

## 2023 Summer Reading Recommendations

## Is this a "required reading" list?

This is a list of suggested, not required, titles for middle school students. We request that you read at least two books this summer to support the growth of your skills.

Reading expands your mind and takes you on adventures you might not otherwise experience. It can be a window to help you gain new ideas and learn about others, or a mirror to help you understand yourself and your experiences. As always, if a book doesn't feel "just right" for you, return it and find another.

## What happens to my reading skills if I don't read in the summer?

When you read books on topics of interest or in genres you enjoy, you naturally tend to read more. Reading during the summer decreases "summer reading loss", which is when your reading abilities decline.

Reading more often helps you become a better reader! Keep reading!

## Can I get these books in ebook or audiobook format?

Click on a book cover to hyperlink to *Sora*, Overdrive's ebook and audiobook platform for schools. Students can use this website/app to check out free ebooks and audiobooks on computers, tablets, and smartphones. Information on how to use this website/app can be found on TCMS Library's Summer Reading webpage (see below).

## Are there other resources for summer learning?



TCMS Library's Summer Reading webpage has information about other ebook and audiobook resources.

(https://libquides.monroe.edu/TCMSSummerReading)



Brighton Memorial Library's events page provides more information about summer programming at the public library. (https://www.brightonlibrary.org/events)

## Curated by:

**Katie Lambert**, TCMS Library Media Specialist **Deena Viviani**, BML Programming, Circulation, and Young Adult Services Librarian **Caitlyn Stahovic-Barnes**, BML Children's Librarian



# ADVENTURE/SPORT



## **96 Miles**, by J.L. Esplin

During a massive blackout in rural Nevada, two brothers struggle to cross the desert for help without their self-reliance-obsessed father or enough water.





## **Swim Team**, by Johnnie Christmas

Bree can't wait for her first day at her new middle school, Enith Brigitha, home to the Mighty Manatees--until she's stuck with the only elective that fits her schedule, the dreaded Swim 101.



## **Two Degrees**, by Alan Gratz

When three children endure separate climate change disasters, they emerge from their experiences committed to changing the world.



## Falling Short, by Ernesto Cisneros

Best friends Isaac and Marco--one athletically gifted and one academically gifted-have more in common than they realize when their goals intersect, forcing them to find a way to support each other so they don't fall short.





**Becoming Muhammad Ali**, by James Patterson and Kwame Alexander

A biographical novel tells the story of Cassius Clay, the determined boy who would one day become Muhammad Ali, one of the greatest boxers of all time.





## The Canyon's Edge, by Dusti Bowling

A year after the death of her mother in a restaurant shooting, Nora is left struggling to stay alive when a climbing trip with her father goes terribly wrong.



## Fast Pitch, by Nic Stone

Shenice Lockwood, captain of the Fulton Firebirds, is hyper-focused when she steps up to the plate, but life has thrown some curveballs her way.



## Air, by Monica Roe

Independent twelve-and-a-half year old Emelyn Ethrige lives with her father in South Carolina, dreams of wheelchair motocross, and makes custom chair bags trying to earn enough money to buy a serious set of wheels.



## **Concealed**, by Christina Diaz Gonzalez

Katrina and her parents are part of the Witness Protection Program. Every new discovery reveals that Katrina's entire life has been built around secrets covered up with lies.



## **Checked**, by Cynthia Kadohata

To help his dog through cancer treatment, Conor gives up hockey and finds himself considering who he is without the sport that has defined him, and connecting more with his family and best friend.













## **Sweet and Sour**, by Debbi Michiko Florence

Eleven-year-old Mai has been contemplating revenge on her former best friend Zach ever since he humiliated her two years ago, but while spending time together for the summer, Mai has noticed a change in Zach, forcing her to decide if she can forgive him, even if she can never forget.





Your Heart, My Sky: love in a time of hunger, by Margarita Engle In Cuba's "special period in times of peace" of 1991, Liana and Amado find love after their severe hunger gives both courage to risk government retribution by skipping a summer of labor to seek food. Told in their two voices plus that of the stray dog that brought them together.

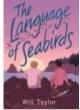




## **Star-Crossed**, by Barbara Dee

When Mattie is cast as Romeo in an eighth-grade play, she is confused to find herself increasingly attracted to Gemma, a new classmate who is playing Juliet.





## The Language of Seabirds, by Will Taylor

Jeremy is not excited about the prospect of spending the summer with his dad and his uncle in a seaside cabin in Oregon. It's the first summer after his parents' divorce, and he hasn't exactly been seeking alone time with his dad. He doesn't have a choice, though, so he goes . . . and on his first day takes a walk on the beach and finds himself intrigued by a boy his age running by.







Snap's town has a witch. At least, that's the rumor. In reality, Jacks is just a Crocswearing, internet-savvy old lady who sells the skeletons of roadkill online. It's creepy, sure, but Snap thinks it's kind of cool, too. Snap needs a favor from this old woman, though, so she begins helping Jacks with her strange work. Snap gets to know her and realizes that Jacks may in fact have real magic--and an unlikely connection to Snap's family's past.



## Danny Constantino's First (and Maybe Last?) Date,

by Paul Acampora

Between going to the middle school dance with his celebrity crush and watching his mom campaign to be the next town mayor, Danny has a lot to learn about life in the spotlight.

## S/ADVERSITY OVERCOMING BARRIER



























## **How to Find What You're Not Looking For**, by Veera Hiranandani

Middle schooler Ariel Goldberg must find her own voice and define her own beliefs after her big sister elopes with a young man from India following the Supreme Court decision that strikes down laws banning interracial marriage.

## **Starfish**, by Lisa Fipps

Bullied and shamed her whole life for being fat, twelve-year-old Ellie finally gains the confidence to stand up for herself, with the help of some wonderful new allies.

## **Genesis Begins Again**, by Alicia D. Williams

Thirteen-year-old Genesis tries again and again to lighten her black skin, thinking it is the root of her family's troubles, before discovering reasons to love herself as is.

## King and the Dragonflies, by Kacen Callender

In a small but turbulent Louisiana town, one boy's grief takes him beyond the bayous of his backyard, to learn that there is no right way to be yourself.

## Iveliz Explains it All, by Andrea Beatriz Arango

Twelve-year-old Iveliz is trying to manage her mental health and advocate for the help and understanding she deserves, but in the meantime her new friend calls her crazy and her abuela Mimi dismisses the therapy and medicine Iveliz needs to feel like herself.

## Linked, by Gordon Korman

When swastikas begin appearing all over town, Link, Michael, and Dana, the only Jewish girl in town, must face crimes both past and present to find the truth.

## Born Behind Bars, by Padma Venketramen

In Chennai, India, after spending his whole life in jail with his mother, who is serving time for a crime she did not commit, nine-year-old Kabir is suddenly released and has to figure out how to survive on his own in the outside world.



## **Too Bright to See**, by Kyle Lukoff

In the summer before middle school, eleven-year-old Bug must contend with best friend Moira suddenly caring about clothes, makeup, and boys; a ghost haunting; and the truth about Bug's gender identity.

## Attack of the Black Rectangles, by A.S. King



When sixth-grader Mac discovers several words of his classroom copy of Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic* are blacked out he is outraged, so he, his friends, and his eccentric family set out to do something about the censorship imposed by one teacher and the school board.

















## When Winter Robeson Came, by Brenda A. Woods

In August 1965, twelve-year-old Eden's older cousin from Mississippi comes to visit her in Los Angeles, and while the Watts Riots erupt around them, they continue their investigation of the disappearance of Winter's father ten years ago.





## **Show Me a Sign**, by Anne Clare LeZolle

It is 1805 and Mary Lambert has always felt safe among the deaf community of Chilmark on Martha's Vineyard where practically everyone communicates in a shared sign language, but recent events have shattered her life.





## Ahimsa, by Supriya Kelkar

In 1942, when Mahatma Gandhi asks Indians to give one family member to the freedom movement, ten-year-old Anjali is devastated to think of her father risking his life for the freedom struggle. But it turns out he isn't the one joining. Anjali's mother is.





## **Freewater**, by Amina Luqman-Dawson

After fleeing the plantation where they were enslaved, siblings Ada and Homer discover the secret community of Freewater, and work with freeborn Sanzi to protect their new home from the encroaching dangers of the outside world.





## **Everything Sad is Untrue**, by Daniel Nayeri

Daniel expertly weaves together tales of his family from ancient Persia, stories of his young life in Iran, and his current life as "the weird kid" in rural Oklahoma.





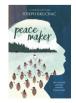
## This Light Between Us, by Andrew Fukuda

In 1935, ten-year-old Alex Maki of Bainbridge Island, Washington, is horrified to discover that his new pen pal, Charlie Levy of Paris, France, is a girl. In spite of his initial reluctance, their letters continue over the years and they fight for their friendship even as Charlie endures the Nazi occupation and Alex leaves his family in an internment camp and joins the Army.



## **Iceberg**, by Jennifer Nielsen

Twelve-year-old Hazel Rothbury stows away aboard the Titanic and, with the help of a porter named Charlie and a first-class passenger named Sylvia, she sets out to explore the great ship, uncovering a haunting mystery--until the ship hits an iceberg and she must fight to save herself and her friends.



## **Peacemaker**, by Joseph Bruchac

A twelve-year-old Iroquois boy rethinks his calling after witnessing the arrival of a mystical figure with a message of peace in this historical novel based on the creation of the Iroquois Confederacy.





## Cuba in My Pocket, by Adriana Cuevas

In 1961 Cuba, with the threat of military service for children looming, twelve-year-old Cumba's parents send him to Miami, where he lives with a new family and misses his homeland.



## Not an Easy Win, by Chrystal D. Giles

Nothing has gone right for twelve-year-old year old Lawrence since his Pop went away. After getting expelled from school for fighting, he discovers the world of chess and things begin to change.





## **Apple in the Middle**, by Dawn Quigley

Bouncing in the middle of two cultures, Apple meets her Native American relatives, shatters Native American stereotypes, and learns what it means to find her place in a world divided by color.





## **A-Okay**, by Jarad Greene

When Jay starts eighth grade with a few pimples he doesn't think much of it. But when his acne goes from bad to worse, Jay's prescribed a powerful medication that comes with some serious side effects. Meanwhile, school isn't going exactly as planned.







## Ellen Outside the Lines, by A.J. Sass

Ellen, an autistic thirteen-year-old, navigates a new city, shifting friendships, a growing crush, and her queer and Jewish identities while on a class trip to Barcelona, Spain.



## The Boys In the Back Row, by Mike Jung

In this unabashed ode to male friendship, Matt and Eric are planning one big final adventure filled with hilarious hijinks and geekiness galore before Eric moves away.





Maizy Chen's Last Chance, by Lisa Yee Eleven-year-old Maizy Chen visits her estranged grandparents, who own and run a Chinese restaurant in Last Chance, Minnesota; as her visit lengthens, she makes unexpected discoveries about her family's history and herself.



Barakah Beats, by Maleeha Siddigui It's Nimra Sharif's first time going to public school. Nimra's nervous, but as long as she has her best friend, Jenna, by her side, she figures she can take on just about anything. Unfortunately, middle school is hard.

















## **Invisible**, by Christina Diaz Gonzalez

Can five overlooked kids make one big difference? There's George: the brain, Sara: the loner, Dayara: the tough kid, Nico: the rich kid, and Miguel: the athlete. And they're stuck together when they're forced to complete their school's community service hours. Although they're sure they have nothing in common with one another, some people see them as all the same--just five Spanish-speaking kids. Then they meet someone who truly needs their help, and they must decide whether they are each willing to expose their own secrets to help--or if remaining invisible is the only way to survive middle school.





## Shine On, Luz Veliz! by Rebecca Balcarcel

Eleven-year-old injured soccer player Luz has a hard enough time reframing her identity as a computer programmer, but when her Guatemalan half-sister moves in, she learns what it truly means to start over.





## Mango Delight, by Fracaswell Hyman

When seventh-grader Mango Delight Fuller accidentally breaks her BFF's new cell phone, her life falls apart. She loses her friends and her spot on the track team, and even costs her father his job as a chef. Mango finds herself forced to make tough choices about the kind of friend she wants to have and, just as important, the kind of friend she wants to be.





## Freestyle by Gail Galligan

While preparing for the last major dance competition before they graduate from eighth grade and go to separate high schools in NYC, Cory must balance the expectations of his parents, school, crew and his new friend as pressure mounts from all sides.



## **Listen, Slowly**, by Thanhha Lai

Twelve-year-old Mai is sick of being perfect and her straight A's and extracurricular activities have gotten her a much unwanted trip to Vietnam with her family so she can learn more about her roots. But as time goes on, Mai grows closer to her family and she begins to understand her culture.



**The Swag is in the Socks**, by Kelly J. Baptist Twelve-year-old Xavier Moon gets the courage to step out of the shadows when his great-uncle gives him some outlandish socks and some even stranger requests.





## The In-Between, by Rebecca K.S. Ansari

Cooper is lost. Ever since his father left their family three years ago, he has become distant from friends, constantly annoyed by his little sister, Jess, and completely fed up with the pale, creepy rich girl who moved in next door and won't stop staring at him. So when Cooper learns of an unsolved mystery his sister has discovered online, he welcomes the distraction.



## Hide and Seeker, by Daka Hermon

Something is wrong with twelve-year-old Zee, who has returned after a year's absence. Nobody knows where he was or what happened to him, but now he is playing an odd game of hide-and-seek and talking wildly about some danger that is approaching.



## What Lives in the Woods, by Lindsay Currie

Ginny is unhappy when her family moves from Chicago to Woodmoor, an old house full of rumors. Ginny, an aspiring mystery writer, is soon half convinced that the rumors are true, because something or someone is haunting the house--and she plans to investigate, with the help of Will, the older boy who lives nearby.





## The Sleepover, by Michael Regina

Matt's friends plan a fun sleepover to try and cheer him up after he falls into a deep grief over the death of his nanny, but the sleepover quickly takes a turn when they realize the family's new nanny may be an actual monster.





## Nightbooks, by J.A. White

A boy is imprisoned by a witch and must tell her a new scary story each night to stay alive.





## Wait till Helen comes: a ghost story graphic novel, by Scott Peterson

When their mom remarries, Molly and her brother, Michael, try to make friends with their new stepsister, Heather. But Heather only wants to make trouble for them. She lies and tattles and misbehaves, and somehow they always get the blame. They know she's trying to drive a wedge between her father and their mother so she can have her father all to herself--and it seems to be working. Then, Heather starts playing in the graveyard behind their new house....



## **Gallant**, by Victoria Schwab

Olivia Prior has grown up at the grim Merilance School for Girls with no no past except for her one treasure, her mother's journal, so when a letter arrives inviting her to come home to ruinous manor, Gallant, she seizes the chance to find out about her family.















## **Bloom**, by Kenneth Oppel

The invasion begins--but not as you'd expect. It begins with rain. Rain that carries seeds. Seeds that sprout--overnight, everywhere. These new plants take over crop fields, twine up houses, and burrow below streets. They bloom--and release toxic pollens. They bloom-everywhere, unstoppable. Or are they?



## **Trex**, by Christyne Morrell

Trex, a boy with an experimental implant, and Mellie, a reclusive girl training to be a spy, are pitted against middle school bullies, their own parents, and an evil, brain-hacking corporation.





## The Last Cuentista, by Donna Barba Higuera

Petra's world is ending and only a few hundred scientists and their children - among them Petra and her family - have been chosen to journey to a new planet to carry on the human race. Hundreds of years later, Petra wakes and discovers that she is the only person who remembers Earth and a sinister Collective has taken over the ship during its journey.



## A Rover's Story, by Jasmine Warga

Built to explore Mars, Resilience begins to develop human-like feelings as he learns from the NASA scientists who assembled him, and as he blasts off and explores Mars, Resilience must overcome different obstacles as he explores the red planet.



## **The Ghosts of Rancho Espanto**, by Adrianna Cuevas

Rafa goes to work on a Rancho Espanto as punishment for a prank gone wrong, where he discovers a mystery as inexplicable as it is familiar and ultimately leads to Rafa learning hard truths about himself.



## It's the End of the World and I'm in My Bathing Suit, by Justin Reynolds

When the electricity goes out, twelve-year-old Eddie and his friends set out to investigate what is going on when they make the startling discovery that they are the only ones left in their neighborhood--and perhaps the only people left anywhere.



## The Last Beekeeper, by Pablo Cartaya

To prove that she belongs in a place where only the smartest and most useful are welcomed, twelve-year-old Yolanda learns that her survival rests on the rediscovery of a long-extinct beehive that could be the answer to everything.





## Shuri, by Nic Stone

Shuri sets out on a quest to save her homeland of Wakanda.

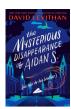


## Cog, by Greg van Eekhout

After an accident leaves him damaged and separated from his scientist caregiver, a young android recruits four robot accomplices and embarks on a cross-country road trip to reunite with her.







## The Mysterious Disappearance of Aidan S (as told to his brother), by David Levithan

Aidan disappeared for six days. Six agonizing days of searches and police and questions and constant vigils. Then, just as suddenly as he vanished, Aidan reappears. Where has he been? The story he tells is simply. . . impossible.



## Undercover Latina, by Aya DeLeon

Going undercover as a white girl to befriend the estranged son of a dangerous white supremacist, Latina teen spy Andrea Hernandez-Baldoquin finds her first solo mission to trap a terrorist endangered by her crush on the target's best friend.



## Chester Keene Cracks the Code, by Kekla Magoon

Eleven-year-old Chester and his classmate Skye, tasked with a complex puzzle-solving mission, discover the key to their spy assignment is to stop a heist, but cracking the code could put them in serious danger.





## **Absolutely Truly**, by Heather Vogel Frederick

Twelve-year-old Truly Lovejoy's family moves to a small town to take over a bookstore. Soon, she has to solve two mysteries involving a missing book and an undelivered letter.



## The Girl In the White Van, by April Henry

Sixteen-year-old Savannah Taylor is abducted after her kung fu class and must figure out how to escape and rescue fellow prisoner Jenny Dowd.





## **OCDaniel**, by Wesley King

A thirteen-year-old boy's life revolves around hiding his obsessive compulsive disorder until a girl at school, who is unkindly nicknamed Psycho Sara, notices him for the first time and he gets a mysterious note that changes everything.





## The Harlem Charade, by Natasha Tarpley

Seventh-graders Jin, Alexandra, and Elvin come from very different backgrounds and circumstances, but they all live in Harlem. When Elvin's grandfather is attacked they band together to find out who is responsible.



## **It Wasn't Me**, by Dana Levy

When Theo's photography project is vandalized, the five students nearby all claim it was not them, so Theo's favorite teacher suggests they all spend vacation week together and get to the truth.















## Six Crimson Cranes by Elizabeth Lim

The exiled Princess Shiori must unravel the curse that turned her six brothers into cranes, and she is assisted by her spurned betrothed, a capricious dragon, and a paper bird brought to life by her own magic.



## The Lie Tree, by Frances Hardinge

On an island off the south coast of Victorian England, fourteen-year-old Faith investigates the mysterious death of her father, who was involved in a scandal, and discovers a tree that feeds upon lies and gives those who eat its fruit visions of truth.





## Shinji Takahashi and the Mark of the Coatl, by Julie Kagawa

To free himself from an ancient curse, thirteen-year-old Shinji Takahashi must team up with a secret organization of explorers, find a magical font hidden in the jungles of Mexico, and replace a stolen idol.





## The Last Mapmaker, by Christina Soontornvat

Joining an expedition to chart the southern seas, twelve-year-old mapmaker's assistant Sai, posing as a well-bred young lady with a glittering future, realizes she's not the only one on board harboring secrets when she discovers the ship's true destination.



**Miles Morales Shock Waves: a Spider-Man graphic novel**, by Justin Reynolds Miles Morales is a normal kid who happens to juggle school at Brooklyn Visions Academy while swinging through the streets of Brooklyn as Spider-Man.



## The Patron Thief of Bread, by Lindsay Eagar

Told in alternating viewpoints, this timeless tale of love, self-discovery, and what it means to be rescued follows eight-year-old Duck, a thief who becomes a baker's apprentice, and an old and ugly gargoyle who grows tired of waiting to fulfill his destiny.





## Maya and the Rising Dark, by Rena Barron

A twelve-year-old girl discovers her father is the keeper of the gateway between our world and The Dark, and when he goes missing she'll need to unlock her own powers and fight a horde of spooky creatures set on starting a war.





## Charlie Hernandez and the League of Shadows, by Ryan

Calejo

Steeped in Hispanic folklore since childhood, middle schooler Charlie Hernandez learns the stories are true when, shortly after his parents disappearance, he grows horns and feathers and finds himself at the heart of a battle to save the world.





**The Total Eclipse of Nestor Lopez**, by Adrianna Cuevas A Cuban-American boy must use his ability to communicate with animals to save the inhabitants of his town when they are threatened by a witch that transforms into animals.



## While I Was Away, by Waka Takahashi Brown

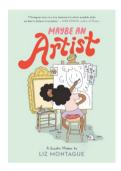
When Waka's mother suspects her twelve-year-old daughter can't understand basic Japanese, she makes a drastic decision to ship Waka to Tokyo to live with her strict grandmother and reconnect with the culture and master the language. Goodbye friends, end-of-sixth-grade parties, and fun, and goodbye summer vacation. Plucked from her straight-A-student life in rural Kansas and sent halfway across the globe, where her reading levels are embarrassingly low, Waka embarks on what feels like the hardest five months of her life.



## My Corner of the Ring, by Jesselyn Silva

In this inspirational memoir, twelve-year-old Jesselyn Silva offers a ringside seat to girl power and what it takes to win in the ring and in life: punch by punch. *My Corner of the Ring* shows kids what it means to be true to yourself and stick with your dreams even when facing adversity and ridicule.





## Maybe An Artist, by Elizabeth Montague

A graphic novel memoir by one of the first Black female cartoonists to be published in the New Yorker, at the age of 22. This is her story from the age 5 through 22, how she navigated life in her predominantly white New Jersey town, overcame severe dyslexia through art, excelled as a track star and found her calling in life





## **Star Child: a biographical constellation of Octavia Estelle Butler**, by Ibi Zoboi

Born into the Space Race, the Red Scare, and the dawning Civil Rights Movement, Butler experienced an American childhood that shaped her into the groundbreaking science-fiction storyteller whose novels continue to challenge and delight readers fifteen years after her death.





## **Play Like a Girl: a graphic memoir**, by Misty Wilson

Debut author Misty Wilson chronicles her seventhgrade experience as the only girl on her town's football team in this empowering graphic memoir about teamwork, friendship, crushes, and touchdowns.

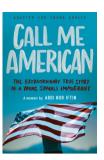












## Call Me American (adapted for young adults), by Abdi Iftin

Follows one boy's journey into young adulthood, against the backdrop of civil war and his ultimate immigration to America in search of a better life. Abdi shares every part of his journey, and his courageous account reminds readers that everyone deserves the chance to build a brighter future for themselves.



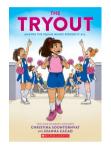


## The Genius Under the Table: growing up behind the Iron Curtain,

by Eugene Yelchin

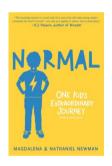
Drama, family secrets, and a KGB spy in his own kitchen! How will Yevgeny ever fulfill his parents' dream that he become a national hero when he doesn't even have his own room? In the tiny apartment he shares with his Baryshnikov-obsessed mother, poetry-loving father, continually outraged grandmother, and talented brother, all Yevgeny has is his little pencil, the underside of a massive table, and the doodles that could change everything.





## The Tryout, by Christina Soontornvat

As one of the only Asian Americans in her school, Christina confronts both well-meaning ignorance and cruel racism, but in middle school fitting in is important, which is why she and her best friend Megan are both excited and nervous to try out for the popular cheerleading squad.



**Normal: One Kid's Extraordinary Journey,** by Magdalena M. Newman Nathaniel Newman and his mother, Magda, tell the story of his growing up with Treacher Collins Syndrome (the same craniofacial syndrome as the boy from 'Wonder'), from facing sixty-seven surgeries before the age of fifteen, to making friends, moving across the country, and persevering through hardships.





## **Muhammad Najem, War Reporter**, by Muhammad

Najem

A graphic memoir by young Syrian Muhammad Najem, who rose to international notoriety during the Syrian Civil War due to his on-theground reporting using social media.



## It's Trevor Noah: born a crime, by

Trevor Noah Looks at the life of South African comedian, writer, producer, political commentator, actor, and television host, Trevor Noah.



Click on book cover to link to Sora ebook and audiobook, if available.