

Rising 7th Grade Summer Reading List 2017

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Places We Have Been: Rome & the Middle Ages

1. *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by AVI (2004; Newbery Medal). Thirteen-year-old Crispin, declared a “wolf’s head” for a crime he did not commit and therefore subject to death, escapes the harsh injustices of feudalism, fleeing across the country with the guidance of a traveling juggler. Also read the sequels *Crispin: At the Edge of the World* and *Crispin: The End of Time*.
2. *Fire, Bed, and Bone* by Henrietta Brandford (1998). In 1381, on the verge of a peasant revolt, an old and observant hunting dog describes the injustices of feudalism while living with her kind, but poor serf family arrested for attending revolutionary rallies.
3. *The Forestwife Trilogy* by Jill Tomlinson (2003-). Maid Marion forms the center of this Sherwood Forest trilogy, following the heroine from her escape from her manor to her adventures with Robin Hood in a setting that includes magical healers, battles against tyranny, and emerging self-sufficiency. Also read *The Outlaws of Sherwood* by Robin McKinley (1988).
4. *Merlin: The Lost Years* by T. A. Barron (1996). A boy, who has no idea who he is or a sense of his past, is tossed by the waves onto a beach in Wales, where he soon recaptures his name through a series of adventures. Also read other books in this series or the author’s new work, *Atlantis Rising*.
5. *Catherine, Called Birdy* by Karen Cushman (1994; Newbery Honor). Fourteen-year-old Catherine does not want to become a lady; she does not want to be married off. She wants, rather, to be a painter, a Crusader, a peddler, a wart charmer. In Medieval England, however, her wishes are unimportant. How can a headstrong girl find her way? Also read *The Midwife’s Apprentice* and *Matilda Bone* by the same author.
6. *The Seeing Stone* by Kevin Crossley-Holland (2010). Given an ancient obsidian relic by his father’s friend Merlin, Arthur de Caldicot, who now explores visions occurring hundreds of years in the past, wonders how his own life can intertwine with that of his namesake, King Arthur. Also read the other books in the trilogy: *At the Crossing Places* and *King of the Middle March*.

7. *The Sign of the Chrysanthemum* by Katherine Paterson (1974). A teen-age boy, searching for his samurai father in 12th-century feudal Kyoto, comes to know himself better as he observes, as a sword maker's apprentice, political unrest and the social ills playing out before him. Also read *Of Nightingale's that Weep* and *Bridge to Terabithia* (Newbery Medal) by the same author.
8. *Tiger, Tiger* by Lynn Reid Banks (1972). Two tiger cubs are taken from the jungle to Rome, one to serve as a defanged, pampered pet to Caesar's daughter, Aurelia, the other as man-eating entertainment in the Colosseum. What happens when a slip of judgment in a moment of play allows Boots to escape? And what is the outcome for Aurelia's beloved slave and tiger tamer, Julius?
9. *The White Stag* by Kate Seredy (1937; Newbery Medal). Recounting the journey of the Huns and Magyars from the Tomb of Nimrod to the Hungarian plains, author Seredy creates the background where the story of Attila will ultimately unfold. "On a summer night in the year 408, a flaming red comet appeared over Europe striking terror into the hearts of all who saw it."
10. *A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver* by E.L. Konigsberg (1973). Eleanor of Aquitaine's exciting life in 12th century France and England, told while she is waiting for her husband, King Henry II, to join her in heaven.

Places We Have Been: Business & Geology

1. *Journey to the Center of the Earth* by Jules Verne (1863). Now that you know so much about the Earth's layers, could you write a better-imagined book? Read and see how a 19th-century science enthusiast imagines a descent into an extinct Icelandic volcano.
2. *Millions* by Frank Cottrell Boyce (2004). A tale, honoring the generosity of St. Francis of Assisi, finds two brothers—one a materialist accountant, the other spiritually driven—figuring out how, in 17 days, to spend a bag of bills that tumbled from the sky.
3. *Moonpenny Island* by Tricia Springstubb (2015). When a geologist and his idiosyncratic daughter arrive on a remote island known mainly for its limestone quarries, Flor, who has just lost her best friend to the mainland, begins to discover new interests and insights through the excavation of prehistoric trilobites.

4. *The Pushcart War* by Jean Merrill (1964). Reissued on its 50th anniversary, this “David & Goliath” parable pits pushcart peddlers against the truck drivers navigating congested city streets. How do wars start, the author posits? In this case, conflict begins with a cartful of daffodils, or something large trampling something considerably smaller.
5. *Saving Kabul Corner* by N. H. Senzai (2015). Twelve-year-old Laila, freshly arrived from Afghanistan, holds to traditional Pashtun ways, while her cousin, Ariana, raised locally, is viewed as a headstrong tomboy. The two must unite, however, to solve a feud of rival groceries in Fremont, California, a feud going back to the homeland. Dynamic views into small family-run businesses and the children employed to keep things going.
6. *Trapped: How the World Rescued 33 Miners from 2,000 Feet Below the Chilean Desert* by Marc Aronson (2011). When over 700,000 tons of rock seal miners underground in a preventable accident, world concern and help enter the scene to save a starving, injured group who show extraordinary stamina and brotherhood, which likely worked with surface efforts to save them all. Also read *The Griffin and the Dinosaur: How Adrienne Mayor Discovered a Fascinating Link Between Myth and Science* by the same author.
7. *The Great Turkey Walk* by Kathleen Karr (1998). It is 1860, the year a somewhat naïve 15-year-old boy, Simon (who has just completed 3rd grade for the fourth time) decides he will earn money by herding 1,000 turkeys from Missouri to Denver, hoping to sell the fowl at a profit. Bankrolled his teacher, who believes there are more smarts on this earth than “book smarts,” Simon embarks with a drover, dog, four mules, and a wagonload of confidence and shelled corn.

Truth Be Told: Historical Fiction

1. *Chasing Orion* by Kathryn Lasky (2010). In a hot Indiana summer in 1952, children whose parents feared the polio outbreak are asked to stay indoors to protect them from the disease. But when Georgie’s family moves next door to a girl recovering from polio, a girl trapped in an iron lung, Georgie receives a larger education than she anticipated. For a book on a similar theme, read *The Giant Slayer* by Ian Lawrence.
2. *Echo: A Novel* by Pam Muñoz Ryan (2015). During WWII, three children— Friedrich of

- Germany, Mike of Pennsylvania, and Ivy of California—are united by a harmonica, their passion for music, and the prophecy of a Black Forest tale. While history explored includes the League of German Girls, Japanese internment camps, and segregation of Hispanic students in Orange County, the author deftly weaves a cohesive story.
3. *The Kite Fighters* by Linda Sue Park (2002). In 15th-century Korea two brothers discover a keen fascination with kites. Kee-sup can craft a kite of unequalled strength and beauty, while Young-sup can seemingly control the wind itself. When they are asked by a king to enter a competition, they must break with tradition to guarantee success.
 4. *Secrets of the Terra-cotta Soldier* by Vinson/Ying Chang Compestine (2014). Thirteen-year-old Ming, surviving the fear and hunger of Maoist China, becomes involved in the unearthing of Emperor Qin's terra-cotta soldiers, as he seeks to save his archeologist "intellectual" father from a labor camp. Illuminating photographs juxtapose the building of the Great Wall during Mongol raids with the 1970s Cultural Revolution.
 5. *The War that Saved My Life* by Kimberly Bradley (2015). A war can be a terrible thing, but can also lead to unexpected good, as a disabled girl, Ada, who has never been outside her tiny apartment, discovers when she leaves London with her young brother to live with a complete stranger.

Games We Play: Baseball, Boxing, Running, Quiz Shows

1. *Athlete vs. Mathlete* by W.C. Mack (2013). Twin boys—one who lights up the scoreboards and the other the blackboards—stay on their own turf until Russell, an enthusiastic participant in "The Masters of the Mind" team—is recruited for basketball. How do the brothers handle the trespass, peer pressure, and sibling rivalry?
2. *Becoming Joe DiMaggio* by Maria Testa (2002). A boy and his immigrant grandfather bond through in the 1930s and 1940s (WWII), while Joseph's father is in jail, through baseball games listened to on the radio, a shared Italian heritage, and dreams to become "the greatest."
3. *Bird in a Box* by Andrea Davis Pinkney (2011). In a small upstate New York town during the Great Depression, three children—Hibernia, Willie, and Otis—find solace in the exciting boxing matches of Joe Lewis. Told from three narrative

perspectives, the lives of each child are fully realized with rich first-person detail and immediacy.

4. *The Boy Who Saved Baseball* by John Ritter (2003). The Dillontown baseball team must win the next game if they wish to hold onto their playing field, threatened by developers in rural California—enter a mysterious boy and potential savior, Cruz de la Cruz, who arrives on horseback, claims to know how to hit, and helps lure famed player Dante del Gata to coach (also read Ritter's *Over the Wall* and just released *Fenway Fever*).
5. *Crash* by Jerry Spinelli (1996). A bit of a spoof on the "typical jock," this work contrasts a wise and gentle Quaker boy with a likable, but shallow sports fanatic, one who thinks anyone not interested in football has to be "weird"; probing questions about competition, pacifism, and growing away from one stance into a more sensitive "other".
6. *A Diamond in the Desert* by Kathryn Fitzmaurice (2012). Twelve-year-old Tetsu, who loves baseball, finds he must choose between his beloved sport and other responsibilities when his family, which includes an ailing sister, is transported to a Japanese internment camp in the Arizona desert during WWII.
7. *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* by Chris Grabenstein (2013). When an unusual creator of board games returns to his hometown to build a library, he invites 12 lucky 7th graders to spend the night and figure out how to escape within 24 hours. Great references to literature, the Dewey Decimal system, and word puzzles in the problem solver's paradise. Also read the sequel, *The Island of Dr. Libris* (2015).
8. *A View from Saturday* by E. L. Konigsburg (1998—Newbery Award). Sixth grade Academic "quiz" Bowl contestants at Epiphany Middle School comprise complex and intellectual leads in a book covering sea turtles, retirement homes, a genius dog, and all topics in between. Also read *Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth* by the same author.

Mysteries to Solve

1. *Absolutely Truly: A Pumpkin Falls Mystery* by Heather Vogel Frederick (2014). Discovering an undelivered letter in an autographed copy of *Charlotte's Web* in her family's threatened bookstore, Truly Lovejoy embarks on a journey to

- locate the letter's author, make new friends in her new town of Pumpkin Falls, and understand her father's difficulties as he moves forward following injury in Afghanistan.
2. *The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin (1978). This mystery involves 16 remarkable characters invited to the reading of Samuel Westing's will. They could become millionaires - it all depends on how they play his tricky and dangerous Westing Game, in a puzzle-knotted and word-twisting plot filled with humor and suspense. Newbery Medal winner
 3. *Holes* by Louis Sachar (1998). Due to a curse on his family, Stanley Yelnatis is sent to a hellish juvenile correction camp in Texas where is forced to dig for treasure and finds his first real friend. Newbery Medal winner.
 4. *Eddie Red Undercover: Mystery in Mayan Mexico* by Marcia Wells (2015). The NYPD's youngest crime-solving hero, Eddie (our African-American protagonist from "Mystery on Museum Mile" fame), now delves into the riddle of his father, accused of stealing an ancient mask. As before, Eddie's photographic memory and artistic gifts come in handy as he collaborates with Julia, who sets him straight on Mexican stereotypes.
 5. *The Eyes of the Amaryllis* by Natalie Babbitt (1986). When Jenny visits her widowed grandmother, she attempts to unravel the mystery of her grandfather, who perished during a hurricane at sea on the brig *Amaryllis* over 30 years ago. Also read *Tuck Everlasting* and *Goody Hall*.
 6. *The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Dowd (2007). When prickly friends, Ted and Kat, wait for their cousin to exit a Ferris wheel, he vanishes into thin air. Sleuthing the streets of London for clues—as police, too, bumble about—Kat soon admires Ted's meticulous, previously annoying methods as he approaches the world in his own unique way.
 7. *The Ruby in the Smoke* by Philip Pullman (1988). Searching the Victorian underworld for the mystery to her father's death, 16-year-old Sally Lockhart also seeks the meaning to the phrase "Beware the seven blessings." Part of a series.
 8. *Pieces and Players* by Blue Balliett (2015). A Vermeer and Manet have vanished, along with 11 other paintings, from one of the most buttoned-up museums in the world, and Petra, Calder, and Tommy must get to the bottom of things

with two new assistants: Zoomy and Early, a lover of words. If you haven't read this author's previous works, here they are: *Chasing Vermeer*, *The Wright 3*, and *The Calder Game*.

9. *Rain, Reign* by Ann M. Martin (2014). Obsessed with homonyms and distinguished with high-functioning Asperger's, Rose—cared for by an impatient father and a more compassionate Uncle Weldon—must ferret out the riddle of her dog's disappearance when a superstorm comes through town. Also read *Rules* by Cynthia Lord.

10. *Under the Egg* by Laura Marx Fitzgerald (2014). When she accidentally spills rubbing alcohol on her deceased grandfather's painting, Theodora believes she has found a Renaissance masterpiece underneath. Her grandfather, however, was a security guard at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. How does Theodora protect him and also discover the truth? She could certainly use the money; grandfather only left her family \$463.

11. *Time out of Time* by Maureen Doyle McQuerry (2015). Timothy James, his sister Sarah, and a friend race against both time and evil in their quest to find The Four Treasures of the Market. Hindering and assisting them are well-drawn characters from Scottish myth and folklore. A good book for mystery lovers and accomplished code-breakers.

Fantasy

1. *The Castle Behind the Thorns* by Merrie Haskell (2014). Finding himself inexplicably surrounded by a cage of impenetrable brambles, Sand must access the local forge and castle saints to craft tools and to survive. Soon, he discovers the secrets of heir Perrotte, who knows her home's dark history and can help them both escape.

2. *The Conch Bearer* by Chitra Divakaruni (2004). In a run-down shack in the tired Indian neighborhood he calls home, a 12-year-old boy is given the care of a mystical conch, which he must return to its home many miles away (also read the sequels: *The Mirror of Fire and Dreaming* and *Shadowland*).

3. *The Illyrian Adventure* by Lloyd Alexander (2000). In the late 19th century, a fearless 16-year-old orphan "who has the digestive talents of a goat and the mind of a chess-master" researches the ancient legend of Illyria with her guardian and participates in a dangerous rebellion. Part of the Vesper Holly Series. Also read *The Rope Trick* by the same author.

4. *The Storm Makers* by Jennifer E. Smith (2013). Gifted with the power to control the weather, 12-year-old twins, Ruby and Simon, must adjust to life on a Wisconsin farm, where a 100-year drought is killing the local crops
5. *A Tale of Time City* by Diana Wynne-Jones (1987). In London, in 1939, Vivian, an evacuee from the London Blitz, is kidnapped into a world outside the clutches of history. To return, Vivian must help locate The Time Lady and travel through various historical periods to assure her own return to Twenty Century.
6. *Time out of Time* by Maureen Doyle McQuerry (2015). Timothy James, his sister Sarah, and a friend race against both time and evil in their quest to find The Four Treasures of the Market. Hindering and assisting them are well-drawn characters from Scottish myth and folklore. A good book for mystery lovers and accomplished code-breakers.

I Didn't Think I Would End up Here

1. *Aleutian Sparrow* by Karen Hesse (2003). Removed from the Aleutian Islands for their own "protection" after the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, the Aleuts are relocated from their windswept and barren islands to the forested terrain of Southeast Alaska—where they must develop new skills to survive. Young Vera tells their story.
2. *Ice Dogs* by Terry Johnson (2014). When Victoria, a 14-year-old dogsled racer, becomes lost on a routine outing, she must, with the help of her dogs and a mysterious boy, Chris, brave a hostile wilderness with minimal supplies and maximum setbacks.
3. *Zane and the Hurricane* by Rodman Philbrick (2014). On vacation, 12-year-old Zane Dupree and his dog find themselves separated from family as they endure the devastating weather conditions of Katrina. Exemplary researcher, Philbrick, brings this moment to life as Zane joins an old African-American musician and a small girl. Also read *Freak the Mighty* and *Young Man and the Sea* by the same author.

Answers to Everything--Almost

1. *A Black Hole is Not a Black Hole* by Carolyn Cinami DeChristofano (2012). Animated, humorous, and accessible examples, illustrated with paintings, charts, and

photography, are used to illustrate this baffling phenomenon in the universe. And didn't you always want to know more about the event horizon, lumpy matter, and spaghettification?

2. *Building Big* by David Macaulay (2013). Bridges, skyscrapers, domes, and dams are just some of the monumental structures described in this well-illustrated book crediting not just designers, but also sometimes the lowly creatures that inspired them—shipworms, for instance, “the scourge of the Royal Navy,” instructed engineers on efficient underwater tunnels. Also read *Built to Last*, *Cathedral* and *Underground* by the same author.
3. *Can a Bee Sting?* Compiled by Gemma Elwin Harris (2012). Asking scientists, philosophers, and writers to answer questions of curious children, Harris assembled vibrant summaries seasoned with speculation, humor, and reverence for short explanations. Questions include: “Where Does the Wind Come From?” “Are We All Related?” “Are Cows Polluting the Air?” and “Did Alexander the Great Like Frogs?” Specialists, frequently referencing men and women of note, include author Philip Pullman, linguist Noam Chomsky, and London zookeeper Daniel Simmonds.
4. *The Great Molasses Flood: Boston 1919* by Deborah Kops (2015). We hear of oil tankers exploding, but a tanker filled with molasses? Documenting one of the strangest accidents in history, Kops records hazards of flying metal, collapsing buildings, and the sweet-smelling sludge that created a challenging clean-up with the city's North End.
5. *Into the Unknown* by Stewart Ross (2011). Describing and drawing the vehicles used by explorers over time through “land, sea, and air,” Ross and illustrator Stephen Biesty ply the frozen north, the stratosphere, and even the Mariana Trench. Glorious fold-outs and a nice balance of charts, artwork, captions, and text.

[Short, Satisfying Reads (under 125 pages)]

Ghost in the Noonday Sun by Sid Fleischman *Guts* by Gary Paulsen *The Green Book* by Jill Patton Walsh *Soup* by Richard Newton Peck

The Janitor by Andrew Clements *The Midnight Inn* by Paul Fleischman
Mudshark by Gary Paulsen *Graven Images* by Paul Fleischman *Twenty and Ten*
by Claire Huchet Bishop *Journey to Jo'Burg* by Beverly Naidoo *Half-a-Moon Inn*
by Paul Fleischman

Weasel by Cynthia deFelice *Stone-Faced Boy* by Paula Fox *Keeper of the Doves*
by Betsy Byars

Field of Dogs by Katherine Paterson *Meiko and the Fifth Treasure* by E. Coerr
On My Honor by Marion Dane Bauer

A Week in the Woods by Andrew Clements *Regarding the Fountain* by Kate Klise
Fame Glory in Freedom Georgia Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes

Missing May by Cynthia Rylant *A Fine White Dust* by Cynthia Rylant *Summer of
the Swans* by Betsy Byars *Mississippi Bridge* by Virginia Hamilton

Red Dirt Jessie by Anna Myers *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck *The Snow Goose*
Paul Gallico/Angela Barrett