

Summer Reading 2024



June 2024

Dear Families,

Reading for enjoyment during the summer is one of life's little pleasures for most of us. Our wish for your children is that they too look forward to reading those books that they didn't have time for during the school year. All students entering sixth, seventh, and eighth grade are expected to read **at least three books** over the summer. We recommend students use sticky notes or take notes to engage more deeply with their reading. Although there is no specific summer assignment to respond to the books, teachers may ask students to respond to their summer reading when they return to school in September.

While curating our lists, we try to choose books that are of high interest to students. The books also vary widely by reading level. If you feel that a book is not at an appropriate level, please help your child choose something else. You may want to read the books alongside your child so you can discuss them together. Some students may want to pair up with friends to read the same book together, too.

The following list is organized by genre. Each list includes a brief synopsis of the book, and some include links to book trailers or short video reviews.

You can check the [Dobbs Ferry Public Library](#) catalog to see if a book is available through the public library system. Continuing students can also see if books are available online through [Sora](#).

Another option for children to continue learning over the summer is through the [Middle School Choice Board](#). The choice board is essentially a grid with a range of activities that gives students the opportunity to choose what they would like to learn and how they would like to show their learning.

Happy reading!

Best wishes,

Ellen Elsen
Library Media Specialist

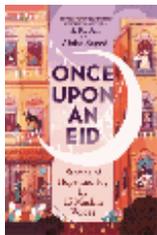
Michelle Yang-Kaczmarek
K-8 Literacy Coordinator

The Language and Literature Department at DFMS (Lisa Alfonzetti, Claudia Ducic, Ed Feller, Christine Grenier, Melissa Gretczko, Rachael Lief, Denise Rivera, and Jill Rosenblum)

Dobbs Ferry Middle School
Suggested Summer Reading for Eighth Grade
Summer 2024

Students are expected to read any three books this summer, although we hope you will choose to read all summer. Books may be chosen from the suggestions below, but you are not limited to this list. You do not need to write a response to what you have read over the summer, but there will be an assignment when you return to school in September. We do recommend that you use sticky notes or jot down notes in a response notebook as a way to record your thinking as you read.

Short Story Collection



Once Upon an Eid: Stories of Hope and Joy by 15 Muslim Voices, edited by S.K. Ali and Aisha Saeed
This collection showcases the most brilliant Muslim voices writing today, all about the most joyful holiday of the year: Eid! ★5 starred reviews



Take the Mic: Fictional Stories of Everyday Resistance, edited by Bethany C. Morrow
This anthology features fictional stories--in poems, prose, and art--that reflect a slice of the varied and limitless ways that readers like you resist every day.

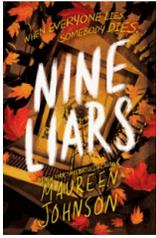
Action, Adventure & Mystery



I Am Princess X by Cherie Priest
Years after writing stories about a superheroine character she created with a best friend who died in a tragic car accident, sixteen-year-old May is shocked to see stickers, patches and graffiti images of the superheroine appearing all over town. ★3 starred reviews



The Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes
A Connecticut teenager inherits vast wealth and an estate from the richest man in Texas, but she must also live with his surviving family and solve a series of puzzles to discover how she earned her inheritance. (Other books in series: *The Hawthorne Legacy*, *The Final Gambit*, *The Brothers Hawthorne*)
★2 starred reviews



Nine Liars by Maureen Johnson

Senior year at Ellingham Academy for Stevie Bell isn't going well. With the cold case of the century solved, Stevie is adrift. There is nothing to distract her from the questions pinging around her brain--questions about college, love, and life in general. Relief comes when David invites Stevie and her friends to join him for study abroad, and his new friend Izzy introduces her to a double-murder cold case. ★2 starred reviews

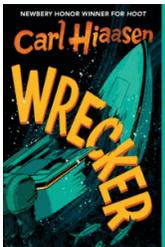
Book trailer:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nLti_ORWDCmnFqIUMHVI42aCBw4FIXV-/view?usp=sharing



What Happened to Rachel Riley? by Claire Swinarski

Anna Hunt may be the new girl at East Middle School, but she can already tell there's something off about her eighth-grade class. Rachel Riley, formerly one of the most popular girls in school, has become a social outcast. But no one, including Rachel Riley herself, will tell Anna why. As a die-hard podcast enthusiast, Anna knows there's always more to a story than meets the eye. So she decides to put her fact-seeking skills to the test and create her own podcast around the question that won't stop running through her head: What happened to Rachel Riley? ★2 starred reviews



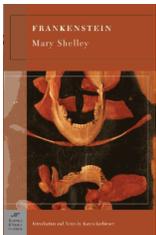
Wrecker by Carl Hiaasen

When fifteen-year-old Valdez Jones VIII, a.k.a. Wrecker, unwittingly becomes entangled with a group of smugglers and grave robbers, he must deep dive into their shady dealings in order to escape their twisted net. ★1 starred review

Book trailer:

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Classics



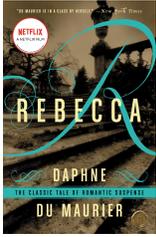
Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus by Mary Shelley

Victor Frankenstein discovers the secret of creating life and fashions an eight-foot monster, only to bring danger and destruction to the lives of those he loves.



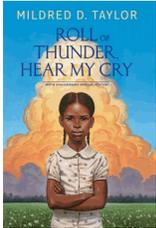
Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

This book chronicles the joys and sorrows of the four March sisters as they grow into young ladies in nineteenth-century New England. (Other books in series: *Good Wives*, *Little Men*, *Aunt Jo's Scrap-Bag*, and *Jo's Boys*)



Rebecca by Daphne duMaurier

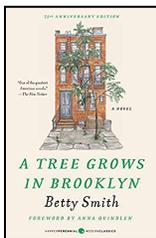
For months after her death, the memory of Rebecca de Winter continues to dominate everyone at her former home, Manderley, one of the most famous English country houses.



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor

An African-American family living in Mississippi during the Depression of the 1930s is faced with prejudice and discrimination which its children do not understand. (Other books in series: *Song of the Trees*, *Mississippi Bridge*, *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*, *The Friendship*, *The Road to Memphis*, *The Gold Cadillac*, and *All the Days Past, All the Days to Come*)

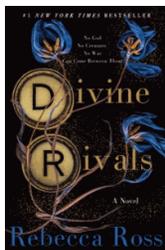
🏆 Newbery Medal



A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith

From the moment she entered the world, Francie Nolan needed to be made of stern stuff, for growing up in the Williamsburg slums of Brooklyn, New York demanded fortitude, precocity, and strength of spirit. Often scorned by neighbors for her family's erratic and eccentric behavior, no one, least of all Francie, could say that the Nolans' life lacked drama.

Fantasy, Dystopia & Science Fiction



Divine Rivals by Rebecca Ross

When two young rival journalists find love through a magical connection, they must face the depths of hell, in a war among gods, to seal their fate forever. (Sequel: *Ruthless Vows*)

Book trailer:

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Elatsoe by Darcie Little Badger

Elatsoe lives in an alternate contemporary America shaped by the ancestral magics and knowledge of its Indigenous and immigrant groups. She can raise the spirits of dead animals—most importantly, her ghost dog Kirby. When her beloved cousin dies, all signs point to a car crash, but his ghost tells her otherwise: He was murdered. Who killed him and how did he die? With the help of her family, her best friend Jay, and the memory of great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandmother, Elatsoe must track down the killer and unravel the mystery of this creepy town and its dark past.

★3 starred reviews

Author speaking about the book:

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The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea by Axie Oh

In this retelling of the Korean legend The Tale of Shim Cheong, sixteen-year-old Mina is swept away to the Spirit Realm, where, assisted by a motley crew of demons, gods, and lesser spirits, she sets out to awaken the sleeping Sea God and save her homeland and family from deadly storms.

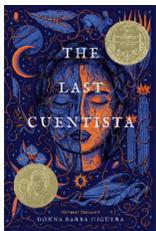


Instructions for Dancing by Nicola Yoon

After picking up a book from the library, Yvette—who has given up on love—gains the ability to see how other people's romantic relationships will end.

Book trailer:

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The Last Cuentista by Donna Barba Higuera

Petra Pena wanted nothing more than to be a storyteller, like her abuelita. But Petra's world is ending. Earth has been destroyed by a comet, and only a few hundred scientists and their children—among them Petra and her family—have been chosen to journey to a new planet. Hundreds of years later, Petra wakes to this new planet—and the discovery that she is the only person who remembers Earth. A sinister Collective has taken over the ship during its journey, bent on erasing the sins of humanity's past. They have systematically purged the memories of all aboard—or purged them altogether. Petra alone now carries the stories of our past, and with them, any hope for our future. Can she make them live again?

★3 starred reviews 🏆 Newbery Medal & Pura Belpré Author Award

Author speaking about the book:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15HH98QO5faZYZfVKivdsE7RYHnhDLeHK/view?usp=sharing>



The Manifestor Prophecy (Nic Blake and the Remarkables) by Angie Thomas

All Nic Blake wants is to be a powerful Manifestor like her dad. But before she has a chance to convince him to teach her the gift, a series of shocking revelations and terrifying events launch Nic and two friends on a hunt for a powerful magic tool she's never heard of so she can save her father from imprisonment for a crime she refuses to believe he committed. ★3 starred reviews

Book trailer:

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Scythe by Neal Shusterman

In a world where disease has been eliminated, the only way to die is to be randomly killed (“gleaned”) by professional reapers (“scythes”). Two teens must compete with each other to become a scythe--a position neither of them wants. (Other books in series: *Thunderhead*, *The Toll*, *Gleanings*)

★6 starred reviews 🏆 Printz Honor

Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BbJqV-T7b9woNQE4i17NanyC1uJ9adkv/view?usp=sharing>



Superman: Dawnbreaker by Matt de la Peña

Clark Kent has always been faster, stronger--better--than everyone around him. He knows drawing attention to himself could be dangerous, but lately it's difficult to stay in the shadows. When Clark follows the sound of a girl crying, he comes across Gloria Alvarez and learns that people are disappearing from the Mexican-American and undocumented worker community in Smallville. Teaming up with his best friend, Lana Lang, Clark discovers that before he can save the world, he must save Smallville. ★1 starred review



Warcross by Marie Lu

When teenage coder Emika Chen hacks her way into the opening tournament of the Warcross Championships, she glitches herself into the game as well as a sinister plot with major consequences for the entire Warcross empire.

(Sequel: *Wildcard*) ★3 starred reviews

Historical Fiction



The Downstairs Girl by Stacey Lee

1890, Atlanta. By day, seventeen-year-old Jo Kuan works as a lady's maid for the cruel Caroline Payne, the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Atlanta. But by night, Jo moonlights as the pseudonymous author of a newspaper advice column for “the genteel Southern lady.” ★4 starred reviews



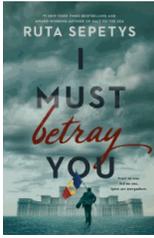
Heroes by Alan Gratz

December 6, 1941: Best friends Frank and Stanley have it good. Their dads are Navy pilots stationed at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, and the boys get a front-row view of the huge battleships and the sparkling water. Yes, World War II is raging in Europe and in Asia, but the US isn't involved in the war.

December 7th, 1941: Everything explodes. That morning, Frank and Stanley are aboard the battleship the USS Utah when Japanese planes zoom overhead and begin dropping bombs on the ships below. Chaos ensues as everyone scrambles to dive for safety. As the boys fight to make their way home amidst the carnage, it's clear that everything has changed. ★1 starred review

Book trailer:

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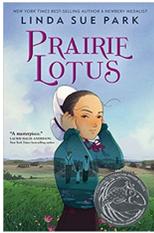


I Must Betray You by Ruta Sepetys

In a country governed by isolation, fear, and a tyrannical dictator, seventeen-year-old Cristian Florescu is blackmailed by the secret police to become an informer, but he decides to use his position to try to outwit his handler, undermine the regime, give voice to fellow Romanians, and expose to the world what is happening in his country. ★4 starred reviews

Book trailer:

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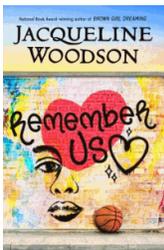


Prairie Lotus by Linda Sue Park

In Dakota Territory in the 1880s, half-Chinese Hanna and her white father face racism and resistance to change as they try to make a home for themselves. Includes author's note. ★5 starred reviews 🏆 Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature Honor book

One Minute Book Review:

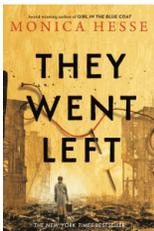
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xQ_6BssrFlbw6nQ8M-87Q3VZLulgcnlp/view?usp=sharing



Remember Us by Jacqueline Woodson

The summer before seventh grade, as the constant threat of housefires looms over her Brooklyn neighborhood, basketball-loving Sage is trying to figure out her place in her circle of friends, when a new kid named Freddy moves in.

★5 starred reviews



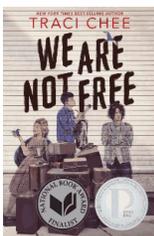
They Went Left by Monica Hesse

Zofia, a teenage Holocaust survivor, travels across post-war Europe as she searches for her younger brother and seeks to rebuild her shattered life.

★4 starred reviews 🏆 Sydney Taylor Book Honor

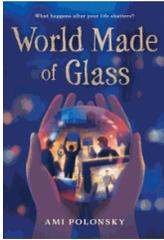
Author speaking about the book:

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We Are Not Free by Traci Chee

For fourteen-year-old budding artist Minoru Ito, her two brothers, her friends, and the other members of the Japanese-American community in southern California, the three months since Pearl Harbor was attacked have become a waking nightmare: attacked, spat on, and abused with no way to retaliate--and now things are about to get worse, their lives forever changed by the mass incarcerations in the relocation camps. ★5 starred reviews 🏆 Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature Honor & Printz Honor



World Made of Glass by Ami Polonsky

Iris opens her eyes to hard truths and the power of her voice when her father dies of AIDS in 1987. ★4 starred reviews

Horror



Bloom by Kenneth Oppel

The invasion begins-- with rain. Rain that carries seeds. Seeds that sprout--overnight, everywhere. These new plants take over crop fields, twine up houses, and burrow below streets. They bloom--and release toxic pollen. They bloom--and form Venus flytrap-like pods that swallow animals and people. Three kids on a remote island seem immune to the toxic plants. They each have strange allergies--and yet not to these plants. What's their secret? Can they somehow be the key to beating back this invasion? (Other books in series: *Hatch, Thrive*) ★1 starred review

Video book review:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1H8eBspymYI8312w-5xsuZ76X5Ep3rncw/view?usp=sharing>



The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle by Janet Fox

In 1940, during the Blitz, Katherine, Robbie, and Amelie Bateson are sent north to a private school in Rookskill Castle in Scotland, a brooding place, haunted by dark magic from the past--but when some of their classmates disappear, Katherine has to find out if the cause is hidden in the past or very much in the present. ★3 starred reviews

Book trailer:

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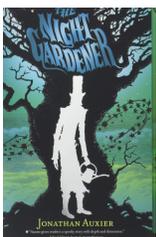


Guest: A Changeling Tale by Mary Downing Hahn

Young Mollie traverses eerie, perilous lands to retrieve her baby brother, Thomas, from the Kinde Folke, malicious sprites who snatched him and left a hideous changeling in his place.

Book trailer:

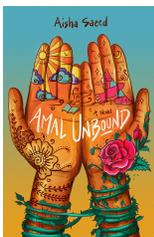
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11CTGwe-kh17AN1QMerzdtAXfEvpB4mYw/view?usp=sharing>



The Night Gardener by Jonathan Auxier

Irish orphans Molly, fourteen, and Kip, ten, travel to England to work as servants in a crumbling manor house where nothing is quite what it seems to be. Soon the siblings are confronted by a mysterious stranger and secrets of the cursed house. ★4 starred reviews

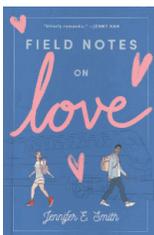
Realistic Fiction



Amal Unbound by Aisha Saeed

In Pakistan, Amal holds onto her dream of being a teacher even after becoming an indentured servant to pay off her family's debt to the wealthy and corrupt Khan family. (Sequel: *Omar Rising*)

★4 starred reviews



Field Notes on Love by Jennifer E. Smith

Two teens, Hugo and Mae, are strangers until they share a cross-country train trip that teaches them about love, each other, and the futures they can build for themselves. ★1 starred review

Book trailer:

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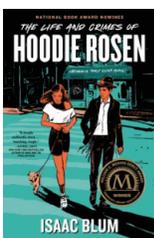
King and the Dragonflies by Kacen Callender

In a small but turbulent Louisiana town, one boy's grief takes him beyond the bayous of his backyard, to learn that there is no right way to be yourself.

★5 starred reviews 🏳️‍🌈 Coretta Scott King Author Honor & National Book Award for Young People's Literature

Author speaking about the book:

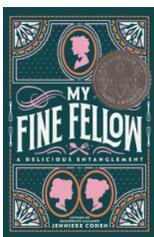
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The Life and Crimes of Hoodie Rosen by Isaac Blum

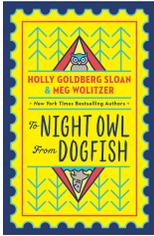
Hoodie Rosen's life isn't that bad. Sure, his entire Orthodox Jewish community has just picked up and moved to the quiet, mostly non-Jewish town of Tregaron, but Hoodie's world hasn't changed that much. He's got basketball to play, studies to avoid, and a supermarket full of delicious kosher snacks to eat. The people of Tregaron aren't happy that so many Orthodox Jews are moving in at once, but that's not Hoodie's problem. That is, until he meets and falls for Anna-Marie Diaz-O'Leary--who happens to be the daughter of the headstrong mayor trying to keep Hoodie's community out of the town. And things only get more complicated when Tregaron is struck by a series of antisemitic crimes that quickly escalate to deadly violence. ★2 starred reviews 🏳️‍🌈 William C. Morris YA Debut Award

Author speaking about the book: <https://vimeo.com/733743778>

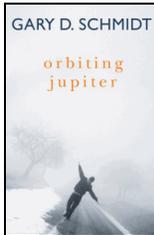


My Fine Fellow by Jenniecke Cohen

In 1830s England, where the Culinaricians, who create gorgeous food and confections, are the crème de la crème of high society, three individuals combine forces to pull off a delectable caper that will bring them fame, fortune, and a little romance, in a gender-reversed reimagining of "My Fair Lady." ★2 starred reviews 🏳️‍🌈 Sydney Taylor Honor Book



To Night Owl from Dogfish by Holly Goldberg Sloan and Meg Wolitzer
Unhappy about being sent to the same summer camp after their fathers start dating, Bett and Avery, eleven, eventually begin scheming to get the couple back together after a break-up. Told entirely through emails. ★1 starred review
Book trailer:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i20UfvGgPonZYh19LbwSiaS_ava7ceyb/view?usp=sharing



Orbiting Jupiter by Gary D. Schmidt
Jack, 12, tells the gripping story of Joseph, 14, who joins his family as a foster child. Damaged in prison, Joseph wants nothing more than to find his baby daughter, Jupiter, whom he has never seen. When Joseph has begun to believe he'll have a future, he is confronted by demons from his past that force a tragic sacrifice. ★5 starred reviews



Punching the Air by Ibi Zoboi with Yusef Salaam
At sixteen years old, Amal is convicted of a crime he didn't commit and sent to prison. Despair and rage almost sink him until he turns to the refuge of his words, his art. This never should have been his story. But can he change it?
Novel in verse. ★6 starred reviews



Rain Is Not My Indian Name by Cynthia Leitich Smith
Tired of staying in seclusion since the death of her best friend, a fourteen-year-old Native American girl takes on a photographic assignment with her local newspaper to cover events at the Native American summer youth camp.

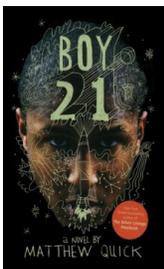


The Stars Beneath Our Feet by David Barclay Moore
A boy tries to steer a safe path through the projects in Harlem in the wake of his brother's death. ★5 starred reviews



The Voting Booth by Brandy Colbert
The first year they are eligible to vote, Marva and Duke meet at their polling place and, over the course of one crazy day, fall in love. ★3 starred reviews

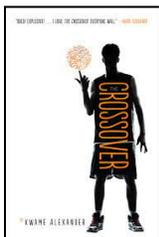
Sports Fiction



Boy 21 by Matthew Quick

Finley, an unnaturally quiet boy who is the only white player on his high school's varsity basketball team, lives in a dismal Pennsylvania town that is ruled by the Irish mob, and when his coach asks him to mentor a troubled African American student who has transferred there from an elite private school in California, he finds that they have a lot in common in spite of their apparent differences.

★2 starred reviews



The Crossover by Kwame Alexander

Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health. Novel in verse.

★6 starred reviews 🏆 Newbery Medal & Coretta Scott King Author Honor



Golden Arm by Carl Deuker

Lazarus Weathers, a high school senior from the wrong side of the tracks, seeks to protect his half-brother while pitching his way out of poverty, one strike at a time. ★1 starred review

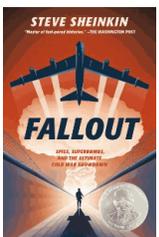
Informational Texts/Biographies/Memoirs



Buzzkill: A Wild Wander through the Weird and Threatened World of Bugs

by Brenna Maloney

Insects play a critical role on our planet, from sustenance to pollination to medicines and more. The author tackles both the wacky and weird, as well as threats to insects and their habitats, their possible extinction, and ways that everyday people, like you, can prevent their decline. ★4 starred reviews

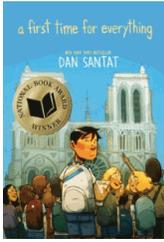


Fallout: Spies, Superbombs, and the Ultimate Cold War Showdown

by Steve Sheinkin

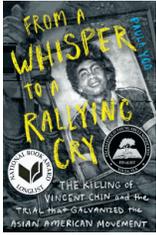
As World War II comes to a close, the United States and the Soviet Union emerge as the two world superpowers. After the United States shows its hand with the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, the Soviets refuse to be left behind. With communism sweeping the globe, the two nations begin a neck-and-neck competition to build even more destructive bombs and conquer the Space Race. In their battle for dominance, spy planes fly above, armed submarines swim deep below, and undercover agents meet in the dead of night. The decades-long showdown culminates in the Cuban Missile Crisis, the world's close call with the third-and final-world war.

★3 starred reviews 🏆 Robert F. Silbert Informational Book Honor



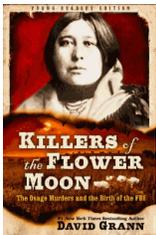
A First Time for Everything by Dan Santat

In this feel-good coming-of-age memoir, the best-selling author and Caldecott Medalist shares his life-changing middle school trip to Europe during which he experiences a series of firsts, including first love. Graphic memoir. ★4 starred reviews 🏆 National Book Award for Young People's Literature



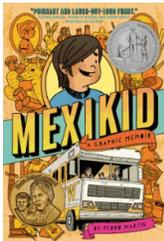
From a Whisper to a Rallying Cry: The Killing of Vincent Chin and the Trial that Galvanized the Asian American Movement by Paula Yoo

An account of the killing of Vincent Chin, the verdicts that took the Asian American community to the streets in protest, and the groundbreaking civil rights trial that followed. ★4 starred reviews



Killers of the Flower Moon (Adapted for Young Readers) by David Grann

In the 1920s, the richest people per capita in the world were members of the Osage Nation in Oklahoma, thanks to the oil that was discovered beneath their land. Then, one by one, the Osage began to die under mysterious circumstances, and anyone who tried to investigate met the same end. ★2 starred reviews

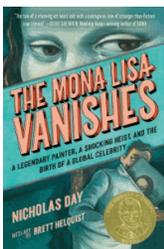


MexiKid by Pedro Martin

Pedro Martin's grown up in the U.S. hearing stories about his legendary abuelito. During a family road trip to Mexico, he connects with his grandfather and learns more about his own Mexican identity. Graphic memoir. ★3 starred reviews 🏆 Newbery Honor Book and Pura Belpré Author and Illustrator Award

Book trailer:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XCEG-meAPTHHYRspPtz-X9JjOp88CENq/view?usp=sharing>

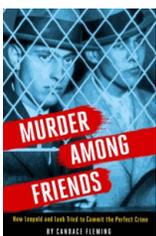


The Mona Lisa Vanishes: A Legendary Painter, a Shocking Heist, and the Birth of a Global Celebrity by Nicholas Day

A narrative nonfiction about how the Mona Lisa was stolen from the Louvre, how the robbery made the portrait the most famous artwork in the world-and how the painting by Leonardo da Vinci should never have existed at all. ★3 starred reviews 🏆 Robert F. Silbert Informational Book Winner

Video book review:

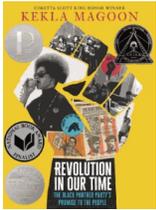
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Murder Among Friends: How Leopold and Loeb Tried to Commit the Perfect Crime by Candace Fleming

Taking readers back to 1924, this shocking true crime story follows two eighteen-year-old college students who kidnapped and murdered a child they both knew, their trial, and how a renowned defense attorney enabled them to avoid the death penalty.

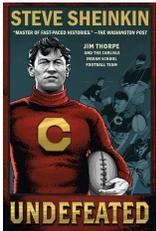
★5 starred reviews



Revolution in Our Time: The Black Panther Party's Promise to the People by Keekla Magoon

In this comprehensive history of the Black Panther Party, Magoon introduces readers to the Panthers' community activism, grounded in the concept of self-defense, which taught Black Americans how to protect and support themselves in a country that treated them like second-class citizens. For too long the Panthers' story has been a footnote to the civil rights movement rather than what it was: a revolutionary socialist movement that drew thousands of members--mostly women--and became the target of one of the most sustained repression efforts ever made by the U.S. government against its own citizens.

★6 starred reviews 🟡 Coretta Scott King Honor Author & Printz Honor Author speaking about the book: <https://vimeo.com/527321243>



Undeclared: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian High School Football Team by Steve Sheinkin

Before they became legends, Jim Thorpe and Pop Warner met at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, where they forged one of the winningest teams in American football history. ★5 starred reviews

Author speaking about the book:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/169REgoB79jsxWKj9lfA7leryh0bUbKM5/view?usp=sharing>

Starred Reviews are from the following publications:

Booklist

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

Horn Book Guide

Horn Book Magazine

Kirkus

Publisher's Weekly

School Library Connection

School Library Journal

Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)