**Book Club (Choose 1)**

*A Long Way from Chicago* by Richard Peck $5.99

Each summer Joey and his sister Mary Alice, two city slickers from Chicago, visit Grandma Dowdel’s seemingly sleepy Illinois town. Soon enough, they find that it’s far from sleepy, and Grandma is far from your typical grandmother. From seeing their first corpse (and he isn’t resting easy) to helping Grandma trespass, catch the sheriff in his underwear, and feed the hungry all in one day, Joey and Mary Alice have nine summers they’ll never forget!

*The Cay* by Theodore Taylor $5.24

Phillip is excited when the Germans invade the small island of Curacao. War has always been a game to him, and he’s eager to glimpse it firsthand–until the freighter he and his mother are traveling to the United States on is torpedoed. When Phillip comes to, he is on a small raft in the middle of the sea. Besides Stew Cat, his only companion is an old West Indian, Timothy. Phillip remembers his mother’s warning about black people: “They are different, and they live differently.”  But by the time the castaways arrive on a small island, Phillip’s head injury has made him blind and dependent on Timothy.

A Fish in a Tree by L. Hunt $ 6.74

The author of the beloved One for the Murphy’s gives readers an emotionally-charged, uplifting novel that will speak to anyone who’s ever thought there was something wrong with them because they didn’t fit in. “Everybody is smart in different ways. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid.” Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the trouble maker. With his help, Ally learns not to be so hard on herself and that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. As her confidence grows, Ally feels free to be herself and the world starts opening up with possibilities. She discovers that there’s a lot more to her—and to everyone—than a label, and that great minds don’t always think alike.

*Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie* by J. Sonnenblick $7.49

A brave and beautiful story that will make readers laugh and break their hearts at the same time. Thirteen-year-old Steven has a totally normal life: he plays drums in the All-Star Jazz band, has a crush on the hottest girl in the school, and is constantly annoyed by his five-year-old brother, Jeffrey. But when Jeffrey is diagnosed with leukemia, Steven's world is turned upside down. He is forced to deal with his brother's illness and his parents' attempts to keep the family in one piece. Salted with humor and peppered with devastating realities, DRUMS, GIRLS, AND DANGEROUS PIE is a heartwarming journey through a year in the life of a family in crisis.

*Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini* by Sid Fleishman $6.74

Who was this man who could walk through brick walls and, with a snap of his fingers, vanish elephants? In these pages you will meet the astonishing Houdini—magician, ghost chaser, daredevil, pioneer aviator, and king of escape artists. No jail cell or straitjacket could hold him! He shucked off handcuffs as easily as gloves. In this fresh, witty biography of the most famous bamboozler since Merlin, Sid Fleischman, a former professional magician, enriches his warm homage with insider information and unmaskings. Did Houdini really pick the jailhouse lock to let a fellow circus performer escape? Were his secrets really buried with him? How did he manage to be born in two cities at the same instant? Here are the stories of how a knockabout kid named Ehrich Weiss, the son of an impoverished rabbi, presto-changoed himself into the legendary Harry Houdini.

*Glory Be* by A. Scattergood $5.24

A Mississippi town in 1964 gets riled when tempers flare at the segregated public pool. As much as Gloriana June Hemphill, or Glory as everyone knows her, wants to turn twelve, there are times when Glory wishes she could turn back the clock a year. Jesslyn, her sister and former confidante, no longer has the time of day for her now that she’ll be entering high school. Then there’s her best friend, Frankie. Things have always been so easy with Frankie, and now suddenly they aren’t. Maybe it’s the new girl from the North that’s got everyone out of sorts. Or maybe it’s the debate about whether or not the town should keep the segregated public pool open. Augusta Scattergood has drawn on real-life events to create a memorable novel about family, friendship, and choices that aren’t always easy.

*Escape from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library* by C. Grabbenstein                                 $5.99

Kyle Keeley is the class clown, popular with most kids, (if not the teachers), and an ardent fan of all games: board games, word games, and particularly video games. His hero, Luigi Lemoncello, the most notorious and creative gamemaker in the world, just so happens to be the genius behind the building of the new town library. Lucky Kyle wins a coveted spot to be one of the first 12 kids in the library for an overnight of fun, food, and lots and lots of games. But when morning comes, the doors remain locked. Kyle and the other winners must solve every clue and every secret puzzle to find the hidden escape route. And the stakes are very high. In this cross between *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *A Night in the Museum*, Agatha Award winner Chris Grabenstein uses rib-tickling humor to create the perfect tale for his quirky characters. Old fans and new readers will become enthralled with the crafty twists and turns of this ultimate library experience.

*The Enormous Egg* by O. Butterworth  $5.25

Young Nate Twitchell is surprised when one of the hens on his family farm lays a giant egg. After a painstaking wait, Nate is even more surprised when it hatches and out pops a baby triceratops that he names Uncle Beazley! But when Nate decides to keep the dino and raise it on his own, he has no idea what he's getting himself into. As Uncle Beazley grows, Nate and his family realize they are not equipped to take care of a full-sized dinosaur, and so with the help of their scientist friend, Nate and Uncle Beazley set off for the National Museum in Washington, D.C., on the hunt for the perfect home for a modern-day dinosaur---then the real trouble begins! The Enormous Egg was originally published in 1956 and has been a classic in children's literature ever since. This brand new edition features amazing new illustrations from Eisner-award winning graphic novelist Mark Crilley (creator of Akiko and Miki Falls).

*The Dumbest Idea Ever* by J. Gownley $8.99

What if the dumbest idea ever turned your life upside down? At thirteen, Jimmy was popular, at the top of his class, and the leading scorer on his basketball team. But all that changed when chicken pox forced him to miss the championship game. Things went from bad to worse when he got pneumonia and missed even more school. Before Jimmy knew it, his grades were sinking and nothing seemed to be going right. How did Jimmy turn things around, get back on top at school, and land a date with the cutest girl in class? Renowned comics creator Jimmy Gownley shares his adventures as he grows from an eager-to-please boy into a teenage comic book artist. This is the real-life story of how the DUMBEST idea ever became the BEST thing that ever happened to him.

*Ungifted* by G. Korman $5.99

The word gifted has never been applied to a kid like Donovan Curtis. It's usually more like Don't try this at home. So when the troublemaker pulls a major prank at his middle school, he thinks he's finally gone too far. But thanks to a mix-up by one of the administrators, instead of getting in trouble, Donovan is sent to the Academy of Scholastic Distinction (ASD), a special program for gifted and talented students. It wasn't exactly what Donovan had intended, but there couldn't be a more perfect hideout for someone like him. That is, if he can manage to fool people whose IQs are above genius level. And that becomes harder and harder as the students and teachers of ASD grow to realize that Donovan may not be good at math or science (or just about anything). But after an ongoing experiment with a live human (sister), an unforgettably dramatic middle-school dance, and the most astonishing come-from-behind robot victory ever, Donovan shows that his gifts might be exactly what the ASD students never knew they needed.

*Becoming Naomi Leon* by P. Ryan $5.99

Naomi Soledad Leon Outlaw has had a lot to contend with in her your life, her name for one. Then there are her clothes (sewn in polyester by Gram), her difficulty speaking up, and her status at school as “nobody special.” But according to Gram, most problems can be overcome with positive thinking. And with Gram and her little brother, Owen, life at Avocado Acres Trailer Rancho in California is happy and peaceful...until their mother reapers after seven years of being gone, stirring up all sorts of questions and challenging Naomi to discover and proclaim who she really is.

**Writing Task (Choose 1)**

*Jackaby* by W. Ritter $7.46

“Miss Rook, I am not an occultist,” Jackaby said. “I have a gift that allows me to see truth where others see the illusion--and there are many illusions. All the world’s a stage, as they say, and I seem to have the only seat in the house with a view behind the curtain.” Newly arrived in New Fiddleham, New England, 1892, and in need of a job, Abigail Rook meets R. F. Jackaby, an investigator of the unexplained with a keen eye for the extraordinary--including the ability to see supernatural beings. Abigail has a gift for noticing ordinary but important details, which makes her perfect for the position of Jackaby’s assistant. On her first day, Abigail finds herself in the midst of a thrilling case: A serial killer is on the loose. The police are convinced it’s an ordinary villain, but Jackaby is certain it’s a nonhuman creature, whose existence the police--with the exception of a handsome young detective named Charlie Cane--deny. Doctor Who meets Sherlock in William Ritter’s debut novel, which features a detective of the paranormal as seen through the eyes of his adventurous and intelligent assistant in a tale brimming with cheeky humor and a dose of the macabre.

*Heartbeat* by S. Creech $5.24

Newbery Medalist Creech ("Walk Two Moons") masterfully weaves this story, told in free verse, about a young girl finding her identity and learning how it fits within the many rhythms of life. Run run run. That's what twelve-year-old Annie loves to do. When she's barefoot and running, she can hear her heart beating . . . thump-THUMP, thump-THUMP. It's a rhythm that makes sense in a year when everything's shifting: Her mother is pregnant, her grandfather is forgetful, and her best friend, Max, is always moody. Everything changes over time, just like the apple Annie's been assigned to draw. But as she watches and listens, Annie begins to understand the many rhythms of life, and how she fits within them. Twelve-year-old Annie ponders the many rhythms of life the year that her mother becomes pregnant, her grandfather begins faltering, and her best friend (and running partner) becomes distant.

*The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (Young Readers Edition) by W. Kamkwamba $14.24

When fourteen-year-old William Kamkwamba's Malawi village was hit by a drought, everyone's crops began to fail. Without enough money for food, let alone school, William spent his days in the library . . . and figured out how to bring electricity to his village. Persevering against the odds, William built a functioning windmill out of junkyard scraps, and thus became the local hero who harnessed the wind. Lyrically told and gloriously illustrated, this story will inspire many as it shows how -- even in the worst of times -- a great idea and a lot of hard work can still rock the world.

*Tracking Trash* by L. Burns $7.49

Aided by an army of beachcombers, oceanographer Dr. Curtis Ebbesmeyer tracks trash in the name of science. From sneakers to hockey gloves, Curt monitors the watery fate of human-made cargo that has spilled into the ocean. The information he collects is much more than casual news; it is important scientific data. And with careful analysis, Curt, along with a community of scientists, friends, and beachcombers alike, is using his data to understand and protect our ocean. In engaging text and unforgettable images, readers meet the woman who started it all (Curt’s mother!), the computer program that makes sense of his data (nicknamed OSCURS), and several scientists, both on land and on the sea, who are using Curt’s discoveries to preserve delicate marine habitats and protect the creatures who live in them. A Boston Globe-Horn Book Award Honor Book for Nonfiction.

*Landry News* by A. Clements $5.99

NEW STUDENT GETS OLD TEACHER The bad news is that Cara Landry is the new kid at Denton Elementary School. The worse news is that her teacher, Mr. Larson, would rather read the paper and drink coffee than teach his students anything. So Cara decides to give Mr. Larson something else to read -- her own newspaper, The Landry News. Before she knows it, the whole fifth-grade class is in on the project. But then the principal finds a copy of The Landry News, with unexpected results. Tomorrow's headline: Will Cara's newspaper cost Mr. Larson his job?

*The Fourth Stall* by C .Rylander $5.24

Chris Rylander delivers a funny Ferris Bueler-style middle grade novel with The Fourth Stall. Do you need something? Mac can get it for you. It's what he does—he and his best friend and business manager, Vince. Their methods might sometimes run afoul of the law, or at least the school code of conduct, but if you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can pay him, Mac is on your side. His office is located in the East Wing boys' bathroom, fourth stall from the high window. And business is booming. Or at least it was, until one particular Monday. It starts with a third grader in need of protection. And before this ordeal is over, it's going to involve a legendary high school crime boss named Staples, an intramural gambling ring, a graffiti ninja, the nine most dangerous bullies in school, and the first Chicago Cubs World Series game in almost seventy years. And that's just the beginning. Mac and Vince soon realize that the trouble with solving everyone else's problems is that there's no one left to solve yours.

*Neil Armstrong is My Uncle*… by N. Marino $12.71

"Muscle Man McGinty is a squirrelly runt, a lying snake, and a pitiful excuse for a ten-year old......the problem is that no one knows it but me. In the entire town of Massapequa Park, only I can see him for what he really is. A phony. It's the summer of 1969, and things are not only changing in Tamara's little Long Island town, but in the world. Perhaps Tamara could stand to take one small step toward a bit of compassion and understanding? A terrific debut novel with truly vivid characters and a wonderful voice.

*Wednesday Wars* by G. Schmidt $5.99

In this Newbery Honor-winning novel, Gary D. Schmidt offers an unforgettable antihero. The Wednesday Wars is a wonderfully witty and compelling story about a teenage boy’s mishaps and adventures over the course of the 1967–68 school year in Long Island, New York. Meet Holling Hoodhood, a seventh-grader at Camillo Junior High, who must spend Wednesday afternoons with his teacher, Mrs. Baker, while the rest of the class has religious instruction. Mrs. Baker doesn’t like Holling—he’s sure of it. Why else would she make him read the plays of William Shakespeare outside class? But everyone has bigger things to worry about, like Vietnam. His father wants Holling and his sister to be on their best behavior: the success of his business depends on it. But how can Holling stay out of trouble when he has so much to contend with? A bully demanding cream puffs; angry rats; and a baseball hero signing autographs the very same night Holling has to appear in a play in yellow tights! As fate sneaks up on him again and again, Holling finds Motivation—the Big M—in the most unexpected places and musters up the courage to embrace his destiny, in spite of himself.

*Chasing Vermeer* by B. Balliett     $5.99

When a book of unexplainable occurrences brings Petra Andalee and Calder Pillay together, strange things start to happen: seemingly unrelated events connect, an eccentric old woman seeks their company, and an invaluable Vermeer painting disappears. Before they know it, the two find themselves at the center of an international art scandal, where no one — neighbors, parents, teachers — is spared from suspicion. As Petra and Calder are drawn clue by clue into a mysterious labyrinth, they must draw on their powers of intuition, their problem-solving skills, and their knowledge of Vermeer. Can they decipher a crime that has left even the FBI baffled?

*Outsiders* by S. Hinton $7.49

According to Ponyboy, there are two kinds of people in the world: greasers and socs. A soc (short for "social") has money, can get away with just about anything, and has an attitude longer than a limousine. A greaser, on the other hand, always lives on the outside and needs to watch his back. Ponyboy is a greaser, and he's always been proud of it, even willing to rumble against a gang of socs for the sake of his fellow greasers--until one terrible night when his friend Johnny kills a soc. The murder gets under Ponyboy's skin, causing his bifurcated world to crumble and teaching him that pain feels the same whether a soc or a greaser.

*It Ain’t So Awful, Falafel* by F. Dumas $12.71

Zomorod (Cindy) Yousefzadeh is the new kid on the block . . . for the fourth time. California’s Newport Beach is her family’s latest perch, and she’s determined to shuck her brainy loner persona and start afresh with a new Brady Bunch name—Cindy. It’s the late 1970s, and fitting in becomes more difficult as Iran makes U.S. headlines with protests, revolution, and finally the taking of American hostages. Even mood rings and puka shell necklaces can't distract Cindy from the anti-Iran sentiments that creep way too close to home. A poignant yet lighthearted middle grade debut from the author of the best-selling Funny in Farsi.