



# SUMMER READING LIST\*

## Libraries ROCK! ~ Grades 5-6

Suggested summer reading compiled for the Connecticut Department of Education by Linda Williams, Connecticut State Library

### FICTION

#### **Confusion is Nothing New** by Paul Acampora

What's a girl to do when she finds out her late mother was the lead singer of an '80s cover band, Cyndi Lauper is Not Dead? A hilarious novel by an author who was born in Connecticut.

#### **Bud, Not Buddy** by Christopher Paul Curtis

Ten-year-old Bud, a motherless boy living in Flint, Michigan, during the Great Depression, escapes a bad foster home and sets out in search of the man he believes to be his father--the renowned bandleader, H.E. Calloway of Grand Rapids. | [ALA](#), [ILA](#) | Lexile: 950

#### **Garvey's Choice** by Nikki Grimes

Preferring science and reading to the sports his father wants him to play, Garvey comforts himself with food and endures bullying before joining the school chorus, where he learns how to accept himself and bond with his father. | [ALA](#), [ILA](#) | Lexile: 620

#### **Blackbird Fly** by Erin Entrada Kelly

Bullied at school, eighth-grader Apple, a Filipino American who loves the music of the Beatles, decides to change her life by learning how to play the guitar. | [ALA](#), [ILA](#) | Lexile: 660

#### **Amina's Voice** by Hena Khan & Abigail Dela Cruz

A Pakistani-American Muslim girl struggles to stay true to her family's vibrant culture while simultaneously blending in at school after tragedy strikes her community. | Lexile: 800

#### **Hiding Out at the Pancake Palace** by Nan Marino

When musical prodigy, Elvis Ruby, completely freezes up on television, he is forced to hide out in the Pinelands of New Jersey and try to find his way back to the music

once again with the help of a new friend. | [NPR Best Books of 2013](#) | Lexile 580

#### **Yang the Youngest and His Terrible Ear** by Lensey Namioka

Recently arrived in Seattle from China, musically untalented Yingtao is faced with giving a violin performance to attract new students for his father when he would rather be working on friendships and playing baseball. | Lexile: 700

#### **Countdown** by Deborah Wiles

As eleven-year-old Franny Chapman deals with drama at home and with her best friend in 1962, she tries to understand the larger problems in the world after President Kennedy announces that Russia is sending nuclear missiles to Cuba. Features historic quotations and photographs. | [ALA](#), [NCTE](#) | Lexile: 800

#### **Clayton Byrd Goes**

#### **Underground** by Rita Williams-Garcia

Feeling most alive when he's playing the blues with his grandfather, Clayton is devastated when his grandfather dies and his mother forbids him from playing music, losses that compel him to run

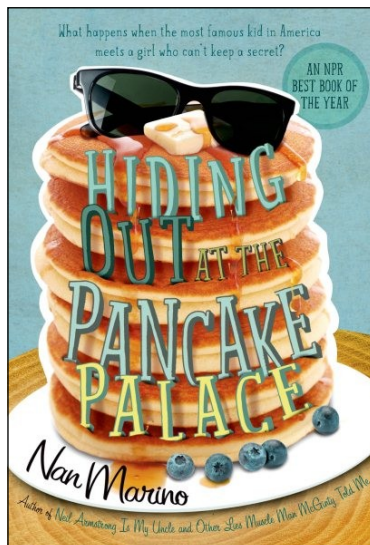
away and join bluesmen on the road. | [ALA](#), [National Book Award Finalist](#) | Lexile: 710

#### **The Sweetest Sound** by Sherri Winston

Shy ten-year-old Cadence grapples with an overprotective father, a mother who's skipped town to pursue stardom, and what to do when a recording of her amazing voice leaks before she's ready to share it with the world.

#### **Saint Louis Armstrong Beach** by Brenda Woods

Saint Louis Armstrong Beach is enjoying life in New Orleans, playing clarinet for the tourists in his spare time, accompanied by Shadow, a local stray dog. When Hurricane Katrina approaches, Saint faces unexpected challenges in trying to rescue Shadow. | [Nutmeg 2015](#) | Lexile: 660

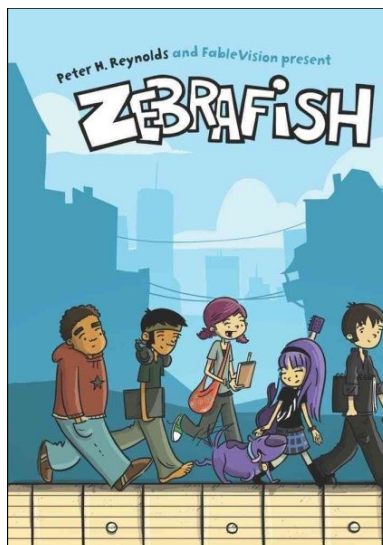


# SUMMER READING LIST\*

## GRAPHIC NOVELS

**Zebrafish** by Sharon Emerson,  
drawn by Renée Kurilla

When their rock band becomes popular, five middle schoolers use their new fame to generate awareness (and donations) for an important cause. | [ILA](#) | Lexile: 470



**Jazz Day: The Making of a Famous Photograph** by Roxane Orgill, illustrated by Francis Vallejo

An uplifting collection of poems captures the world of mid-20th-century Harlem while recounting the efforts of Esquire magazine graphic designer Art Kane, who despite limited resources attempted to photograph a group of famous jazz artists in front of a brownstone. | [ALA](#), [NCTE](#)

## POETRY

**Sweethearts of Rhythm: the Story of the Greatest All-Girl Swing Band in the World** by Marilyn Nelson

A look at a 1940's all-female jazz band, that originated from a boarding school in Mississippi and found its way to the most famous ballrooms in the country, offering solace during the hard years of the war. | [NCTE](#) | Lexile: 840

**Roots and Blues: A Celebration** by Arnold Adoff

Lyrical text explores how Blues have been part of everyday life throughout history, from its origins in the sounds of the earth, through slaves' voices singing of freedom, to today's greatest performers--and listeners. | [NCSS](#)

**Prairie Dog Song: The Key to Saving North America's Grasslands** by

Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore

Cumulative text based on an old folksong alternating with additional scientific information explores the role of prairie dogs, a keystone species in North America's grasslands, and conservation efforts to restore the balance of plants and animals of the Janos, Mexico, prairie dog complex. | Lexile: 1020

## NONFICTION

**Like a Bird: The Art of the American Slave Song** by Cynthia Grady, illustrated by Michele Wood

Enslaved African Americans longed for freedom, and that longing took many forms including music. Drawing on biblical imagery, slave songs both expressed the sorrow of life in bondage and offered a rallying cry for the spirit. | Lexile: 1060

**My Country, 'Tis of Thee: How One Song Reveals the History of Civil Rights** by Claire Rudolph Murphy

A chronicle of civil rights movements through the song's changing lyrics reveals how its words have been transformed by generations of protestors and civil rights pioneers throughout landmark historical movements. | [NCSS](#) | Lexile: 1000

## BIOGRAPHY

**I and I: Bob Marley** by Tony Medina

A biography in verse about the Jamaican reggae musician Bob Marley, offering an overview of key events and themes in his life, including his biracial heritage, Rastafarian beliefs, and love of music. End notes on poems provide further biographical information.

**John's Secret Dreams: The Life of John Lennon** by Doreen Rappaport, illustrated by Bryan Collier

Introduces the life of John Lennon who, as a member of the Beatles and as a solo artist, sought to make the world a better and more peaceful place than the one in which he was raised.

**How the Beatles Changed the World** by Martin W. Sandler

Fifty years after the British invasion began, Martin Sandler explores The Beatles' long-lasting impact on the world. | Lexile: 1160

\*Many listed books were selected as exemplary books by one or more of the following organizations: the American Library Association (ALA), the International Literacy Association (ILA), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) or the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY). Others awards as noted.



# SUMMER READING

## Favorites & Classics

*For Grades 5-6*

### **The Secret Garden** by Frances Hodgson Burnett

A ten-year-old orphan comes to live in a lonely house on the Yorkshire moors where she discovers an invalid cousin and the mysteries of a locked garden. | Lexile: 970

### **The Incredible Journey** by Sheila Burnford

A Siamese cat, an old bull terrier, and a young Labrador retriever travel together 250 miles through the Canadian wilderness to find their family. | Lexile: 1320

### **Extra Credit** by Andrew Clements

As letters flow back and forth — between the prairies of Illinois and the mountains of Afghanistan, across cultural and religious divides — sixth-grader Abby, ten-year-old Amira, and eleven-year-old Sadeed begin to speak and listen to each other. | Lexile: 830

### **The Watsons Go To Birmingham - 1963** by Christopher Paul Curtis

The ordinary interactions and everyday routines of the Watsons, an African American family living in Flint, Michigan, are drastically changed after they go to visit Grandma in Alabama in the summer of 1963. | Lexile: 1000

### **The Search for WondLa** by Tony DiTerlizzi

Living in isolation with a robot on what appears to be an alien world populated with bizarre life forms, a twelve-year-old human girl called Eva Nine sets out on a journey to find others like her. Features "augmented reality" pages, in which readers with a webcam can access additional information about Eva Nine's world. | Lexile: 760

### **The City of Ember** by Jeanne DuPrau

In the year 241, twelve-year-old Lina trades jobs on Assignment Day to be a Messenger to run to new places in her decaying but beloved city, perhaps even to glimpse Unknown Regions. | Lexile: 680

### **The Birchbark House** by Louise Erdrich

Omakayas, a seven-year-old Native American girl of the Ojibwa tribe, lives through the joys of summer and the perils of winter on an island in Lake Superior in 1847. | Lexile: 970

### **The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm** by Nancy Farmer

In 2194 in Zimbabwe, General Matsika's three children are kidnapped and put to work in a plastic mine, while three mutant detectives use their special powers to search for them. | Lexile: 660

### **Harriet the Spy** by Louise Fitzhugh

Eleven-year-old Harriet, who is a spy and plans to be an author keeps a secret notebook filled with thoughts and notes on her schoolmates and people she observes on her afterschool spy route, but when some of her classmates read the notebook, they seek revenge. | Lexile: 760

### **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. | Lexile: 740

### **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. | Lexile: 610

### **The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe** by C. S. Lewis

Four English schoolchildren find their way through the back of a wardrobe into the magic land of Narnia and assist Aslan, the golden lion, to triumph over the White Witch, who has cursed the land with eternal winter. | Lexile: 940





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*For Grades 5-6*

### **Number the Stars** by *Lois Lowry*

In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis. | Lexile: 670

### **Anne of Green Gables** by *L. M. Montgomery*

Anne, an eleven-year-old orphan, is sent by mistake to live with a lonely, middle-aged brother and sister on a Prince Edward Island farm and proceeds to make an indelible impression on everyone around her. | Lexile: 850

### **The Borrowers** by *Mary Norton*

Miniature people who live in an old country house by borrowing things from the humans are forced to emigrate from their home under the clock. | Lexile: 780

### **A Single Shard** by *Linda Sue Park*

Tree-ear, a thirteen-year-old orphan in medieval Korea, lives under a bridge in a potters' village, and longs to learn how to throw the delicate celadon ceramics himself. | Lexile: 920

### **Bridge to Terabithia** by *Katherine Paterson*

The life of a ten-year-old boy in rural Virginia expands when he becomes friends with a newcomer who subsequently meets an untimely death trying to reach their hideaway, Terabithia, during a storm. | Lexile: 810

### **Tom's Midnight Garden** by *Philippa Pearce*

While staying with his aunt and uncle, Tom discovers a beautiful garden that is visible only at night and meets a little girl from the Victorian era with whom he travels back in time. | Lexile: 860

### **Ninth Ward** by *Jewell Parker Rhodes*

In New Orleans' Ninth Ward, twelve-year-old Lanesha, who can see spirits, and her adopted grandmother have no choice but to stay and weather the storm as Hurricane Katrina bears down upon them. | Lexile:

### **Esperanza Rising** by *Pam Muñoz Ryan*

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression. | Lexile: 750

### **One Crazy Summer** by *Rita Williams-Garcia*

In the summer of 1968, after travelling from Brooklyn to Oakland, California, to spend a month with the mother they barely know, eleven-year-old Delphine and her two younger sisters arrive to a cold welcome as they discover that their mother, a dedicated poet and printer, is resentful of the intrusion of their visit and wants them to attend a nearby Black Panther summer camp. | Lexile: 750

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## SERIES

***The Chronicles of Prydain*** by *Lloyd Alexander*

***Crispin*** trilogy by *Avi*

***Poppy*** series by *Avi*

***John Bellairs Mysteries*** by *John Bellairs*

***The Penderwicks*** series by *Jeanne Birdsall*

***The Dark is Rising*** series by *Susan Cooper*

***The Unicorn Chronicles*** by *Bruce Coville*

***The Moffats*** series by *Eleanor Estes*

***Joey Pigza*** series by *Jack Gantos*

***Shadow Children*** by *Margaret Peterson Haddix*

***Redwall*** series by *Brian Jacques*

***Diary of a Wimpy Kid*** series by *Jeff Kinney*

***Regarding the....*** series by *Kate Klise*

***Dog Friday*** trilogy by *Hilary McKay*

***Percy Jackson & the Olympians*** by *Rick Riordan*

***Harry Potter*** series by *J. K. Rowling*

***Septimus Heap*** series by *Angie Sage*

***Enola Holmes Mysteries*** by *Nancy Springer*

***The Mysterious Benedict Society*** by *Trenton Lee Stewart*

***Sammy Keyes*** series by *Wendelin Van Draanen*

***Adam Canfield*** series by *Michael Winrip*

***Enchanted Forest Chronicles*** by *Patricia Wrede*

***Dear America*** series by *various authors*

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