

## Palo Alto Middle Schools Summer 2010 Reading Suggestions

Note: (YA) = Young Adult title for more mature readers

### Classics

**Austen, Jane**                      *Sense and Sensibility*

In nineteenth-century England, two sisters are drawn into unhappy romances despite the cool judgment of one and the emotional intensity of the other. Students may also read any other books by Jane Austen.

**Bradbury, Ray**                      *The Illustrated Man*

The narrator, on a walking tour, encounters a vagabond whose body is covered with fantastic tattoos that, when darkness falls, become animated and “tell” tales. Playful, satirical, sometimes savage but just as often wistful, the stories are vintage Bradbury.

**Carroll, Lewis**                      *Alice in Wonderland*

A little girl falls down a rabbit hole and discovers a world of nonsensical and amusing characters.

**McCarty, Nick**                      *The Iliad* or any other version including the original by Homer

This is a retelling of Homer's classic Greek epic of Helen, Queen of Sparta, whose kidnapping by Paris, a Trojan prince, ignites the Trojan War. This version is written for the fifth through eighth-grade classroom.

**Mitchell, Adrian**                      *The Odyssey (DK Version)* or any other version including the original by Homer

This is a retelling of Homer's epic that describes the wanderings of Odysseus after the fall of Troy. Illustrated notes throughout the text explain the historical background of the story.

**Stoker, Bram**                      *Dracula*

Having discovered the double identity of the wealthy Transylvanian nobleman, Count Dracula, a small group of people vows to rid the world of the evil vampire. The author of the *Vladimir Tod* series says if you like vampire stories, this is the best!

**Tolkien, J.R.R.**                      *The Lord of the Rings* (trilogy) or *The Hobbit*

Frodo, the hobbit, and a band of warriors from the different kingdoms set out to destroy the Ring of Power before the evil Sauron grasps control.

### Contemporary

**Alvarez, Julia**                      *Return to Sender* (2010 Pura Belpre Award)

After his family hires migrant Mexican workers to help save their Vermont farm from foreclosure, eleven-year-old Tyler befriends the oldest daughter, but when he discovers they may not be in the country legally, he realizes that real friendship knows no borders.

**Clements, Andrew**                      *Extra Credit*

Three young middle-school-age children, Abby, Amira, and Sadeed, exchange letters back and forth between the prairies of Illinois and the mountains of Afghanistan and begin to bridge a gap across cultural and religious divides. Students may choose any of the other upper grade books by Andrew Clements.

**Han, Jenny**                      *The Summer I Turned Pretty* (YA)

Belly spends the summer she turns sixteen at the beach just like every other summer of her life, but this time things are very different as she finds herself falling for a boy she has known since childhood.

**Konigsburg, E.L.**

***The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place***

Upon leaving an oppressive summer camp, twelve-year-old Margaret Rose Kane spearheads a campaign to preserve three unique towers her granduncles have been building in their backyard for over forty years.

**Lord, Cynthia**

***Rules*** (2007 Newbery Honor)

Frustrated at life with an autistic brother, twelve-year-old Catherine longs for a normal existence, but her world is further complicated by a friendship with a young paraplegic.

**Potter, Ellen**

***Slob***

Picked on, overweight genius Owen tries to invent a television that can see the past to find out what happened the day his parents were killed.

**Stead, Rebecca**

***When You Reach Me*** (2010 Newbery Award Winner)

As her mother prepares to be a contestant on the 1980s television game show, "The \$20,000 Pyramid," a twelve-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.

**Stone, Jeff**

***Dragon***

Thirteen-year-old Long, a dragon-style kung fu master and the oldest of the five survivors of the destroyed Cangzhen, must get to the Forbidden City before Tonglong declares himself emperor. Latest book in the *Five Ancestors* series.

**Yee, Lisa**

***Millicent Min, Girl Genius***

In a series of journal entries, eleven-year-old Millicent Min records her struggles to learn to play volleyball, tutor her enemy, deal with her grandmother's departure, and make friends over the course of a tumultuous summer. Sequels are *Stanford Wong Flunks Big-Time* and *So Totally Emily Ebers*.

**Zucker, Naomi**

***Callie's Rules***

Eleven-year-old Callie Jones tries to keep track of all the rules for fitting in that other middle school students seem to know, but when the town decides to replace Halloween with an Autumn Festival, Callie leads her large family in an unusual protest.

## **Fantasy/Science Fiction**

**Beddor, Frank**

***Archenemy***

The people of Wonderland lose their creative drive when the power of the Heart Crystal is depleted, and when even Queen Alyss loses her powers, everybody takes comfort in the fact that Redd Heart is similarly disabled. This is the third in the series which includes *The Looking Glass Wars* and *Seeing Redd*.

**Collins, Suzanne**

***Catching Fire (YA)*** (2010 CA Young Reader Medal Nominee)

By winning the annual Hunger Games, District 12 tributes Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark have secured a life of safety and plenty for themselves and their families, but because they won by defying the rules, they unwittingly become the faces of an impending rebellion. This is the sequel to *The Hunger Games*.

**DiCamillo, Kate**

***The Magician's Elephant***

When ten-year-old orphan Peter Augustus Duchene encounters a fortune teller in the marketplace one day who tells him that his sister, who is presumed dead, is in fact alive, he embarks on a remarkable series of adventures in an attempt to find her.

**Farmer, Nancy**

***The Islands of the Blessed***

Two years after their adventures in the *Land of the Silver Apples*, the apprentice bard Jack and his Viking companion Thorgil confront the malevolent spirit of a vengeful mermaid and begin a quest that casts them among the fin folk of Notland. Nancy Farmer is a local award-winning author. Students may also read *House of the Scorpion*.

**Gordon, Roderick & Brian Williams**      ***Deeper***

Boy archaeologist Will Burrows wanders the caverns beneath the Colony with his best friend Chester and brother Cal, falls upon the Styx's plan to get rid of Topsoilers with a deadly plague, and risks his life to foil their plot while wondering if his killer stepsister is still on the loose. *Tunnels* and *Freefall* are sequels.

**Hale, Shannon**

***Forest Born***

In this fourth entry in the *Books of Bayern* series, Forest-born Rinna feels peace among the trees, but when they shut her out after she kisses a boy, she can't bear it and leaves home. Her brother Razo invites her to the city to be one of Queen Ani's waiting women. She happily accepts, only to discover her own strength comes from places both expected and unexpected. Other books in the *Books of Bayern* series include *Goose Girl*, *Enna Burning* and *River Secrets*.

**Landy, Derek**      ***Skulduggery Pleasants: Scepter of the Ancients*** (2010 CA Young Reader Medal Nominee)

When twelve-year-old Stephanie inherits her weird uncle's estate, she must join forces with Skulduggery Pleasant, a skeleton mage, to save the world from the *Faceless Ones*. Sequel is *Playing with Fire*.

**Oppel, Kenneth**

***Starclimber***

As members of the first crew of astronauts, Matt Cruse and Kate de Vries journey into outer space on the Starclimber and face a series of catastrophies that threaten the survival of all on board. This is the sequel to *Skybreaker* and *Airborn*.

**Pearson, Mary**

***Adoration of Jenna Fox*** (YA - 2010 CA Young Reader Medal Nominee)

In the not-too-distant future, when biotechnological advances have made synthetic bodies and brains possible but illegal, a seventeen-year-old girl, recovering from a serious accident and suffering from memory lapses, learns a startling secret about her existence.

**Pfeffer, Susan**

***Life as We Knew It***

Through journal entries sixteen-year-old Miranda describes her family's struggle to survive after a meteor hits the moon, causing worldwide tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

**Riordan, Rick**

***The Demigod Files***

Details three of Percy Jackson's adventures, as he battles all kinds of mythological monsters in the modern world, and also features interviews with Connor, Travis, Clarisse, Annabeth, Grover, and Percy; a map of Camp-Blood; and more. Students may also read any of the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series including *The Last Olympian*.

**Saci, Lloyd**

***The Carbon Diaries 2015 (YA)***

In 2015, when England becomes the first nation to introduce carbon dioxide rationing in a drastic bid to combat climate change, sixteen-year-old Laura documents the first year of rationing as her family spirals out of control. Sequel is *The Carbon Diaries 2017 (YA)*

**Shusterman, Neal**

***Unwind*** (YA -2010 CA Young Reader Medal Nominee)

Three teens embark upon a cross-country journey in order to escape from a society that salvages body parts from children ages thirteen to eighteen.

**Westerfield, Scott**

*Leviathan (YA)*

In an alternate 1914 Europe, fifteen-year-old Austrian Prince Alek is on the run from the Clanker Powers who are attempting to take over the globe using mechanical machinery. He forms an uneasy alliance with Deryn, who is disguised as a boy, and joins the British Air Service, to learn how to fly genetically engineered beasts. Westerfield is the author of the *Uglies* and *Pretties* series.

## **Historical Fiction**

**Auch, Mary Jane**

*Ashes of Roses*

Sixteen-year-old Rose Nolan arrives on Ellis Island in 1911 in the hopes of starting a new life, but after most of her family is sent back to Ireland, she must find her own way in a new country and fend for herself and her younger sister.

**Barnhouse, Rebecca**

*The Book of the Maidservant*

In 1413, a young maidservant accompanies her deeply religious mistress, Dame Margery Kempe, on a pilgrimage to Rome. Includes author's note on Kempe, writer of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, considered by some to be the first autobiography in the English language.

**Choldenko, Gennifer.**

*Al Capone Shines My Shoes*

Moose Flanagan, who lives on Alcatraz along with his family and the families of the other prison guards, is frightened when he discovers that noted gangster Al Capone, a prisoner there, wants a favor in return for the help that he secretly gave Moose. This is the sequel to *Al Capone Does My Shirts*.

**Curtis, Christopher**

*Elijah of Buxton* (2010 CA Young Reader Medal Nominee)

Eleven-year-old Elijah Freeman, the first free-born child in Buxton, Canada, which is a haven for slaves fleeing the American South in 1859, uses his wits and skills to try to bring to justice the lying preacher who has stolen money that was to be used to buy a family's freedom.

**Godbersen, Anna**

*The Luxe (YA)*

In Manhattan in 1899, five teens of different social classes lead dangerously scandalous lives, despite the strict rules of society and the best laid plans of parents and others.

**Kadohota, Cynthia**

*Cracker: the Best Dog in Vietnam* (2010 CA Young Reader Medal Nominee)

A young soldier in Vietnam bonds with his bomb-sniffing dog.

**Kelly, Jacqueline**

*The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate* (2010 Newbery Honor)

In central Texas in 1899, eleven-year-old Callie Vee Tate is instructed to be a lady by her mother, learns about love from the older three of her six brothers, and studies the natural world with her grandfather, the latter of which leads to an important discovery.

**Kethum, Liza**

*Newsgirl*

Twelve-year-old Amelia Forrester arrives in San Francisco with her family in 1851 and dresses like a boy in the mostly-male town, cutting her hair and wearing a cap to work as a newsboy in order to sell Eastern newspapers and participate in the biggest stories of the day.

**Lee, Tony**

*Outlaw: The Legend of Robin Hood*

A graphic novel retelling of the legend of Robin Hood, revealing why he decided to become an outlaw in Crusades-era England, fighting for justice rather than personal gain.

**Magoon, Kekla**

***The Rock and the River*** (2010 Coretta Scott King Steptoe Award)

In 1968 Chicago, Sam Childs is living in the shadows of two important people – his father, a civil rights activist working with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his older brother “Stick,” who has joined the Black Panther Party. These different approaches to achieving racial equality place Sam between the rock and the river.

**Moran, Katy**

***Bloodline (YA)***

While traveling through early seventh-century Britain trying to stop an impending war, Essa, who bears the blood of native British tribes and of the invading English, discovers that his mother is alive and he, himself, is a prince of the northern kingdom, but he has loyalties and loved ones in the south to whom he is compelled to return.

**Philbrick, Rodman**

***The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg*** (2010 Newbery Honor)

Homer P. Figg escapes from his wretched foster home in Pine Swamp, Maine, and sets out to find his beloved older brother, Harold, who has been illegally sold into the Union Army.

## **Humor**

**Breathed, Berke**

***Flawed Dogs: The Novel: The Shocking Raid on Westminster***

After being framed by a jealous poodle, a dachshund is left for dead, but comes back with a group of mutts from the National Last Ditch Dog Depository to disrupt the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club dog show and exact revenge on Cassius the poodle.

**Horowitz, Anthony**

***The Falcon's Malteser*** *A Diamond Brothers Mystery*

Tim Diamond, a poor-minded detective, is entrusted with a package worth five million dollars, until the owner of the package is murdered, and it is up to Tim and his brother, Nick, to outwit every crook in town who is trying to get the money. Sequels include *Public Enemy Number Two* and *South by Southeast*.

**Kinney, Jeff**

***Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days***

Greg Heffley recounts his daily experiences during summer vacation as he tries to live out his ultimate fantasy of spending the days indoors playing video games with no responsibilities and no rules, despite his mother's attempts to pack the summer with outdoor activities and family fun. Students may read any of his first three diaries.

**Lubar, David**

***Punished!***

Logan and his friend Benedict are playing tag in the library when a mysterious man punishes him by making him speak only in puns. Students may also read *Hidden Talents*.

**Martin, Ann M.**

***The Meanest Doll in the World***

Annabelle and Tiffany, dolls who are best friends living in the Palmer house, have an adventure when they hide in Kate Palmer's backpack, are carried to school, mistakenly go to another house and try to stop Princess Muni, a doll who threatens all doll-dom. Students may read any of Ms. Martin's other books.

**Peck, Richard**

***A Season of Gifts***

A companion novel to: *A Long Way from Chicago* and *A Year Down Yonder*. Relates the surprising gifts bestowed on twelve-year-old Bob Barnhart and his family, who have recently moved to a small Illinois town in 1958, by their larger-than-life neighbor, Mrs. Dowdel.

## Multicultural

**Calcines, Eduardo**

*Leaving Glorytown: One Boy's Struggle Under Castro*

The author reflects on his childhood growing up in 1960s Cuba, discussing how his family was treated for applying for an exit visa to the United States, his fears of being drafted into the Army, the conditions of his poor neighborhood, and more.

**Cameron, Ann**

*Colibri* (YA)

Kidnapped when she was very young by an unscrupulous man who has forced her to lie and beg to get money, a twelve-year-old Mayan girl endures an abusive life, always wishing she could return to the parents she can hardly remember.

**Grimes, Nikki**

*Jazmin's Notebook* (YA) (1999 Coretta Scott King Honor)

Jazmin, an African-American teenager who lives with her older sister in a small Harlem apartment in the 1960s, finds strength in writing poetry and keeping a record of the events in her sometimes difficult life. Students may also read *Bronx Masquerade* (YA) (2003 Coretta Scott King Honor).

**Lin, Grace**

*Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* (2010 Newbery Honor)

Minli, an adventurous girl from a poor village, buys a magical goldfish, and then joins a dragon who cannot fly on a quest to find the Old Man of the Moon in hopes of bringing life to Fruitless Mountain and freshness to Jade River. Chinese folktales are beautifully woven into this original story.

**Naidoo, Beverley**

*Burn My Heart*

While the Mau Mau rebellion threatens the British settlers living in Kenya during the 1950s, Mathew and Mugo maintain their friendship, despite their different races, but during these tense times, a single act of betrayal could alter everything. Students may also read *Web of Lies* or *The Other Side of Truth*.

**Park, Linda Sue**

*When My Name Was Keoko*

With national pride and occasional fear, a brother and sister face the increasingly oppressive occupation of Korea by Japan during World War II, which threatens to suppress Korean culture entirely. Students may also read *A Single Shard*, *The Kite Fighters*, or *Project Mulberry*.

## Mystery/Suspense/Horror/Adventure

**Brewer, Heather**

*The Chronicles of Vladimir Tod: Eighth Grade Bites*

First in the Chronicles series, thirteen-year-old half-vampire Vladimir Tod struggles to navigate the ups and downs of eighth grade while keeping his untested powers and impulses under control.

**Carter, Ally**

*Heist Society*

Fifteen-year-old Kat schemes her way into the best boarding school, hoping to leave the thieving antics of her family behind her, but Hal, a former co-conspirator, appears on campus to tell Kat that a powerful mobster believes her father stole art from a priceless collection, and in order to save him, Kat will have to recover the paintings. Students may also read any of the Gallagher Academy, a spy school for girls series.

**Duncan, Lois**

*I Know What You Did Last Summer*

Four teenagers who have desperately tried to conceal their responsibility for a hit-and-run accident are pursued by a mystery figure seeking revenge. Students may also read any of Ms. Duncan's many mysteries.

**Hiaasen, Carl**

*Scat*

Nick and Marta are both suspicious when their biology teacher, the feared Mrs. Bunny Starch, disappears, and try to uncover the truth despite the police and headmaster's insistence that nothing is wrong. Students may also read *Hoot* or *Flush*.

**Morton-Shaw, Christine**

***The Hunt for the Seventh***

Jim moves with his dad and sister to Minerva Hall where a ghostly voice urging him to "find the Seventh" draws him into a sort of macabre treasure hunt for clues to an ancient prophecy that threatens them all.

**Shan, Darren**

***Cirque du Freak series***

The series begins with two boys, best friends, who encounter a vampire and a deadly spider at an illegal freak show and consequently must make life-changing choices.

**Wooding, Chris**

***Malice***

Presents a middle-school thriller about three boys who become trapped in the deadly world of a comic book.

## **Non fiction**

**Heiligman, Deborah**

***Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith*** (Michael L. Printz 2010 Honor)

A biography of English naturalist Charles Darwin that provides an account of the personality behind evolutionary theory and the affect of his work on his personal life, such as his relationship with his religious wife.

**Hoose, Phillip**

***Claudette Colvin : Twice Toward Justice*** (2010 Newbery Honor)

Presents an account of fifteen-year-old Claudette Colvin, an African-American girl who refused to give up her seat to a white woman on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, nine months before Rosa Parks, and covers her role in a crucial civil rights case.

**Mann, Charles**

***Before Columbus: the Americas of 1491***

A young reader's version of the adult book titled *1491 New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* based upon the explorations of the Americas in 1491, before those of Christopher Columbus.

**Myron, Vicki**

***Dewey: The Small-Town Library Cat who Touched the World***

Tells the story of Dewey Readmore Books, the resident cat at Spencer Public Library in Spencer, Iowa, who was found in the book return in December 1988, adopted by the library staff, and immediately became a loving member of the community. Although this book was written originally for adults, kids love it too.

**Paulsen, Gary**

***My Life in Dog Years***

The author describes how dogs have impacted his life from childhood through the present day, recounting the stories of his first dog, Snowball, in the Philippines; Dirk, who protected him from bullies; and Cookie, who saved his life. Or any number of Mr. Paulsen's adventures in books.

**Rylant, Cynthia**

***The Beautiful Stories of Life: Six Greek Myths, Retold***

Contains retellings of six stories from Greek mythology, including the tales of Pandora, Persephone, Orpheus, Pygmalion, Narcissus, and Psyche.

**Siy, Alexandra**

***Cars on Mars: Roving the Red Planet***

Tells the story of NASA's Mars Exploration Rover mission and looks at what scientists have learned from the photographs and data sent by roving mechanical geologists Spirit and Opportunity since their landing on the planet.

## Sports

**Berman, Len.**

***The Greatest Moments in Sports***

Provides accounts of twenty-five of the greatest moments in sports, each with photographs and statistics, and includes an audio CD that features some of the actual broadcasts of the games.

**Green, Tim**

***Football Champ***

Twelve-year-old Troy's uncanny gift for predicting football plays proves a powerful secret weapon for the Atlanta Falcons, but a seedy reporter with a vendetta suspects something is going on and sets out to shred the reputations of Troy and star linebacker Seth Halloway.

**Gutman, Dan**

***Million Dollar Putt***

Assisted by his neighbor, Birdie, blind thirteen-year-old Ed "Bogie" Bogard will win one million dollars if he can sink a ten-foot putt in Hawaii's fifth annual Angus Killick Memorial Tourny. Students may also choose to read a book from his baseball card series.

**Lupica, Mike**

***Million-Dollar Throw***

In his newest baseball novel, Lupica tells the story of fourteen-year-old Brian who becomes a bat boy for the Detroit Tigers even though his mother feels baseball ruined her marriage to his father. Students may also read *Heat* or *The Big Field*.

**Strother, Scott**

***The Adventurous Book of Outdoor Games***

Provides instructions for over one hundred outside games, including capture the flag, wall ball, and soccer golf.

**Wallace, Rich**

***Dunk Under Pressure***

Free throw specialist Cornell "Dunk" Duncan joins the YMCA summer basketball league all-star team, but after losing his confidence in an important game the seventh-grader makes some decisions about becoming an all-around player.