



## 2013 Recommended Summer Reading List Grades 6-8

### **A Long Walk to Water**, Park, Linda Sue

When the Sudanese civil war reaches his village in 1985, eleven-year-old Salva becomes separated from his family and must walk with other Dinka tribe members through southern Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya in search of safe haven.

### **A Long Way from Chicago**, Peck, Richard

A boy recounts his annual summer trips to rural Illinois with his sister during the Great Depression to visit their larger-than-life grandmother.

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

Tree-ear is an orphan. In medieval Korea, this leaves him little hope for the future. When his parents died, he was sent to live with the monks. Instead, he finds a home under the bridge with Crane-man, a crippled beggar who takes Tree-ear in.

### **Any Which Wall**, Snyder, Laurel

Susan, Henry, Roy and Emma stumble upon a wall in the oddest of places—the middle of a cornfield. To their delight, it turns out to be wishing wall, complete with a key, capable of whisking them away to fascinating times and places.

### **Artemis Fowl: the Arctic Incident**, Colfer, Eoin

A witty blend of fantasy, spy tale, and action movie, readers are sure to enjoy the fast-paced adventures of Artemis, his powerful sidekick Butler, Foaly the centaur, and fairies Holly and Root. As soon as they turn the last page of this book, they'll be hungering for the next one.

### **Breaking Stalin's Nose**, Yelchin, Eugene

In the Stalinist era of the Soviet Union, ten-year-old Sasha idolizes his father, a devoted Communist, but when police take his father away and leave Sasha homeless, he is forced to examine his own perceptions, values, and beliefs.

### **Bridge to Terabithia**, Paterson, Katherine

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.

### **Carver, a Life in Poems**, Nelson, Marilyn

Poems about the life, character, and achievements of the African American inventor, botanist, artist, and teacher.

### **Dead End in Norvelt**, Gantos, Jack

In the historic town of Norvelt, Pennsylvania, twelve-year-old Jack Gantos spends the summer of 1962 grounded for various offenses until he is assigned to help an elderly neighbor with a most unusual chore involving the newly dead, molten wax, twisted promises, Girl Scout cookies, underage driving, lessons from history, typewriting, and countless bloody noses.

### **Dragonwings**, Yep, Laurence

In the early twentieth century a young Chinese boy joins his father in San Francisco and helps him realize his dream of making a flying machine.

### **Esperanza Rising**, Ryan, Pam Munoz

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.

### **Fire From the Rock**, Draper, Sharon

In 1957, Sylvia Patterson's life--that of a normal African American teenager--is disrupted by the impending integration of Little Rock's Central High when she is selected to be one of the first black students to attend the previously all white school.

### **Flush**, Hiaasen, Carl

With their father jailed for sinking a river boat, Noah Underwood and his younger sister, Abbey, must gather evidence that the owner of this floating casino is emptying his bilge tanks into the protected waters around their Florida Keys home.

### **Freedom Walkers**, Freedman, Russell

The success and true impact of the Montgomery boycott depended on the sacrifices and determination of thousands whose names are lost to history—ordinary people who rose above the safe routines of their daily lives to become actors in an historical drama that changed a nation."  
—RUSSELL FREEDMAN, from *Freedom Walkers*

### **Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!**, Schlitz, Laura Amy

This is a collection of short one-person plays featuring characters between ten and fifteen years old who live in or near a thirteenth-century English manor

### **Heart of a Samurai**, Preus, Margi

In 1841, rescued by an American whaler after a terrible shipwreck leaves him and his four companions castaways on a remote island, fourteen-year-old Manjiro, who dreams of becoming a samurai, learns new laws and customs as he becomes the first Japanese person to set foot in the United States.

### **The Invention of Hugo Cabret**, Selznick, Brian

When twelve-year-old Hugo, an orphan living and repairing clocks within the walls of a Paris train station in 1931, meets a mysterious toymaker and his goddaughter, his undercover life and his biggest secret are jeopardized.

### **Little Women**, Alcott, Louisa May

Chronicles the joys and sorrows of the four March sisters as they grow into young ladies in nineteenth-century New England.

### **Lockdown**, Myers, Walter Dean

Teenage Reese, serving time at a juvenile detention facility, gets a lesson in making it through hard times from an unlikely friend with a harrowing past.

### **Lost in the River of Grass**, Rorby, Ginny

When two Florida teenagers become stranded on a tiny island in the Everglades, they attempt to walk ten miles through swampland to reach civilization.

### **Magnificent Voyage**, Lawlor, Laurie

In 1776 when Captain James Cook set off on his third and final voyage, a crew of intrepid men sailed with him, including twenty-five-year-old American John Ledyard. This riveting account based on Ledyard's writings brings the dramatic events of that historic voyage to life.

### **Moon over Manifest**, Vanderpool, Clare

Twelve-year-old Abilene Tucker is the daughter of a drifter who, in the summer of 1936, sends her to stay with an old friend in Manifest, Kansas, where he grew up, and where she hopes to find out some things about his past.

### **Newt's World: Beginnings**, Womble, Susan

Following a car accident that leaves him using a wheelchair, computer whiz Isaac Newton (Newt) Willis adapts a NASA computer communications program developed by his father into a holographic game--a virtual world--"Newt's World." But when he shares the game with his two new best

friends, an international espionage ring learns about the program and holds Newt's school hostage.

### **Old Yeller**, Gipson, Fred

This Newbery Honor-winning story of the love shared between a boy and his dog secured Fred Gipson's place as one of America's most renowned authors. Gipson himself grew up in the Texas Hill country and died in 1973. His book will likely remain a standard among children's classics. *Old Yeller* remains one of America's most loved classics.

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

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.

### **Peter and the Starcatchers**, Barry, Dave & Pearson, Ridley

Soon after Peter, an orphan, sets sail from England on the ship *Never Land*, he befriends and assists Molly, a young Starcatcher, whose mission is to guard a trunk of magical stardust from a greedy pirate and the native inhabitants of a remote island.

### **Saving the Ghost of the Mountain**, Montgomery, Sy and Bishop, Nic

People call it "The Ghost of the Mountain." A pale, spotted, almost cloud-like coat makes the snow leopard uncannily invisible. People live their whole lives in snow leopard country and never see one.

### **Scat**, Hiaasen, Carl

Nick and his friend Marta decide to investigate when a mysterious fire starts near a Florida wildlife preserve and an unpopular teacher goes missing.

### **Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood**, Barakat, Ibtisam

*From Tasting the Sky*

*Father turned to Mother. "We must leave now," he said. His voice was sharp like a knife.*

*My brothers were ready. They held each other's hands tightly. Mother had secured my baby sister between her arms. My father strained to see the road from behind the mound of clothes and blankets he carried. But in spite of my desperate attempts to obey my parents' commands, my three-and-a-half-year-old hands were unable to lace up the one shoe I had put on.*

### **The Anybodies**, Bode, N.E.

After learning that she is not the biological daughter of boring Mr. and Mrs. Drudger, Fern embarks on magical adventures with her real father and finally finds "a place that feels like home."

### **The Arrival**, Tan, Shawn

In this wordless graphic novel, a man leaves his homeland and sets off for a new country, where he must build a new life for himself and his family.

### **The Lightning Thief**, Riordan, Rick

After learning that the father he never knew is Poseidon, God of the Sea, Percy Jackson is transferred from boarding school to Camp Half-Blood, a summer camp for demigods, and becomes involved in a quest to prevent a war between the gods.

### **The Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon**, Schyffert, Bea Uusma

Do you know the story of Michael Collins, the Apollo 11 astronaut who went all the way to the moon but never walked on its surface? Instead, he orbited the moon 14 times, surrounded by 701 power switches and 20 pounds of checklists. Reminiscent of a scrapbook, this extraordinary book chronicles what Michael Collins did, saw, and thought about in space.

### **The Road Not Taken**, Robert Frost

"The Road Not Taken" is a narrative poem consisting of four stanzas of iambic tetrameter and is one of Frost's most popular works. This, being among the best known, is also one of the most often misunderstood poems. It has been commonly studied in literature classes and can often relate to the reader's life as in making difficult decisions.

### **The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle**, Avi

As the lone "young lady" on a transatlantic voyage in 1832, Charlotte learns that the captain is murderous and the crew rebellious.

### **The Trumpet of the Swan**, White, E.B.

Knowing how to read and write is not enough for Louis, a voiceless Trumpeter Swan; his determination to learn to play a stolen trumpet takes him far from his wilderness home.

### **The View from Saturday**, Konigsburg, E.L.

Four students, with their own individual stories, develop a special bond and attract the attention of their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent their sixth-grade class in the Academic Bowl competition.

### **The Wednesday Wars**, Schmidt, Gary D.

During the 1967 school year, on Wednesday afternoons when all his classmates go to either Catechism or Hebrew school, seventh-grader Holling Hoodhood stays in Mrs. Baker's classroom where they read the plays of William Shakespeare and Holling learns much of value about the world he lives in.

### **The Wright Sister**, Maurer, Richard

Published in time for the 100th anniversary of the first flight, here is the first complete biography of the Wright Brothers' sister. Beloved sibling, confidant, and caregiver, Katharine managed many of her brothers' affairs.

### **The Young Man and the Sea**, Philbrick, Rodman

Twelve-year-old Skiff Beaman's mom just died, and his fisherman dad is too depressed to drag himself off the couch and go to work. So these days Skiff has to take care of everything himself. But when his dad's boat sinks, Skiff discovers it will cost thousands to buy a new engine. Skiff's lobster traps won't earn him enough, but there are bigger fish in the sea -- bluefin tuna. If he can catch one of those monster fish, Skiff just might save the boat -- and his family.

### **Treasure Island**, Stevenson, Robert Louis

While going through the possessions of a deceased guest who owed them money, the mistress of the inn and her son find a treasure map that leads to a pirate fortune as well as great danger.

### **Trouble**, Schmidt, Gary

"Henry Smith's father told him that if you build your house far enough away from Trouble, then Trouble will never find you." But Trouble comes careening down the road one night in the form of a pickup truck that strikes Henry's older brother, Franklin. In the truck is Chay Chouan, a young Cambodian from Franklin's preparatory school, and the accident sparks racial tensions in the school—and in the town where Henry's family has lived for generations.

### **Twelve Rounds to Glory**, Smith, Charles R.

From the moment a fired-up teenager from Kentucky won 1960 Olympic gold to the day in 1996 when a retired legend, hands shaking from Parkinson's, returned to raise the Olympic torch, the boxer known as "The Greatest" waged many a fight.

### **Wangari's Tree of Peace**, Winter, Jeanette

This true story of Wangari Maathai, environmentalist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, is a shining example of how one woman's passion, vision, and determination inspired great change.

### **When the Wolves Returned**, Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw

Yellowstone National Park's majestic geologic wonders and remarkable wildlife draw millions of visitors each year. But there was a time when these natural treasures were in great danger, all because after years of unrestricted hunting, one key piece of the puzzle had been eliminated—the wolf.

### **Where the Red Fern Grows**, Rawls, Wilson

A young boy living in the Ozarks achieves his heart's desire when he becomes the owner of two redbone hounds and teaches them to be champion hunters.

### **Wild Things**, Carmichael, Clay

Stubborn, self-reliant, eleven-year-old Zoe, recently orphaned, moves to the country to live with her prickly half-uncle, a famous doctor and sculptor, and together they learn about trust and the strength of family.

Did you know students lose vital reading and math skills during each summer break? But, the more students practice reading, math and critical-thinking skills during the summer months, the better prepared they will be to graduate high school ready for college and careers. The books on this reading list have the department's official seal of approval as good picks to entertain young readers and prevent summer learning loss.

More information about reading for middle and high students can be found at [www.justreadflorida.com](http://www.justreadflorida.com) under the *Student Section – For Teens, by Teens* recommended reading. **Just Read, Florida!** offers a variety of tips to consider when helping readers choose books.

Below are a few websites that will provide more information and reading levels for many of the books listed above. Librarians and teachers are also experts in helping pair students with appropriate books.

**AR BookFinder:** <http://www.arbookfind.com/>

**Lexile Find a Book:** <http://www.lexile.com/search/filters/results/>

**Scholastic Book Wizard:** <http://www.scholastic.com/bookwizard/>

**James A. Shanks Middle School:** <http://www.jasms.gcps.k12.fl.us/>

**Gadsden County Public Library:** <http://www.gcpls.org/>

If a reader tackles a book above his or her reading level, consider what additional instruction or lower-level reading resources might help.

Ask the reader to keep track of unknown words within the book, and look them up together. Take turns reading aloud to each other to help process the information into smaller portions.

This recommended reading list comes from the **Just Read Florida Office of the Florida Department of Education**. Additional web links and annotations were added by James A. Shanks Middle School library media specialist in an effort to provide students with more information in guiding their selections.

