

MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH Recommended Reading List

NOTE: The below list includes books either read or recommended. Some books are available in our library. Some contain mature themes and colorful language. Check for information within (parenthesis). Also, check out other books by the same authors or let me know some of your favorites to add to the list! NOTE: Books by the same author are on the same line separated by a semicolon followed by "or". As always, the best source for new works are your neighborhood librarians-bookstores. There are some web sites that are helpful- ALA Best Books for Young Adults, www.ala.org- many links, such as to YALSA (Young Adult Library Services): St Charles Public Library has a great site: <http://www.st-charles.lib.il.us/index.htm>. Also found this one, www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/lit_resources/favorites/by_age_group/YA_links.html- lots of links.

THE LIST

- Abelove, Joan, GO AND COME BACK (Racial Stereotypes, Recommended)
 Adams, Alice, AFTER THE WAR (Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes)
 Adams, Douglas, HITCHIKERS'S GUIDE TO GALAXY (Humor. See sequels)
 Alcott, Louisa, LITTLE WOMEN (Gender Differences)
 Anderson, Laurie Halse, SPEAK (Strong Female Character)
 Angelou, Maya, I KNOW WHY CAGED BIRD SINGS. (Powerful Personal Memoir)
 Avi, TRUE CONFESSIONS OF CHARLOTTE DOYLE; or WINDCATCHER; or NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH (set in High School)
 Banks, Russell, RULE OF THE BONE
 Bauer, Joan, RULES OF THE ROAD; or HOPE WAS HERE (Strong Female Characters); or THWONK (Humorous love story)
 Bauer, Marion Dane, ON MY HONOR (Dealing with Grief-Loss of best friend)
 Beals, Melba, WARRIORS DON'T CRY (Racial Issues-Integration, Autobiography)
 Blais, Madeline, IN THESE GIRLS HOPE IS A MUSCLE (High School Girls basketball team, non-fiction)
 Block, Francesca, I WAS A TEENAGE FAIRY
 Blumberg, Rhoda, ADMIRAL PERRY IN LAND OF SHOGUN; or INCREDIBLE JOURNEY OF LEWIS & CLARK (Historical)
 Blume, Judy, BLUBBER, (Dealing with obesity); or TIGER EYES (Girl becomes mainstay of family after father dies); or THEN AGAIN, MAYBE I WON'T
 Bombeck, Erma, I WANT TO GROW HAIR, I WANT TO GROW UP, I WANT TO GO TO BOISE (Dealing w/illness)
 Borland, Hal, WHEN THE LEGENDS DIE (Dealing with Ethnic Stereotypes)
 Brady, Mari, PLEASE REMEMBER ME (Dealing with Illness)
 Brashares, Ann, THE SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING PANTS
 Braithwaite, Edward, TO SIR WITH LOVE (Dealing with Racial Stereotypes)
 Bridgers, Sue Ellen, ALL TOGETHER NOW; or HOME BEFORE DARK (Life Challenges); or NOTES FOR ANOTHER LIFE; or PERMANENT CONNECTIONS
 Brooks, Bruce, BOYS WILL BE (Essays about boys); or MOVES MAKE THE MAN, (Basketball); or WHAT HEARTS
 Burnett, Frances Hodgson THE SECRET GARDEN (Coming of Age Story)
 Burns, Olive, COLD SASSY TREE (Age Differences)
 Cadnum, Michael, HEAT (Sports, Female Protagonist!)
 Calvert, Patricia, GLENNIS, BEFORE AND AFTER (Dealing with Life Challenges)
 Capps, Benjamin, A WOMAN OF THE PEOPLE (Dealing with Stereotypes)
 Card, Orson Scott, ENDER'S GAME or SPEAKER OF THE DEAD or sequels (class favorites, Science Fiction)
 Carter, Asa Earl, EDUCATION OF LITTLE TREE (Native American Protagonist)

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- Cather, MY ANTONIA
- Chambers, Aidan, TOLL BRIDGE
- Chbosky, Stephen, THE PERKS OF BEING A WALL FLOWER (Humorous, themes of self discovery)
- Childress, HERO AIN'T NOTHING BUT A SANDWHICH (Serious, Mature Material-Heroin Addict's story)
- Christie, Agatha, AND THEN THERE WERE NONE (Famous Mystery Writer)
- Clapp, Patricia, WITCHES' CHILDREN
- Cleaver, HAZEL RYE; or WHERE LILIES BLOOM
- Cochran, ROUGHNECKS (High School Football story)
- Cole, Brock, CELINE; or GOATS (Wonderful story about outcasts)
- Collier, BROTHER SAM IS DEAD. (Revolutionary War)
- Conly, Jane Leslie, CRAZY LADY (About Personal Values)
- Conrad, HEART OF DARKNESS (considered a literary classic)
- Cooney, Caroline, DRIVER'S ED (Dealing with Life Challenges)
- Cooper, Susan, GREENWITCH or GREY KING or OVERSEA, UNDER STONE (Fantasy Writer)
- Cormier, Robert, AFTER THE FIRST DEATH; or BUMBLEBEE FLIES AWAY; or CHOCOLATE WARS (Mature language, situations) or I AM THE CHEESE. (Government Conspiracies-Mature Themes); or WE ALL FALL DOWN (Struggles of intimacy) or HEROES, or RAG AND BONE SHOP or FRENCHTOWN SUMMER
- Crane, RED BADGE OF COURAGE (Civil War Story)
- Craven, I HEARD THE OWL CALL MY NAME
- Creech, Sharon, WALK TWO MOONS, (Issues of Family, recommended) or LOVE THAT DOG
- Crew, Linda, CHILDREN OF THE RIVER (Dealing with Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes)
- Crutcher, Chris, IRONMAN (Bo, an athlete, struggles with his anger); or RUNNING LOOSE (Growing up in the face of obstacles); STAYING FIT FOR SARAH BYRNES, (Dealing with Life Challenges and Differences) STOTAN, (Sports Novel. Excellent), WHALE TALK; or BEGINNINGS; or CHINESE HANDCUFFS (his books often contain mature themes and obscenities but he's a great writer)
- Culin, Charlotte, CAGES OF GLASS, FLOWERS OF TIME (Dealing with Life Challenges)
- Curtis, Christopher, THE WATSONS GO TO BIRMINGHAM-1963 (Dealing with Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes) or BUD NOT BUDDY (young orphan searching for his father, humorous)
- Cushman, Karen, CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY; or MIDWIFE'S APPRENTICE (Medieval Setting; excellent story)
- Danziger, Paula, THE CAT ATE MY GYMSUIT (Marcy grows up; a humorous writer)
- Davidson, Mary, HELEN KELLER: THE STORY OF MY LIFE (Physical Challenges, Autobiography.)
- DeClements, FIVE FINGER DISCOUNT; or SIXTH GRADE CAN KILL YOU
- Deukurs, Carl, HEART OF A CHAMPION (Sports and Friendship Story, recommended)
- Dickens, GREAT EXPECTATIONS, (Historical Fiction Classic!)
- Dillard, Annie, TEACHING A STONE TO TALK (Writer of AMERICAN CHILDHOOD)
- Dorris, Michael, A YELLOW RAFT ON BLUE WATER; or GUESTS; or MORNING GIRL (Mature Subject material and language; Dealing with Stereotypes)
- Draper, Sharon, FORGED BY FIRE; or TEARS OF A TIGER or ROMIETTE AND JULIO or DOUBLE DUTCH or DARKNESS BEFORE DAWN (strong female protagonist)
- Duncan, Lois, RANSOM, (Suspense, Intrigue, excellent characters)
- Duncan, KILLING MR GRIFFIN
- Farmer, Nancy, A GIRL NAMED DISASTER (Strong Female Character)
- Fast, Howard, APRIL MORNING (Revolutionary War); or MY GLORIOUS BROTHERS (Historical Fiction)
- Fisch, Robert, LIGHT FROM THE YELLOW STAR (Holocaust/Memoir)

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- Flagg, Fannie, *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES* (Gender Differences)
 Fleischman, Paul, *SEEDFOLKS*; (Urban Garden brings community together- 13 different narrators); or *WHIRLIGIG*
 Forbes, JOHNNY TREMAIN (Historical Fiction A Classic!)
 Fox, Paula, *SLAVE DANCER* (Historical Fiction. Boy on Slave Ship)
 Franklin, Miles, *MY BRILLIANT CAREER* (Gender Differences)
 Funke, Cornelia, *THE THIEF LORD*, (lots of my students love *INKHEART*)
 Gaines, Ernest, *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MISS JANE PITTMAN* (Dealing with Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes)
 George, *JULIE OF THE WOLVES* (Strong Female Protagonist)
 Giles, Gail, *SHATTERING GLASS*
 Goldman, William, *THE PRINCESS BRIDE* (Medieval Humorous Adventure)
 Grant, Cynthia, *THE WHITE HORSE* (Dealing with Women's issues)
 Greene, Hanna, *I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN*
 Greene, Bette, *DROWNING OF STEPHEN JONES*; or *SUMMER OF GERMAN SOLDIER* (Historical Fiction); or *PHILLIP HALL LIKE ME*
 Grisham, John, *A TIME TO KILL* or *TESTIMONY* or *PARTNER* or *THE STREET LAWYER* (or any other others; Popular Fiction Writer. Some sexual situations)
 Hamilton, Virginia, *COUSINS*
 Hanff, 84, *CHARRING CROSS ROAD*
 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *SCARLET LETTER* (Classic dealing with reputation)
 Haynes, David, *RIGHT BY MY SIDE* (African American Experience)
 Hemingway, *OLD MAN AND THE SEA* (More to story than the title hints at)
 Hesse, Karen, *OUT OF THE DUST* (Historical Fiction; Life Challenges)
 Hesser, Terry, *KISSING DOORKNOBS* (Dealing w/Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)
 Hinton, SE, (writer of *OUTSIDERS*), *RUMBLE FISH* or *TAMING THE STAR RUNNER*; or *THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW*
 Hobbs, Will, *DOWNRIVER*; or *JASON'S GOLD* (Historical Fiction); or *THE MAZE*
 Hocken, Sheila, *EMMA AND I* (Dealing with Illness/Physical Challenges)
 Hornbacher, Marya, *WASTED* (eating disorders, non fiction, excellent)
 Horwood, *DUNCTON WOOD*
 Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki, *FAREWELL TO MANZANAR* (Historical; Japanese Internment Camps during WW2; highly acclaimed book)
 Hunt, *ACROSS FIVE APRILS* (Historical Fiction, CIVIL WAR)
 Hunter, *DIARY OF LATOYA HUNTER* (Memoir of a Middle School Aged Girl)
 Hurwin, Davida, *A TIME FOR DANCING* (Dealing with Illness/Physical Challenges)
 Jacques, Brian, *REDWALL*; or *MOSSFLOWER* (Fantasy Adventures. Very popular author)
 Jiang, Ji-Li, *RED SCARF GIRL* (Dealing with Illness/Physical Challenges)
 Johnson, Angela, *TONING THE SWEEP* (African American experience. Very moving)
 Jones, Ron, *THE ACORN PEOPLE* (Mature; inspirational, deals w/illness)
 Kata, *PATCH OF BLUE*
 Keller, Helen, *MY RELIGION* (Autobiography-Personal Memoir)
 Kerr, M.E., *GENTLEHANDS*; or *IS THAT YOU MISS BLUE*, (Girls growing up among religious mysticism) or *NIGHT KITES*
 Keyes, Daniel, *FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON*
 Kim, *THE LONG SEASON OF RAIN*
 Kingsolver, Barbara, *THE BEAN TREES* (Highly acclaimed; mature subject)
 Kirkpatrick, *KEEPING THE GOOD LIGHT* (Female Protagonist)
 Klass, David, *DANGER ZONE* (Racism, prejudice, politics!)
 Klaus, Curtis, *BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE* (Strong Female Character)

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- Knowles, SEPARATE PEACE (Classic tale of friendship)
- Krakauer, Jon, INTO THIN AIR (Autobiography of a tragic experience)
- L'Engle, Madeleine, (Writer of WRINKLE IN TIME)
A RING OF ENDLESS LIGHT; or A SEVERED WASP; or A SWIFTLY TILTING PLANET; or
YOUNG UNICORNS
- Lee, Harper, TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD (Classic bout fight against prejudice; Historical
Fiction)
- LeGuin, Ursula, A WIZARD OF EARTH SEA; or VERY FAR AWAY FROM ANYWHERE ELSE
(Dealing with Differences), or ONES WHO WALK AWAY FROM OMELAS, (Utopian
issues, young protagonists)
- Leslie, IN SHADOW OF A RAINBOW
- Levin, Gail Carson, ELLA ENCHANTED
- Levitin, THE RETURN
- Lewis, C.S., LION, WITCH, WARDROBE (Any of NARNIA series acceptable)
- Lipsyte, Robert, JOE LOUIS: A CHAMPION FOR ALL AMERICA (Biography of Boxer); or ONE
FAT SUMMER (Humorous + Inspirational); or THE CHEMO KID (Dealing with Illness):
or THE CONTENDER Boxing story
- Lopez, Charlotte, LOST IN THE SYSTEM (Dealing with Life Challenges)
- Lowry, Lois, A SUMMER TO DIE or GATHERING BLUE or MESSENGER (Author of GIVER)
- Maclean, Norman, A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT
- Magorian, Michelle, GOOD NIGHT, MR TOM (Age Differences)
- Marshall, Catherine, CHRISTY (Life Challenges, Gender Difference)
- Mazer, Norma, AFTER THE RAIN (Age Differences); or OUT OF CONTROL (Sexual
Harassment) or WHEN SHE WAS GOOD
- McCullers, Carson, MEMBER OF THE WEDDING (Gender Differences; excellent)
- McDonald, Joyce, SWALLOWING STONES
- McGuigan, Mary, WHERE YOU BELONG (Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes)
- McKinley, Robin, BEAUTY (Strong Female Character); or THE BLUE SWORD, (Kidnapped
Girl becomes Warrior)
- Mead, Alice, ADEM 'S CROSS (Albanian Boy in Kosovo)
- Meigs, Cornelia, INVINCIBLE LOUISA (Gender Differences)
- Merrill, Jean, THE PUSHCAR WARS (Satire, Funny)
- Mikaelsen, Ben, PETEY (Dealing with Cerebral Palsy); or RESCUE JOSH McGUIRE
- Momaday, N. Scott, THE WAY TO RAINY MOUNTAIN (Native American experience)
- Myers, Walter Dean, FALLEN ANGELS, (Vietnam Story); or HARLEM; or HOOPS (Sports
Story); or IT AIN'T ALL FOR NOTHIN; or MONSTER; or SCORPIONS (Youth Gangs);
or SLAM! ; or THE GLORY FIELD (Civil War. Highly recommended)
- Namioka, Lensey, DEN OF THE WHITE FOX (Historical, action, suspense!)
- Naylor, Phyllis, WALKING THROUGH THE DARK (Dealing with Life Challenges)
- Nolan, Han, DANCING ON THE EDGE
- Nuwer, Hank, THE LEGEND OF JESSE OWENS (Biography)
- O'Neal, Zibby, THE LANGUAGE OF GOLDFISH (Dealing with Differences)
- O'Dell, Scot, ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS
- Orenstein, Peggy, SCHOOL GIRLS
- Orr, Wendy, PEELING THE ONION, (Dealing with Women's issues)
- Ortiz, Victoria, SOJOURNER TRUTH (Dealing with Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes)
- Orwell, George, 1984 (Futuristic Novel); or ANIMAL FARM (Politics and Human nature couched
within Animal story)
- Paterson, Katherine, BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA (Boy learns about friendship); or COME
SING JIMMY JO; JACOB I HAVE LOVED (Family Issues between twins); or JIP, HIS

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- STORY (Historical Fiction); or MASTER PUPPETEER; or THE GREAT GILLY HOPKINS(Strong Female Character)
- Paulsen, Gary, HARRIS AND ME, (Boy 's Adventures w/mischievous cousin); or HATCHET (Great Survival Story!); or NIGHTJOHN + (Slavery); or POPCORN DAYS AND BUTTERMILK NIGHTS; or SARNY (Sequel to NIGHTJOHN); or SOLDIER'S HEART; or THE FOXMAN; or TRACKER
- Peck, Richard, THE LAST SAFE PLACE ON EARTH (about the impact a group in the community can have on its members); or A DAY NO PIGS WOULD DIE (A rural Vermont boy has to grow up quickly due to his father's early death and the raising of a "pet" pig which ultimately needs to be the winter food)
- Peck, Robert SOUP ON FIRE (Comical Novel)
- Pelzer, Dave, A CHILD CALLED IT (mature subject, well written)
- Pfeffer, Susan Beth, FAMILY OF STRANGERS; or YEAR WITHOUT MICHAEL, acclaimed author
- Philbrick, Rodman, FREAK THE MIGHTY (Humorous, inspirational)
- Plummer, Louise, UNLIKELY ROMANCE OF KATE BJORKMAN
- Potok, MY NAME IS ASHER LEV; or THE CHOSEN (Wonderful books about friendship)
- Pullman, Phillip, RUBY IN THE SMOKE; or THE GOLDEN COMPASS; or THE SUBTLE KNIFE, (great dark mysteries)
- Quackenbush, Robert, CLARA BARTON (Dealing with Gender Issues, Biography)
- Raskin, THE WESTING GAME (Strong Female Character)
- Rawlings, THE YEARLING (Animal Story)
- Rawls, WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS
- Rhodes, Atwater, IN THE FOREST OF THE NIGHT
- Richter, Conrad, THE LIGHT IN THE FOREST (Dealing with Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes)
- Riordan, Rick, THE LIGHTNING THIEF. (Big class favorite)
- Rodowsky, Colby, REMEMBERING MOG (Dealing with Life Challenges)
- Roop, Peter, SUSAN B ANTHONY (Biography, Gender Differences)
- Rowling, HARRY POTTER Series (ANY acceptable)
- Rylant, EVERY LIVING THING; or SING MAY (Very moving remembrance)
- Sachar, Louis, HOLES (Wrongly accused, Stanley is sent to a boot camp for young offenders, where he discovers both corruption and a connection to his past.)
- Salisbury, Graham, BLUE SKIN OF THE SEA
- Sanders, Dori, CLOVER (Dealing with Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes)
- Schaefer, SHANE (Western!)
- Serraillier, Ian, ESCAPE FROM WARSAW (World War II Story)
- Shusterman, Neal, WHAT DADDY DID (Dealing with Life Challenges. Mature Themes)
- Sleator, William, ODDBALLS (Humor. Personal Memories)
- Slepian, Jan, THE ALFRED SUMMER, (4 outcasts face limitations. Very inspirational)
- Soto, Gary, A SUMMER LIFE; or FIRE IN MY HANDS; or LIVING UP THE STREET; or TAKING SIDES (In his books, this excellent author shares his own Hispanic experience)
- Sparks, Beatrice, JAY'S JOURNAL; or IT HAPPENED TO NANCY
- Speare, THE SIGN OF THE BEAVER; or THE WITCH OF BLACKBIRD POND
- Spinelli, Jerry, author of MANIAC MAGEE, STARGIRL (Strong Female Character); or THERE'S A GIRL IN MY HAMMERLOCK (Gender Differences); or WHO PUT THAT HAIR IN MY TOOTHBRUSH (Humor. Boy's Romantic escapades); or WRINGER.
- Stanley, CHILDREN OF DUSTBOWL (Historical Fiction)
- Staples, Suzanne, SHABANU: DAUGHTER OF THE WIND (Young woman struggles with growing up in the desert of Pakistan. Very well written. Some mature subject material)

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- Steinbeck, John, EAST OF EDEN; or LONG VALLEY; or TRAVELS WITH CHARLEY; or THE PEARL; or RED PONY
- Stewart, Trenton Lee, THE MYSTERIOUS BENEDICT SOCIETY (Another class favorite)
- Taylor, Mildred, ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY (Historical, Excellent-racial issues); or SONG OF THE TREES (prequel)
- Temple, TASTE OF SALT (Moving Haitian experience. Mature reading)
- TenBoom, Corrie, THE HIDING PLACE (Dealing with Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes)
- Thomas, Rob, DOING TIME (Provocative. Serious subject material) or Rats Saw God - Steve, brilliant but nearly failing out of high school, recounts the events that brought him from straight-A sophomore to apathetic senior
- Tolan, S, THE PLAGUE
- Townsend, Sue, THE SECRET DIARY OF ADRIAN MOLE (humorous, Boy living in England)
- Trueman, Terry, STUCK IN NEUTRAL
- Twain, Mark, ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER (A classic!)
- Uchida, Yoshiko, A JAR OF DREAMS; or THE INVISIBLE THREAD (Autobiography of Japanese American Girl in internment camp during WW II)
- Valens, E G, THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN (Physical Illness/Challenge)
- Verne, AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
- Voigt, Cynthia, COME A STRANGER; or DICEY'S SONG (Kids on own); or HOMECOMING; or IZZY, WILLY-NILLY (Dealing w/illness); or JACKAROO (Most of her Novels feature Strong Female Protagonists)
- Wallace, Rich, PLAYING WITHOUT THE BALL (Sports story)
- Wangerin, Walter, THE BOOK OF THE DUN COW (Animal Fantasy, battle of good and evil)
- Wells, H.G., THE INVISIBLE MAN
- Werlin, Nancy, LOCKED INSIDE; or THE KILLER'S COUSIN (Mystery/Suspense Novels)
- Wersba, Barbara, RUN SOFTLY, GO FAST; or WHISTLE ME HOME
- Westall, Robert, DEMONS AND SHADOWS (Ghost Stories); or KINGDOM BY THE SEA, (WWII Boy/Dog journey)
- Wheeler, Leslie, JANE ADDAMS (Gender Differences)
- White, BELLE PRATER'S BOY
- White, Robb, DEATHWATCH (Survival Story)
- White, Ryan, RYAN WHITE: MY OWN STORY (Dealing with Illness/Physical Challenges)
- Wiesel, Elie, NIGHT (Holocaust Memoir. Powerful. Mature subject)
- Wittlinger, Ellen, HARD LOVE
- Wolff, Virginia, BAT 6 (Ethnic Stereotypes); or MAKE LEMONADE (Dealing with Life Challenges); or PROBABLY STILL NICK SWANSON (Dealing with Differences)
- Woodson, Jacqueline, I HADN'T MEANT TO TELL YOU THIS (Racial Stereotypes-Marie, a popular black girl, befriends Lena, a poor, white girl living with a secret of abuse.) or If You Come Softly, great book alternating between the point of view of the young woman and the young man in the relationship.
- Yep, Laurence, CHILD OF THE OWL; or THE STAR FISHER (Chinese American Experience)
- Zindel, Paul, Author of PIGMAN, DAVID AND DELLA; or MY DARLING, MY HAMBURGER, (Love, Sex, betrayal come to a young girl) PIGMAN AND ME (Age Differences)
- Zusak, Markus, The Book Thief- serious work, but well written