



SUMMER READING LIST*

Libraries ROCK! ~ Grades 9-12

*Suggested music-themed summer reading titles
compiled for the Connecticut Department of Education
by Linda Williams, Connecticut State Library*

FICTION

Solo by Kwame Alexander

Seventeen-year-old Blade endeavors to resolve painful issues from his past to navigate the challenges of his former rockstar father's addictions, scathing tabloid rumors, and a protected secret that threatens his own identity. | [ALA](#) | Lexile: 640

A Song for Ella Grey by David Almond

A modern adaptation of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth lyrically depicts the experiences of Claire, who struggles as a bystander when her best friend, Ella, becomes involved with a charismatic young man at the beach. | [ALA](#) | Lexile: 540

Audrey, Wait! by Robin Benway

While trying to score a date with her cute co-worker at the Scooper Dooper, sixteen-year-old Audrey gains unwanted fame and celebrity status when her ex-boyfriend, a rock musician, records a breakup song about her that soars to the top of the Billboard charts. | [ALA](#) | 760

Naked '76 by Kevin Brooks

In the summer of 1976, when punk rock is taking over England, Lili finds herself playing bass for a wild new band called Naked, and struggling to sort out complicated relationships with self-destructive band mates. | Lexile: 960

Nick & Norah's Infinite

Playlist by Rachel Cohn

High school student Nick O'Leary, member of a rock band, meets college-bound Norah Silverberg and asks her to be his girlfriend for five minutes in order to avoid his ex-sweetheart. | [ALA](#) | Lexile: 940

Beautiful Music for Ugly Children by

Kristin Cronn-Mills

Gabe has always identified as a boy, but he was born with a girl's body. With his new public access radio show gaining in popularity, Gabe struggles with romance, friendships, and parents--all while trying to come out as transgendered. An audition for a station in Minneapolis

looks like his ticket to a better life in the big city. But his entire future is threatened when several violent guys find out Gabe, the popular DJ, is also Elizabeth from school. | [ALA](#) | Lexile: 600

All Our Pretty Songs by Sarah McCarry

In the Pacific Northwest, the bond between two best friends is challenged when a mysterious and gifted musician comes between them and awakens an ancient evil. | [ALA Outstanding Books for the College Bound](#) | Lexile: 820

The Sky is Everywhere by Jandy Nelson

In the months after her sister dies, seventeen-year-old Lennie falls into a love triangle and discovers the strength to follow her dream of becoming a musician. | Lexile: 860

Tone Deaf by Olivia Rivers

Ali Collins was a child piano prodigy until a brain tumor caused her to lose her hearing, and now, after meeting Jace, the lead singer of Tone Deaf, her musical and romantic possibilities increase. | [ALA](#) | Lexile: 800

Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell

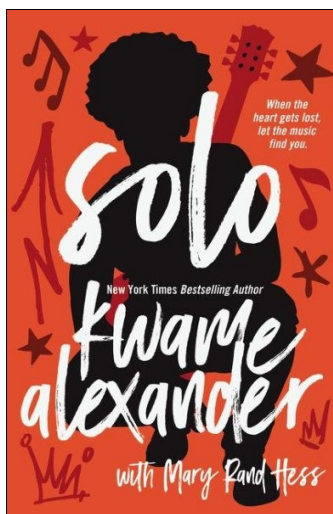
Set over the course of one school year in 1986, this is the story of two star-crossed misfits--smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try. | [ALA](#), [ILA](#) | Lexile: 580

The Scar Boys by Len Vlahos

Written as a college admission essay, eighteen-year-old Harry Jones recounts a childhood defined by the hideous scars he hid behind, and how forming a band brought self-confidence, friendship, and his first kiss. | [ALA](#) | Lexile: 910

The Lucy Variations by Sara Zarr

Sixteen-year-old San Franciscan Lucy Beck-Moreau once had a promising future as a concert pianist. Her chance at a career has passed, and she decides to help her ten-year-old piano prodigy brother, Gus, map out his own future, even as she explores why she enjoyed piano in the first place. | [ALA Outstanding Books for the College Bound](#) | Lexile: 610



SUMMER READING LIST*

POETRY

The Rose That Grew From Concrete by Tupac Shakur

A collection of verse by the late hip-hop star Tupac Shakur includes more than one hundred poems confronting such wide-ranging topics as poverty, motherhood, Van Gogh, and Mandela. | [ALA](#)

NONFICTION

Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad by M. T. Anderson

An account of the Siege of Leningrad reveals the role played by Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich and his Leningrad Symphony in rallying and commemorating their fellow citizens. | [ALA](#), [NCSS](#) | Lexile: 990

Sensing the Rhythm: Finding My Voice in a World Without Sound by Mandy Harvey

The musician recounts her life and career, including how she lost her hearing at age eighteen, suffered from depression, and found her way back to music.

Ready for a Brand New Beat: How "Dancing in the Street" Became the Anthem for a Changing America by Mark Kurlansky

Traces the meteoric popularity of the iconic song by Marvin Gaye, Mickey Stevenson, and Ivy Jo Hunter against a backdrop of the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964, exploring how the song's multiple meanings rendered it an activist anthem. | [ALA Outstanding Books for the College Bound](#)

This is Your Brain on Music: the Science of a Human Obsession by Daniel J. Levitin

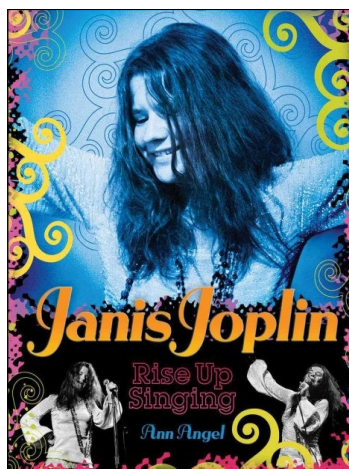
Explores the relationship between the mind and music by drawing on recent findings in the fields of neuroscience and

evolutionary psychology to discuss topics such as the sources of musical tastes and the brain's responses to music.

Children of the Stone: The Power of Music in a Hard Land by Sandy Tolan

Chronicles the life story of Ramzi Aburedwan, a Palestinian refugee who got an education, mastered the viola, and founded a music school in the West Bank, showing how his love of music helped to inspire children in a violent land.

BIOGRAPHY



Janis Joplin by Ann Angel

A biography of rock musician Janis Joplin, with photographs and anecdotes from those who knew her, covering her work to improve as a singer, struggle against authority and love for her mother. | [ALA](#) | Lexile: 1170

Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies by Neil Beram

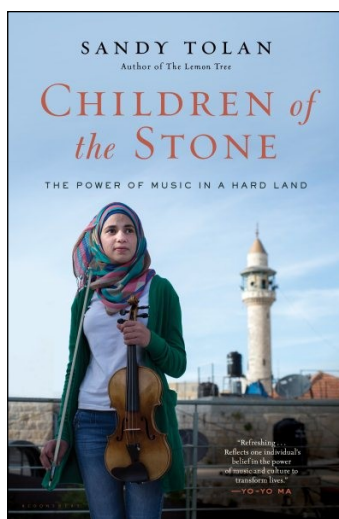
A lyrical introduction to the life and art of Yoko Ono covers her avant-garde visual art and her experimental music, exploring how she endured as the misunderstood wife of John Lennon and sought unique creative expressions. | [ALA Outstanding Books for the College Bound](#)

This Land Was Made for You and Me by Elizabeth Partridge

A biography of Woody Guthrie, a singer who wrote over 3,000 folk songs and ballads as he traveled around the United States, including This Land is Your Land and So Long It's Been Good to Know Yuh. | [ALA Outstanding Books for the College Bound](#), [NCSS](#) | Lexile: 1020

Die Young With Me: A Memoir by Rob Rufus

The author describes growing up in rural West Virginia and starting a punk band with his twin brother, only to be diagnosed with stage four cancer, which forced him to discover his inner strength. | [ALA ALEX Award](#)



*Many listed were selected as exemplary 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 (USBYP).



SUMMER READING

Favorites & Classics

For Grades 9-12

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by *Sherman Alexie*

Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. | Lexile: 600

Speak by *Laurie R. King*

A traumatic event near the end of the summer has a devastating effect on Melinda's freshman year in high school. | Lexile: 690

Feed by *M. T. Anderson*

In a future where most people have computer implants in their heads to control their environment, a boy meets an unusual girl who is in serious trouble. | Lexile: 770

The Handmaid's Tale by *Margaret Atwood*

Set in the near future, America has become a puritanical theocracy and Offred tells her story as a Handmaid under the new social order. | Lexile: 750

Squashed by *Joan Bauer*

As sixteen-year-old Ellie pursues her two goals--growing the biggest pumpkin in Iowa and losing twenty pounds herself--she strengthens her relationship with her father and meets a young man with interests similar to her own. | Lexile: 930

Love in the Time of Global Warming

by *Francesca Lia Block*

After a devastating earthquake destroys the West Coast, causing seventeen-year-old Penelope to lose her home, her parents, and her ten-year-old brother, she navigates a dark world, holding hope and love in her hands and refusing to be defeated. | Lexile: 890

Weetzie Bat by *Francesca Lia Block*

Follows the wild adventures of Weetzie Bat and her Los Angeles friends, Dirk, Duck, and My-Secret-Agent-Lover-Man. | Lexile: 960

Kindred by *Octavia Butler*

A young African-American woman is mysteriously transferred back in time leading to an irresistible curiosity about her family's past. | Lexile: 580

Ender's Game by *Orson Scott Card*

Young Ender Wiggin may prove to be the military genius Earth needs to fight a desperate battle against a deadly

alien race that will determine the future of the human race. | Lexile: 780

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by

Stephen Chbosky

A series of letters to an unknown correspondent reveals the coming-of-age trials of a high-schooler named Charlie. | Lexile: 720

Girl Overboard by *Justina Chen*

After a snowboarding accident, Syrah Cheng, a billionaire's daughter, must rehabilitate both her knee and her self-esteem while forging relationships with those who accept her for who she is. | Lexile: 960

The House on Mango Street by *Sandra*

Cisneros

A young girl living in a Hispanic neighborhood in Chicago ponders the advantages and disadvantages of her environment and evaluates her relationships with family and friends. | Lexile: 850

Just Listen by *Sara Dessen*

Isolated from friends who believe the worst because she has not been truthful with them, sixteen-year-old Annabel finds an ally in classmate Owen, whose honesty and passion for music help her to face and share what really happened at the end-of-the-year party that changed her life. | Lexile: 810

Copper Sun by *Sharon M. Draper*

Two fifteen-year-old girls--one a slave and the other an indentured servant--escape their Carolina plantation and try to make their way to Fort Moses, Florida, a Spanish colony that gives sanctuary to slaves. | Lexile: 820

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by *Jonathan Safran Foer*

Follows nine-year-old Oskar Schell as he encounters a number of interesting characters in his search for information about his father, who died in the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, and tries to find the lock that fits the mysterious key he left behind. | Lexile: 940

The Fault in Our Stars by *John Green*

Sixteen-year-old Hazel, a stage IV thyroid cancer patient, has accepted her terminal diagnosis until a chance meeting with a boy at cancer support group forces her to reexamine her perspective on love, loss, and life. | Lexile: 850





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Favorites & Classics

For Grades 9-12

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime by Mark Haddon

Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother. | Lexile: 1180

Seraphina by Rachel Hartman

In a world where dragons and humans coexist in an uneasy truce and dragons can assume human form, Seraphina, whose mother died giving birth to her, grapples with her own identity amid magical secrets and royal scandals, while she struggles to accept and develop her extraordinary musical talents. | Lexile: 760

Game by Walter Dean Myers

If Harlem high school senior Drew Lawson is going to realize his dream of playing college, then professional, basketball, he will have to improve at being coached and being a team player, especially after a new--white--student threatens to take the scouts' attention away from him. | Lexile: 800

Monster by Walter Dean Myers

While on trial as an accomplice to a murder, sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon records his experiences in prison and in the courtroom in the form of a film script as he tries to come to terms with the course his life has taken. | Lexile: 670

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi

Contains black-and-white comic strip images in which the author shares the story of her life in Tehran, Iran, where she lived from ages six to fourteen while the country came under control of the Islamic regime. | Lexile: 380

Midwinterblood by Marcus Sedgwick

Seven linked vignettes unfold on a Scandinavian island inhabited--throughout various time periods--by Vikings, vampires, ghosts, and a curiously powerful plant. | Lexile: 770

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith

Young Francie Nolan, having inherited both her father's romantic and her mother's practical nature, struggles to survive and thrive growing up in the slums of Brooklyn in the early twentieth century. | Lexile: 810

Buried Onions by Gary Soto

When nineteen-year-old Eddie drops out of college, he struggles to find a place for himself as a Mexican American living in a violence-infested neighborhood of Fresno, California. | Lexile: 850

Marcelo in the Real World by Francisco X. Stork

Marcelo Sandoval, a seventeen-year-old boy on the high-functioning end of the autistic spectrum, faces new challenges, including romance and injustice, when he goes to work for his father in the mailroom of a corporate law firm. | Lexile: 700

Jumped by Rita Williams-Garcia

The lives of Leticia, Dominique, and Trina are irrevocably intertwined through the course of one day in an urban high school after Leticia overhears Dominique's plans to beat up Trina and must decide whether or not to get involved. | Lexile: 600

How to Save a Life by Sara Zarr

Told from their own viewpoints, seventeen-year-old Jill, in grief over the loss of her father, and Mandy, nearly nineteen, are thrown together when Jill's mother agrees to adopt Mandy's unborn child but nothing turns out as they had anticipated. | Lexile: 710

SERIES

Weetzie Bat series by Francesca Lia Block

Finishing School series by Gail Carriger

The Mortal Instruments series by Cassandra Clare

The Hunger Games series by Suzanne Collins

The Maze Runner series by James Dashner

The Rangers Apprentice series Flanagan

Earthsea series by Ursula K. Le Guin

Life as We Knew It series by Susan Beth Pfeffer

His Dark Materials series by Philip Pullman

The Raven Cycle by Maggie Stiefvater

Shiver trilogy by Maggie Stiefvater

Daughter of Smoke and Bone series by Laini
