

SEVENTH GRADE BOOK LIST

Summer provides a very important time for students of all ages to continue reading books of their own choosing. We know that the more a student is read to and reads independently, the more likely that student will become a lifelong reader. Start the summer off right by setting aside a consistent time of at least one-half hour each day for an enjoyable reading time for your child.

Choosing a “just right” book is important. Students should be encouraged to choose books that are interesting to them and that are not too difficult for them to read. The books below are merely suggestions to begin a search for books that will “hook” your child onto reading.

From Education World

***Beyond the Burning Time* by Kathryn Lasky**

They say something very strange is happening to some of the people of Salem. That some of the young girls have become ... troubled. And the fear is beginning to spread. Mary and her mother don't hear about the rumors right away. They don't know that many of the villagers believe that some of Mary's friends have had spells cast on them -- by witches. Or that one of the accused is Mary's mother. Now Mary and her brother, Caleb, have a decision to make: Are the villagers right? Or is their mother innocent? And if she is -- can they help her escape before it's too late?

***Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul, 101 Stories of Life, Love and Learning* by Jack Canfield (ed.), Mark Victor Hansen (ed.), Kimberly Kirberger (ed.)** This carefully formulated collection of stories guides teenagers through one of the most difficult periods in life, offering invaluable advice on the nature of friendship and love, the importance of belief in the future, the value of respect for oneself and others, and more -- all delivered with compassion and humor. Also recommended: *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul II*.

***Crazy Lady!* by Jane Leslie Conly** Receiving less and less attention from his widowed father, Vernon joins with his friends as they ridicule the neighborhood outcasts -- Maxine, an alcoholic prone to public displays of outrageous behavior, and Ronald, her retarded son. Then social services tries to put Ronald into a special home, and Vernon finds himself fighting the agency.

***The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien** Whisked away from his comfortable, unambitious life in his hobbit-hole in Bag End by Gandalf the wizard and a company of dwarves, Bilbo Baggins finds himself caught up in a plot to raid the treasure hoard of Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon. Although quite reluctant to take part in this quest, Bilbo surprises even himself by his resourcefulness and his skill as a burglar! Written for J.R.R. Tolkien's own children, *The Hobbit* met with instant success when published in 1937 and has remained a timeless classic.

***Homecoming* by Cynthia Voigt** The Tillerman kids' mother just left them one day in a car in a mall parking lot. Their father had left them a long time ago. So, as usual, it was up to 13-year-old Dicey, the eldest of four, to take care of everything, make all the decisions, feed them, find places to sleep. But above all, Dicey would have to make sure to avoid the authorities who would split them up and place them in foster homes. Deep down, she hoped they could find an adult they could trust, someone who would take them in and love them. But she was afraid it was too much to hope for.

***Journey of the Sparrows* by Fran Leeper Buss** Nailed into a crate in the back of a truck, 15-year-old Maria, her older sister Julia, their little brother Oscar, and a boy named Tomas endure a cruel journey across the U.S. border and then north to Chicago. There they struggle to find work -- cleaning, sewing, washing dishes -- always careful to remain "invisible" so the authorities won't arrest and deport them. Despite the family's ordeals, hope and love can be found -- in Maria's budding romance with Tomas, in the help given by a kindly midwife and priest, and most of all, in the stories Maria tells to lift the family's spirits, of a little sparrow who brings a rainbow. Starkly realistic and tenderly poetic, this powerfully moving story of the secret lives of immigrants who courageously triumph over incredible obstacles is not to be missed.

***The Man Who Was Poe* by Avi** In Providence, Rhode Island, in 1848, Edgar Allan Poe reluctantly investigates the problems of 11-year-old Edmund, whose family has mysteriously disappeared and whose story suggests a new Poe tale with a ghastly final twist.

***The Maze* by Will Hobbs** Stowing away in the back of a pickup, Rick, a 14-year-old foster child, escapes from a juvenile detention facility near Las Vegas and travels to Canyonlands National Park in Utah. There, he finds himself in a dead end in the surreal landscape of redrock spires and deep canyons called the Maze, and is taken in by an eccentric naturalist who is working on a project to reintroduce condors to the wild.

***Myst, The Book of Atrus* by Rand Miller, Robyn Miller, David Wingrove** The ages of *Myst* are worlds of adventure and awe ... of mystery and beauty ... of intrigue and betrayal. You have seen only a glimpse of the picture. Now take a step further into the fictional legend of *Myst*. These pages are your link to the story of Atrus, son of Gehn, and the last of the race of D'Ni -- the masters of The Art, the craft of linking to other worlds through the descriptive art of writing. For most of his young life, Atrus thought the stories his grandmother told him were just strange legends. Then his time came to explore the magnificent underground realm.

***Night* by Elie Wiesel** A terrifying account of the Nazi death camp horror that turns a young Jewish boy into an agonized witness to the death of his family ... the death of his innocence...and the death of his God. Penetrating and powerful, as personal as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Night* awakens the shocking memory of evil at its absolute and carries with it the unforgettable message that this horror must never be allowed to happen again.

***Nothing but the Truth, A Documentary Novel* by Avi** A ninth-grader's suspension for singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" during homeroom becomes a national news story. In this remarkable Newbery Honor book, facts, people, actions, and reactions are presented in stark documentary style. The truth -- and nothing but the truth -- can be discovered by only one person: the reader.

***Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck** While the powerlessness of the laboring class is a recurring theme in Steinbeck's work of the late 1930s, he narrowed his focus when composing *Of Mice and Men*, creating an intimate portrait of two men facing a world marked by petty tyranny, misunderstanding, jealousy, and callousness. But though the scope is narrow, the theme is universal; a friendship and a shared dream that makes an individual's existence meaningful.

***Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse** In a series of free verse poems, 15-year-old Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the dust bowl years of the Great Depression. Powerful and moving, this Newbery Medal winner effectively depicts both a bleak historical era and one family's healing.

***Redwall* by Brian Jacques** When the peaceful life of ancient Redwall Abbey is shattered by the arrival of the evil rat Cluny and his villainous hordes, Matthias, a young mouse, determines to find the legendary sword of Martin the Warrior which, he is convinced, will help Redwall's inhabitants destroy the enemy.

***River Thunder* by Will Hobbs** Jessie, Troy, and the rest of the crew from *Downriver* have returned to the Grand Canyon for adventure on the Colorado River. In the year since they last were together, each has changed; each feels more mature. But how will they interact now that they are facing new challenges - challenges greater than anything they've had to deal with at home? For Troy, it is a chance to prove he can be a team player, someone worthy of friendship and love. For Jessie, the river is the ultimate test. Does she have what it takes to row down the mighty Colorado? The only way to find out is to get into the raft and set off to face the thundering rapids and the powerful emotions that the river unleashes.

***Shabanu, Daughter of the Wind* by Suzanne Fisher Staples** When 11-year-old Shabanu, the daughter of a nomad in the Cholistan Desert of present-day Pakistan, is pledged in marriage to an older man whose money will bring prestige to the family, she must either accept the decision, as is the custom, or risk the consequences of defying her father's wishes.

***To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee** "Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird." That is a lawyer's advice to his children as he defends the real mockingbird of Harper Lee's classic novel -- a black man charged with the rape of a white girl. Through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with rich humor and unswerving honesty the irrationality of adult attitudes toward race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s. The conscience of a town steeped in prejudice, violence, and hypocrisy is pricked by the stamina and quiet heroism of one man's struggle for justice. But the weight of history will only tolerate so much.

***Where the Lilies Bloom* by Vera Cleaver, Bill Cleaver** Mary Call has true Appalachian grit. When her dying father makes her promise to keep her brother and sisters together forever on the mountain and take no help from strangers, she is determined to keep her word -- no matter what. At first Mary Call is sure she can run the family just fine on her own. Romey and Ima Dean help her gather herbs to sell in town, using the riches of the mountains to keep the family clothed and fed. But winter sets in all too quickly. As food runs low, and the tiny house begins to cave in under the weight of the snow, Mary Call learns that the land where the lilies bloom is also a cruel and unforgiving land that deems a price for her stubborn pride.

***Z for Zachariah* by Robert C. O'Brien** Ann Burden is 16 and, as far as she knows, the only person left in the world. The nuclear radiation that destroyed the rest of the world has not touched the valley where she lives, and so she has remained, surviving as best she knows how, for the past year. Then, the smoke from a distant campfire shatters Ann's solitude. Someone else is still alive and making his way toward the valley: John Loomis, a scientist, protected from the radiation by a "safe-suit." He asserts his will almost immediately. And as his behavior becomes more and more extreme -- finally culminating in violent confrontation -- Ann must choose how she will live, in a world unlike any she has known.