

The Best Books for Grades 6-8



Alexander, Lloyd The Arkadians

A young hero embarks on a quest in this mythical novel.

Iron Ring

Driven by his sense of honor, young King Tamar sets off on a perilous journey, during which he meets talking animals, villainous and noble kings, demons, and the love of his life.

Remarkable Journey of Prince Jen

Chinese-inspired tale of a young prince whose quest to deliver six objects to a mystical king leads him out of boyhood and into triumph.

Based on recommendations of the
**Rhode Island Educational
Media Association**, an organization
of school library media specialists, 2001

Appleman-Jurman, Alicia Alicia: My Story

The story of a young girl who rescued thousands of Jews after losing her entire family to the Nazis.

Avi Nothing But the Truth

A ninth grader's suspension for humming "The Star-Spangled Banner" during homeroom becomes a national news story.

Something Upstairs

When he moves from Los Angeles to Providence, Kenny discovers that his new house is haunted by the spirit of a black slave boy who asks Kenny to return with him to the early nineteenth century and prevent his murder.

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle

As the only female on a transatlantic voyage in 1832, Charlotte learns that the captain is murderous and the crew rebellious.

Wolf Rider

The phone caller said he has just killed Nina, a student in Andy's father's class. She is still alive, but when he tells her what happened, he falls under suspicion.

Bloor, Edward Tangerine

Twelve-year-old Paul, who lives in the shadow of his football hero brother Erik, fights for the right to play soccer despite his near blindness and slowly begins to remember the incident that damaged his eyesight.

Blume, Judy Just As Long As We're Together

When Alison moves to town, Stephanie hopes that her whole group will be best friends. The trials of junior high, however, make all the girls worry about how they can possibly remain friends.

Brooks, Bruce The Moves Make the Man

A Black boy and an emotionally troubled white boy in North Carolina form a precarious friendship.

Bunting, Eve Someone Is Hiding on Alcatraz Island

Danny saves an older woman from a mugger's attack and ends up hiding out in an abandoned prison from the gang he crossed in saving her.

Canfield, Jack, et al, ed. Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul

A collection of short stories and true life anecdotes specifically geared toward encouraging today's teenager.

**Cleary, Beverly Girl from Yamhill
A Memoir**

The popular children's author relates events of her childhood.

Conly, Jane Leslie While No One Was Watching

When two brothers steal a rabbit from a back yard in the rich part of town, the incident brings about their collision with other children from a background very different from their own.

Cooper, Susan The Dark is Rising series

Adventures in the supernatural as Will Stanton takes part in eternal conflict between good and evil.

King of Shadows

While in London as part of an all-boy acting company preparing to perform in a replica of the Globe Theatre, Nat Field finds himself transported back to 1599 and performing under the tutelage of Shakespeare himself.

Coulombis, Audrey Getting Near to Baby

Staying with her Aunt Patty and Uncle Hob helps Willa Jo and her younger sister come to terms with the death of their family's baby.

Creech, Sharon Chasing Redbird

Thirteen-year-old Zinnia Taylor uncovers family secrets and self truths while clearing a mysterious settler trail.

Walk Two Moons

Sal hopes that her missing mother will return home.

The Wanderer

Thirteen-year-old Sophie and her cousin Cody record their transatlantic crossing aboard the Wanderer, a forty-five foot sailboat, which, along with uncles and another cousin, is en route to visit their grandfather in England.

Curtis, Christopher Paul Bud, Not Buddy

Ten-year-old Bud, a motherless boy living in Flint, Michigan during the Great Depression, escapes a bad foster home and sets out in search of the man he believes to be his father, a renowned bandleader.

The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963

The ordinary interactions and everyday routines of the Watsons, an African American family living in Flint, Michigan, are drastically changed after they go to visit Grandma in Alabama in the summer of 1963.

Cushman, Karen Ballad of Lucy Whipple

A rich historical novel recounting Lucy's strength and courage as she and her New England family move to California during the gold rush.

Catherine, Called Birdy

Medieval England is the background for this story of a spirited girl narrated in diary form.

Midwife's Apprentice

A homeless girl is taken as an apprentice by a midwife in the Middle Ages.

DeFelice, Cynthia Weasel

Alone in the frontier wilderness in the winter of 1839 while his father is recovering from an injury, eleven-year-old Nathan runs afoul of the renegade killer known as Weasel and makes a surprising discovery about the concept of revenge.

Dickinson, Peter Eva

After a terrible accident, a young girl wakes up to discover that she has been given the body of a chimpanzee.

Duncan, Lois Killing Mr. Griffin

A teenager suggests playing a cruel trick on the English teacher, but did he intend it to end with murder?

Farmer, Nancy The Ear, The Eye and the Arm

Adventures of three children in 23rd century Africa.

Girl Named Disaster

A complex novel about courage, community and continuity of an African-American girl who embarks on a life-altering journey and draws strength from spirits and ancestors along the way.

Fenner, Carol Randall's Wall

An artistically talented but impoverished fifth-grade boy has built a wall of defense to protect himself from the pain of human relationships- a wall which begins to crumble when a dynamic and compassionate classmate decides to interfere in his life.

Fleischman, Paul Bull Run

Men and women from all walks of life describe the glory, the horror, the thrill and the disillusionment of the first battle of the Civil War.

Fox, Paula The Slave Dancer

Kidnapped by the crew of an Africa-bound ship, a thirteen year old boy discovers, to his horror, that he is on a slaver and his job is to play music for the exercise periods of the human cargo.

Frank, Anne Anne Frank, The Diary of a Young Girl

A precocious young girl, forced to live in enforced seclusion with family and friends to hide from the Nazis, keeps a diary of events and thoughts.

Freedman, Russell Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery

A detailed portrait of Eleanor Roosevelt's political career, personal causes, and private life.

Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor

A biography of Lewis Hine, champion of laws against child labor.

Giff, Patricia Reilly Nory Ryan's Song

Life has been difficult for Nory and her family, but this year a terrible blight attacks the potatoes and the Ryan family must face their most trying challenge yet.

Haddix, Margaret Among the Hidden

In a future where the Population Police enforce the law limiting a family to only two children, Luke has lived all his twelve years in isolation and fear on his family's farm, until another "third" convinces him that the government is wrong.

Hess, Karen Out of the Dust

In a series of poems, fifteen year old Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the dust bowl years of the Depression.

Hinton, S.E. The Outsiders

According to Ponyboy, there are two kinds of people in the world: greasers and socs. A soc (short for "social") has money and can get away with just about anything. A greaser, on the other hand, always lives on the outside and needs to watch his back. Ponyboy is happy to be a greaser until one terrible night when his friend Johnny kills a soc. The murder helps Ponyboy realize that pain feels the same whether a soc or a greaser.

Jacques, Brian Redwall

The first in the Redwall series tells what happens when the peaceful life of ancient Redwall Abbey is shattered by the arrival of the evil rat, Cluny and his villainous hordes.

Konigsburg, E.L. Silent to the Bone

Wrongly accused of injuring his baby half-sister, 13 year-old Branwell loses his power of speech. Only his friend, Connor, is able to reach him and uncover the truth about what really happened.

Lawrence, Iain The Wreckers

Shipwrecked after a vicious storm, fourteen year old John Spencer attempts to save his father and himself while also dealing with an evil secret about the Cornish coastal town where they are stranded.

L'Engle, Madeleine A Wrinkle in Time

Meg and her friends become involved with unearthly strangers and a search for Meg's father, who has disappeared working for the government.

Lowry, Lois Number the Stars

In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.

Myers, Walter Dean Fallen Angels

The story of one black teenager's twelve month tour of duty in Vietnam. Includes realistic language.

O'Brien, Robert Z is for Zachariah

A novel about the aftermath of nuclear devastation.

Paterson, Katherine The Bridge to Terabithia

The life of a ten-year-old boy in rural Virginia expands when he becomes friends with a newcomer who subsequently meets an untimely death trying to reach their hideaway, Terabithia, during a storm.

The Great Gilly Hopkins

An eleven-year-old foster child tries to cope with her longings and fears as she schemes against everyone who tries to be friendly.

Jacob Have I Loved

The story of two very different twin sisters who live on an island in the Chesapeake Bay during World War II.

Lyddie

An impoverished Vermont farm girl is determined to gain her independence by becoming a factory worker in Lowell, Massachusetts in the 1840s.

Paulsen, Gary Hatchet

After a plane crash, 13 year-old Brian spends 54 days in the wilderness, learning to survive initially with only the aid of a hatchet his mother gave him.
My Life in Dog Years

The author describes some of the dogs that have had special places in his life.

Peck, Richard A Long Way From Chicago

A boy recounts his annual summer trips to rural Illinois with his sister during the Great Depression to visit their larger-than-life grandmother.

Pullman, Phillip The Amber Spyglass

Third in the trilogy. Explains the painful price Lyra must pay to walk through the land of the dead and the haunting power of Dr. Malone's amber spyglass.

The Golden Compass

First in the trilogy. A gripping adventure story in which Lyra sets off for the Arctic in pursuit of kidnappers and her best friend.

The Subtle Knife

Second in the trilogy. As the boundaries between worlds begin to dissolve, Lyra and her daemon help Will search for his father and for a powerful, magical knife.

Rawls, Wilson Where the Red Fern Grows

A boy and his two dogs go through adventure and tragedy in the Ozark Mountain Valley.

Rowling, J.K. Harry Potter series

Rescued from the outrageous neglect of his aunt and uncle, a young boy with a great destiny proves his worth while attending Hogwarts School for Wizards and Witches.

Sachar, Louis Holes

As further evidence of his family's bad fortune which they attribute to a curse on a distant relative, Stanley is sent to a correctional camp in the Texas desert where he finds his first real friend, a treasure, and a new sense of himself.

Spinelli, Jerry Wrinker

As Palmer comes of age, he must either accept the violence of being a wringer at his town's annual Pigeon Day or find the courage to oppose it.

Tolkien, J.R.R. The Hobbit

The delightful tale which first creates the fantasy called Middle Earth and its charming dwarf-like creatures, the Hobbits.

Voigt, Cynthia Dacey's Song

A young girl struggles to understand her mother's mental

illness and hold her family together as they start a new life with their grandmother.

Homecoming

Young Dicey fights to keep her brothers and sister together and out of foster homes.

White, Ruth Belle Prater's Boy

Novel about a woman's disappearance in 1950s Appalachia.

Woodson, Jacqueline If You Come Softly

After meeting at their private school in New York, 15 year-old Jeremiah who is black and whose parents are separated, and Ellie who is white and whose mother has twice abandoned her, fall in love and try to cope with people's reactions.

Yolen, Jane The Devil's Arithmetic

Hannah resents the traditions of her Jewish heritage until time travel places her in the middle of a small Jewish village in Nazi-occupied Poland.

Zindel, Paul The Pigman

Two teenagers befriend an old man they meet after playing a telephone prank on him. His tragic death shakes their sense of right and wrong.

*Most annotations were taken from the PERMA-BOUND CATALOG.



*Compiled by Susan Fleisig and
members of the RI Educational Media
Association*