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BOOK SUGGESTIONS

Middle School - Great Reads

JUVENILE FICTION

J Appelt—[*The Underneath*](#)

An old hound that has been chained up at his hateful owner's run-down shack, and two kittens born underneath the house, endure separation, abuse, and many other tribulations in their quest to be reunited and free.

J Avi—[*Seer of Shadows*](#)

In New York City in 1872, 14-year-old Horace, a photographer's apprentice, becomes entangled in a plot to create fraudulent spirit photographs, but when Horace accidentally frees the real ghost of a dead girl bent on revenge, his life takes a frightening turn.

J Choldenko—[*Al Capone Does My Shirts*](#) (series)

A 12-year-old boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there, and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.

J Cochrane—[*The Girl Who Threw Butterflies*](#)

Eighth-grader Molly's ability to throw a knuckleball earns her a spot on the baseball team, which not only helps her feel connected to her recently deceased father, who loved baseball, it helps in other aspects of her life, as well.

J Connor—[*Crunch*](#)

The oldest Marriss brother, fourteen-year-old Dewey, attempts to be the "embodiment of responsibility" as he juggles the management of the family's bicycle repair business while sharing the household and farm duties with his siblings after a sudden energy crisis strands their parents far from home.

J Draper—[*Out of My Mind*](#)

Considered by many to be mentally retarded, a brilliant, impatient fifth-grader with cerebral palsy discovers a technological device that will allow her to speak for the first time.

J Erskine—[*Mockingbird*](#)

Ten-year-old Caitlin, who has Asperger's Syndrome, struggles to understand emotions, show empathy, and make friends at school, while at home she seeks closure by working on a project with her father.

J Kirby—[*The Clockwork Three*](#)

As mysterious circumstances bring Giuseppe, Frederick, and Hannah together, their lives soon interlock like the turning gears in a clock and they realize that each one holds a key to solving the others' mysteries.

J Olson—[*Call Me Hope: a novel*](#)

In Oregon, Hope begins coping with her mother's verbal abuse by devising survival strategies for herself while she works toward buying a pair of purple hiking boots by helping at a second-hand shop.

J Pearsall—[*All of the Above: a novel*](#)

Five urban middle school students, their teacher, and other community members relate how a school project to build the world's largest tetrahedron affects the lives of everyone involved.

J Stead—[*When You Reach Me*](#)

As her mother prepares to be a contestant on the television game show, "The \$20,000 Pyramid," a 12-year-old New York City girl tries to make sense of a series of mysterious notes received from an anonymous source that seems to defy the laws of time and space.

J Turner—[*The Thief*](#) (series)

Gen flaunts his ingenuity as a thief and relishes the adventure which takes him to a remote temple of the gods where he will attempt to steal a precious stone.

J Vanderpool—[*Moon Over Manifest*](#)

12-year-old Abilene 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.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

YA Abbott—[*Watersmeet*](#)

14-year-old Absina escapes the escalating violence and prejudice of her home town, Vranille, and sets out with a dwarf, Haret, to seek the father she has never met in a place called Watersmeet.

YA Acampora—[*Defining Dulcie*](#)

When 16-year-old Dulcie's father dies, her mother makes a decision to move them to California, where Dulcie makes an equally radical decision to steal her dad's old truck and head back home.

YA Baskin—[*Anything But Typical*](#)

Jason, a twelve-year-old autistic boy who wants to become a writer, relates what his life is like as he tries to make sense of his world.

YA Fletcher—[*Shadow Spinner*](#)

When a 13-year-old crippled girl joins the Sultan's harem in ancient Persia, she gathers for Shahrazad the stories which will save the queen's life.

YA Mack—[*Birdland*](#)

14-year-old, tongue-tied Jed spends Christmas break working on a school project filming a documentary about his East Village, New York City, neighborhood, where he is continually reminded of his older brother, a promising poet who died the year before.

YA Paulsen—[*Notes From the Dog*](#)

When Johanna shows up at the beginning of summer to house-sit next door to Finn, he has no idea of the profound effect she and her cancer will have on his life by the time summer vacation is over.

YA Schmidt—[*Trouble*](#)

Henry, wishing to honor his brother Franklin's dying wish, sets out to hike Maine's Mount Katahdin with his best friend and dog. But fate adds another companion--the Cambodian refugee accused of fatally injuring Franklin--and reveals troubles that predate the accident.

YA Sonnenblick—[*Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie*](#) (and others)

When his younger brother is diagnosed with leukemia, thirteen-year-old Steven tries to deal with his complicated emotions, his school life, and his desire to support his family.

YA Spinelli—[*Stargirl*](#)

In this story about the perils of popularity, the courage of nonconformity, and the thrill of first love, an eccentric student named Stargirl changes Mica High School forever.

YA Vaupel—[*My Contract With Henry*](#)

A mission that begins as an eighth-grade project on Thoreau's experimental living at Walden Pond becomes a life-changing experience for a group of outsider students who become budding philosophers, environmental activists, and loyal friends.

