

2023 Suggested Summer Reading List for Rising 6th-8th Graders

Fiction

***A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle** **256 Pages** **Lexile Level 740**

It was a dark and stormy night; Meg Murry, her small brother Charles Wallace, and her mother had come down to the kitchen for a midnight snack when they were upset by the arrival of a most disturbing stranger.

"Wild nights are my glory," the unearthly stranger told them. "I just got caught in a downdraft and blown off course. Let me sit down for a moment, and then I'll be on my way. Speaking of ways, by the way, there is such a thing as a tesseract."

A tesseract (in case the reader doesn't know) is a wrinkle in time. To tell more would rob the reader of the enjoyment of Miss L'Engle's unusual book. *A Wrinkle in Time*, winner of the Newbery Medal in 1963, is the story of the adventures in space and time of Meg, Charles Wallace, and Calvin O'Keefe (athlete, student, and one of the most popular boys in high school). They are in search of Meg's father, a scientist who disappeared while engaged in secret work for the government on the tesseract problem.

***Blue* by Joyce Moyer Hostetter** **200 Pages** **Lexile Level 780**

Ann Fay Honeycutt accepts the role of "man of the house" when her father leaves because she wants to do her part for the war. She's doing well with the extra responsibilities when a frightening polio epidemic strikes, crippling many local children.

Her town of Hickory, North Carolina responds by creating an emergency hospital in three days. Ann Fay reads each issue of the newspaper for the latest news of the epidemic. But soon she discovers for herself just how devastating polio can be. As her challenges grow, so does her resourcefulness. In the face of tragedy, Ann Fay discovers her ability to move forward. She experiences the healing qualities of friendship and explores the depths of her own faithfulness to those she loves—even to one she never expected to love at all.

***Courage for Beginners* by Karen Harrington** **320 Pages** **Lexile Level 690**

Twelve-year-old Mysti Murphy wishes she were a character in a book. If her life were fictional, she'd magically know how to deal with the fact that her best friend, Anibal Gomez, has abandoned her in favor of being a "hipster." She'd be able to take care of everyone when her dad has to spend time in the hospital. And she'd certainly be able to change her family's secret.

Seventh grade is not turning out the way Mysti had planned. With the help of a hot-air balloon, her new friend Rama Khan--and maybe even the heroes of the Texas Revolution--can she find the courage to change?

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***I Heard the Owl Call My Name* - Margaret Craven 160 Pages Lexile Level 1080**

Amid the grandeur of the remote Pacific Northwest stands Kingcome, a village so ancient that, according to Kwakiutl myth, it was founded by the two brothers left on earth after the great flood. The Native Americans who still live there call it Quee, a place of such incredible natural richness that hunting and fishing remain primary food sources.

But the old culture of totems and potlatch is being replaced by a new culture of prefab housing and alcoholism. Kingcome's younger generation is disenchanting and alienated from its heritage. And now, coming upriver is a young vicar, Mark Brian, on a journey of discovery that can teach him—and us—about life, death, and the transforming power of love.

***Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life* by Wendy Mass 304 Pages Lexile Level 710**

In one month Jeremy Fink will turn thirteen. But does he have what it takes to be a teenager? He collects mutant candy, he won't venture more than four blocks from his apartment if he can help it, and he definitely doesn't like surprises. On the other hand, his best friend, Lizzy, isn't afraid of anything, even if that might get her into trouble now and then.

Jeremy's summer takes an unexpected turn when a mysterious wooden box arrives in the mail. According to the writing on the box, it holds the meaning of life! Jeremy is supposed to open it on his thirteenth birthday. The problem is, the keys are missing, and the box is made so that only the keys will open it without destroying what's inside. Jeremy and Lizzy set off to find the keys, but when one of their efforts goes very wrong, Jeremy starts to lose hope that he'll ever be able to open the box.

***Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George 208 Pages Lexile Level 860**

To her small village, she is known as Miyax; to her friend in San Francisco, she is Julie. When her life in the village becomes dangerous, Miyax runs away, only to find herself lost in the Alaskan wilderness.

Miyax tries to survive by copying the ways of a pack of wolves and soon grows to love her new wolf family. Life in the wilderness is a struggle, but when she finds her way back to civilization, Miyax is torn between her old and new lives. Is she the Miyax of her human village—or Julie of the wolves?

***My Antonia* - Willa Cather 146 Pages Lexile Level 1010**

The novel tells the stories of an orphaned boy from Virginia, Jim Burden, and the elder daughter in a family of Bohemian immigrants, Antonia Shimerda, who are each brought as children to be pioneers in Nebraska towards the end of the 19th century. Both the pioneers who first break the prairie sod for farming, as well as of the harsh but fertile land itself, feature in this American novel. The first year in the very new place leaves strong impressions in both children, affecting them lifelong.

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***The Crystal Snowstorm* by Meriol Trevor 216 Pages Lexile Level Not Available**

It is 1847, a time of revolutions throughout Europe. Young Catherine Ayre has been called from her quiet home in England by a grandfather she scarcely knows, Grand Duke Edmond of Letzenstein. She becomes a pawn in the political unrest of the small country. Why does her grandfather so hate her uncle Constant, the rightful heir? And just who is Rafael le Marre? Catherine is swept into exciting adventures before she can feel herself a part of the small but fascinating country of Letzenstein.

***The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery 96 Pages Lexile Level 710**

A pilot crashes in the Sahara Desert and encounters a strange young boy who calls himself the Little Prince. The Little Prince has traveled there from his home on a lonely, distant asteroid with a single rose. The story that follows is a beautiful and at times heartbreaking meditation on human nature.

***The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster 272 Pages Lexile Level 1000**

For Milo, everything's a bore. When a tollbooth mysteriously appears in his room, he drives through only because he's got nothing better to do. But on the other side, things seem different. Milo visits the Island of Conclusions (you get there by jumping), learns about time from a ticking watchdog named Tock, and even embarks on a quest to rescue Rhyme and Reason. Somewhere along the way, Milo realizes something astonishing. Life is far from dull. In fact, it's exciting beyond his wildest dreams!

***The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett 384 Pages Lexile Level 970**

When orphaned Mary Lennox comes to live at her uncle's great house on the Yorkshire Moors, she finds it full of secrets. The mansion has nearly one hundred rooms, and her uncle keeps himself locked up. And at night, she hears the sound of crying down one of the long corridors.

The gardens surrounding the large property are Mary's only escape. Then, Mary discovers a secret garden, surrounded by walls and locked with a missing key. With the help of two unexpected companions, Mary discovers a way in—and becomes determined to bring the garden back to life.

***Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls 304 Pages Lexile Level 700**

Billy has long dreamt of owning not one, but two, dogs. So when he's finally able to save up enough money for two pups to call his own—Old Dan and Little Ann—he's ecstatic. It doesn't matter that times are tough; together they'll roam the hills of the Ozarks.

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Soon Billy and his hounds become the finest hunting team in the valley. Stories of their great achievements spread throughout the region, and the combination of Old Dan's brawn, Little Ann's brains, and Billy's sheer will seems unbeatable. But tragedy awaits these determined hunters—now friends—and Billy learns that hope can grow out of despair, and that the seeds of the future can come from the scars of the past.

***Will Wilder Series* by Raymond Arroyo 304- 368 Pages Lexile Level 700-740**

Will Wilder is a mischievous, headstrong 12-year-old with an otherworldly gift – he alone can see the nefarious creatures encroaching on Perilous Falls. For nearly a century, a sacred relic has protected his hometown from the raging waters surrounding it. Travel along with Will through all of his adventures with this captivating series.

Historical Fiction

***Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes 320 Pages Lexile Level 840**

Fourteen-year-old Johnny Tremain, an apprentice silversmith with a bright future ahead of him, injures his hand in a tragic accident, forcing him to look for other work. In his new job as a horse-boy, riding for the patriotic newspaper *The Boston Observer* and as a messenger for the Sons of Liberty, he encounters John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and Dr. Joseph Warren. Soon Johnny is involved in the pivotal events of the American Revolution, from the Boston Tea Party to the first shots fired at Lexington.

***The Bronze Bow* by Elizabeth George Speare 256 Pages Lexile Level 760**

In this Newbery Medal–winning novel, Daniel bar Jamin will stop at nothing to seek revenge for his father's death at the hands of the Roman Empire.

After Daniel bar Jamin's father is crucified by the Roman Empire, Daniel wants nothing more than to rid his land of Israel of Roman control once and for all. Yet when David meets Jesus of Nazareth, a traveling carpenter with a gentle message of love and forgiveness, David starts to realize that the hate festering in his heart might be his true enemy after all.

***The Red Keep* by Allen French 370 Pages Lexile Level Not Available**

In the country of Burgundy, the Sauval brothers have begun to terrorize the surrounding lands in an attempt to bring the area under their control. They raid the Red Keep, in hope of gaining it for themselves, only to be thwarted by Sir Roger and young Conan. Now they plot anew to steal the Keep from its rightful owner, Lady Anne. She, with Conan and her loyal followers, sets out to bring justice upon the evil brothers. An action-filled tale with the authentic flavor of the twelfth century, by the author of *The Story of Rolf and the Viking Bow* and *The Lost Baron*.

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***The Trumpeter of Krakow* by Eric P. Kelly 224 Pages Lexile Level 1200**

There was something about the Great Tarnov Crystal...Wise men spoke of it in hushed tones. Others were ready to kill for it. Now a murderous Tartar chief is bent on possessing it. But young Joseph Charnetski was bound by an ancient oath to protect the jewel at all costs. When Joseph and his family seek refuge in medieval Krakow, they are caught up in the plots and intrigues of alchemists, hypnotists, and a dark messenger of evil. Will Joseph be able to protect the crystal, and the city, from the plundering Tartars?

***The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare 272 Pages
Lexile Level 850**

In this Newbery Medal–winning novel, a girl faces prejudice and accusations of witchcraft in seventeenth-century Connecticut. A classic of historical fiction that continues to resonate across the generations.

Sixteen-year-old Kit Tyler is marked by suspicion and disapproval from the moment she arrives on the unfamiliar shores of colonial Connecticut in 1687. Alone and desperate, she has been forced to leave her beloved home on the island of Barbados and join a family she has never met.

Torn between her quest for belonging and her desire to be true to herself, Kit struggles to survive in a hostile place. Just when it seems she must give up, she finds a kindred spirit. But Kit's friendship with Hannah Tupper, believed by the colonists to be a witch, proves more taboo than she could have imagined and ultimately forces Kit to choose between her heart and her duty.

Non-Fiction

***Ablaze: Stories of Daring Teen Saints* by Colleen Swaim
Radiate: More Stories of Daring Teen Saints by Colleen Swaim
144 -160 Pages Lexile Level Unavailable**

Following Christ is not always easy, but takes courage, patience, and love. Whether you are young or merely a youth at heart, you will be inspired by the heroism of these teenage saints. Young male and female teen saints from various places in the world are in this text. These stories come alive with vivid storytelling and saintly challenges designed to inspire reflection and inflame your heart. Through prayers, images, and maps, catch a glimpse of a saint's world that carries lessons for our own--and discover how you can set our world ablaze with love for the Lord!

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***Grace Hopper: Navy Admiral and Computer Pioneer* by Charlene W. Billings**

128 Pages

Lexile Level Unavailable

Traces the life of the scientist who, as well as having a distinguished career in the Navy, was a pioneer contributor to computer science and is known as the grandmother of the computer age.

***Making a Difference: The Story of an American Family* by Margaret Hodges**

196 Pages

Lexile Level Unavailable

Traces the lives and accomplishments of the extraordinary Mary Sherwood and her five children who played an important part in bringing great changes in higher education and voting rights for women, opportunities for government service, and awareness of the need to preserve the country's natural wonders. A group portrait of a family of achievers offers an intriguing account of Mary Sherwood, a young widow, and her five talented children, who made their individual marks as scholars, innovators, and servants of humankind.

***Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories* by S. Beth Atkins**

96 Pages

Lexile Level 850

This critically acclaimed book features photographs, poems, and interviews with nine children who reveal the hardships and hopes of today's Mexican-American migrant farm workers and their families.

