious horse named Flicka.

Paterson, Katherine

Jacob Have I Loved

The story of a young girl, Louise, who struggles to find her way out of the shadow of her beautiful and talented twin sister Caroline, on an isolated and conservative Methodist Island on the Chesapeake Bay.

Paulsen, Gary

Hatchet

Haunted by his parents' divorce and the secret that caused it, thirteen-year-old Brian Robeson is the sole survivor of a plane crash, with only the clothes he has on and a hatchet to help him shape a life for himself in the wilderness.

Peck, Robert Newton

A Day No Pigs Would Die

A semi-autobiographical tale of a boy's struggle with adolescence and the responsibility of manhood.

Pyle, Howard

The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood

The author takes you back to Merry Olde England and transports you through the language and descriptions of the land, so that you feel part of that magical era. The love Robin Hood had for his men and for his King, and for Sherwood Forrest itself, will reach into your soul.

Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan

The Yearling

Set in the wild and beautiful interior of the Florida scrublands in the late 1800s, *The Yearling* follows one year in the life of young Jody Baxter and the pet he has so desperately longed for, a fawn he names Flag.

Rawls, Wilson

Where the Red Fern Grows

Author Wilson Rawls spent his boyhood much like the character of this book, Billy Colman, roaming the Ozarks of northeastern Oklahoma with his bluetick hound.

Schaefer, Jack

Shane

Joe and Marion Starrett are farmers, one family in a group of homesteaders who have fenced off and built a home on the range. As to be expected, the cattle barons who, for years, have used the wide open plains to feed their herd are not too happy about those fences.

Scott, Sir Walter

Ivanhoe

The fortunes of the son of a noble Saxon family in Norman England as he woos his lady, disobeys his

father, and is loved by another.

Shelley, Mary

Frankenstein

The novel reflects many elements of the Romantic period : the primacy of feeling, the importance of nature, the individual and his quest, the supernatural and the exotic, and solitude.

Smith, Betty

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

A tale of an immigrant family.

Speare, Elizabeth George

The Sign of the Beaver

Until the day his father returns to their cabin in the Maine wilderness, 12-year-old Matt must try to survive on his own. During an attack by swarming bees, Matt is astonished when he's rescued by an Indian chief and his grandson, Attean. As the boys come to know each other, many months pass without a sign of Matt's family. Then Attean asks Matt to join the Beaver tribe.

Sperry, Armstrong

Call It Courage

A Polynesian legend, the story of a young boy, named Mafatu, and his struggle for independence, courage, recognition and inclusion.

Steinbeck, John

The Red Pony

The Red Pony is divided into four stories, which all center on a boy named Jody; the four together show him in a critical time of his childhood.

The Pearl

Stevenson, Robert Louis

Treasure Island

An adventure novel, a thrilling tale of “buccaneers and buried gold.”

Taylor, Mildred D.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

The year is 1933 in the heart of the depression. Cassie Logan and her family live in rural Mississippi. Although Cassie and her brothers attend a school for black children, she is unaware of the intense racial hatred and prejudice that exists in the community. As the story unfolds, Cassie is surprised and angered to learn that many white people think she and other black people are inferior. She learns to fear the violence and slowly becomes aware of how high a price she and her family must pay to fight injustice – and to hold on to not only their land but the independence that it represents.

Taylor, Theodore

The Cay

When the freighter on which they are traveling is torpedoed by a German submarine during World War II, an adolescent white boy, blinded by a blow on the head, and an old West Indian sailor are stranded on a tiny Caribbean island.

Tolkien, J.R.R.

The Hobbit

Set in a time “Between the Dawn of Færie and the Dominion of Men”, *The Hobbit* follows the quest of home-loving hobbit Bilbo Baggins to win a share of the treasure guarded by the dragon, Smaug. Bilbo’s journey takes him from light-hearted, rural surroundings into darker, deeper territory.

Twain, Mark***The Adventures of Tom Sawyer***

Enjoy the story of Tom Sawyer as a mischievous young boy carries on under the watchful eye of his Aunt Polly. The novel takes the reader along on a series of entertaining adventures and pranks while Tom's youthful romance with his sweetheart Becky Thatcher blooms in the background.

Washington, Irving***The Legend of Sleepy Hollow***

Probably the most well-known American ghost story.

Webster, Jean***Daddy Long Legs***

Judy is a rambunctious orphan whose high spirits get her through many trials ; by the end she turns out a mature (yet energetic) young woman who gets her happy ending.

Wells, H.G.***War of the Worlds***

Written in response to several historical events, the most important being the unification and militarization of Germany.

Wilder, Thornton***The Bridge of San Luis Rey***

On July 20, 1714, "the finest bridge in all Peru" collapses and five people die. Brother Juniper, a Franciscan missionary, happens to witness the tragedy, and as a result, he asks the central question of the novel: "Why did this happen to those five?" He sets out to explore the lives of the five victims, and to understand why they died. Ironically, his quest will lead to his own death.

Yep, Laurence***Dragonwings***

Chinese tradition and culture come vividly to life as father and son face the challenges of living in America. They experience discrimination, but also make valued friends. The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire bring destruction but new opportunities for the boy and his father.

Zindel, Paul***The Pigman***

For sophomores John and Lorraine, the world feels meaningless; to pass the time, they play pranks on unsuspecting people. It's during one of these pranks that they meet the "Pigman"—a fat, balding old man with a zany smile plastered on his face. John and Lorraine soon find that they're caught up in Mr. Pignati's zest for life. In fact, they become so involved that they begin to destroy the only corner of the world that's ever mattered to them.

... Without forgetting romantic poets such as William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats.