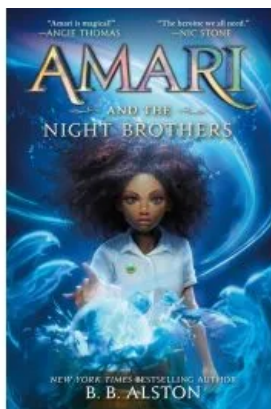


2026–2027 Elementary School Battle of the Books Reading List:



Amari and the Night Brothers, by B.B. Alston

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.9

Points: 14.0

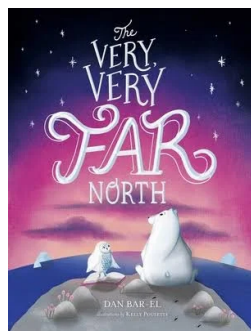
Recommended reading age: 8–12 years

Artemis Fowl meets Men in Black in this exhilarating debut middle-grade fantasy, the first in a series filled with #blackgirlmagic. Perfect for fans of Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky, the Percy Jackson series, and Nevermoor.

Amari Peters has never stopped believing her missing brother, Quinton, is alive. Not even when the police told her otherwise, or when she got in trouble for standing up to bullies who said he was gone for good.

So when she finds a ticking briefcase in his closet, containing a nomination for a summer tryout at the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs, she's certain the secretive organization holds the key to locating Quinton—if only she can wrap her head around the idea of magicians, fairies, aliens, and other supernatural creatures all being real.

Now she must compete for a spot against kids who've known about magic their whole lives. No matter how hard she tries, Amari can't seem to escape their intense doubt and scrutiny—especially once her supernaturally enhanced talent is deemed “illegal.” With an evil magician threatening the supernatural world, and her own classmates thinking she's an enemy, Amari has never felt more alone. But if she doesn't stick it out and make it through tryouts, she may never find out what happened to Quinton.



The Very, Very Far North, by Dan Bar-el

Accelerated Reader Level: 5.9

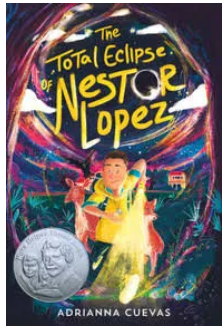
Points: 5.0

Recommended reading age: 5-9 years

An inquisitive polar bear named Duane befriends an array of animals as he discovers where he belongs in this charming classic-in-the-making.

In the Very, Very Far North, past the Cold, Cold Ocean and just below the hill that looks like a baby whale, you'll find Duane and his friends.

Duane is a sweet and curious young bear who makes friends with everyone he meets—whether they're bossy, like Major Puff the puffin, or a bit vain, like Handsome the musk ox, or very, very shy, like Boo the caribou. For these arctic friends, every day is a new adventure!



The Total Eclipse of Nestor Lopez, by Adrianna Cuevas

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.7

Points: 7.0

Recommended reading age: 8–12 years

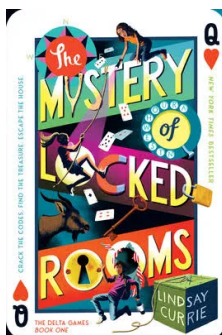
In this magical middle-grade debut novel from Adrianna Cuevas, *The Total Eclipse of Nestor Lopez*, a Cuban American boy must use his secret ability to communicate with animals to save the inhabitants of his town when they are threatened by a tule vieja, a witch that transforms into animals.

All Nestor Lopez wants is to live in one place for more than a few months and have dinner with his dad.

When he and his mother move to a new town to live with his grandmother after his dad's latest deployment, Nestor plans to lay low. He *definitely* doesn't want anyone to find out his deepest secret: that he can talk to animals.

But when the animals in his new town start disappearing, Nestor's grandmother becomes the prime suspect after she is spotted in the woods where they were last seen. As Nestor investigates the source of the disappearances, he learns that they are being seized by a tule vieja—a witch who can absorb an animal's powers by biting it during a solar eclipse. And the next eclipse is just around the corner...

Now it's up to Nestor's extraordinary ability and his new friends to catch the tule vieja—and save a place he might just call home.



The Mystery of Locked Rooms, by Lindsay Currie

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.4

Points: 7.0

Recommended reading age: 10–12 years

Crack the codes. Find the treasure. Escape the house.

From the acclaimed author of *Scratch Scratch* and *What Lives in the Woods* comes an action-packed adventure novel about three friends who team up to find a hidden treasure in an abandoned 1950's funhouse.

Twelve-year-old Sarah Greene wants nothing more from her seventh-grade year than to beat the hardest escape room left in her town with her best friends, West, and Hannah. But when a foreclosure notice shows up on Sarah's front door, everything changes. Since her father became ill two years ago, things have been bad, but not lose your house bad...until now.

Sarah feels helpless until Hannah mentions a rumored treasure hidden in the walls of an abandoned funhouse. According to legend, Hans, Stefan, and Karl Stein were orphaned at 8 and lived with different families until they reunited as adults. Their dream was to build the most epic funhouse in existence. They wanted their experience to be more than just mirror mazes and optical illusions, so they not only created elaborate riddles and secret passages but also claimed to have hidden a treasure inside the funhouse.

Once in, Sarah, West, and Hannah realize the house is unlike any escape room they've attempted. There are challenges, yes, but they feel personal. Like the triplets knew who would get in. It seems impossible, but so does everything about the house. As soon as they're in, she immediately worries that attempting the funhouse is a bad idea, but Sarah has no choice but to continue, since her future is at stake.



Popcorn, by Rob Harrell

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.0

Points: 6.0

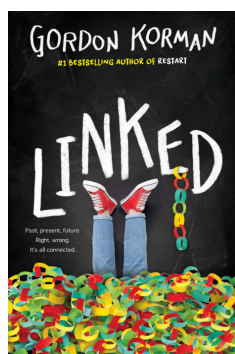
Recommended reading age: 9–14 years

The beloved author of *Wink* is back with a hilarious and moving story about coping with anxiety on a day when everything is going wrong

Andrew's just trying to make it through Picture Day, which is easier said than done when it seems like the whole world is out to get him—from a bully to a science experiment gone wrong to someone else's juice snot (don't ask).

But as Andrew goes through the school day, and as one thing after another goes wrong, that little kernel of worry in his stomach is getting hotter and hotter, until it threatens to *pop* and turn into a public panic attack, his worst fear. He tries to keep his anxiety at bay, but the news that his grandmother with Alzheimer's is missing is too much.

Interspersed with humorous spot art and “anxiety file” panels that depict the real, difficult feelings of anxiety and OCD and real tips for coping, this is a poignant, personal, and laugh-out-loud funny story about letting go of control and accepting help—all while trying to get the perfect school picture.



Linked, by Gordon Korman

Accelerated Reader Level: 5.3

Points: 9.0

Recommended reading age: 9–12 years

An unforgettable novel from the *New York Times* bestselling Gordon Korman.

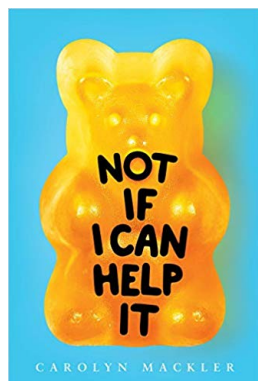
Link, Michael, and Dana live in a quiet town. But it woke up very quickly when someone sneaked into the school and vandalized it with a swastika.

Nobody can believe it. How could such a symbol of hate end up in the middle of their school? Who would do such a thing?

Because Michael was the first person to see it, he's the first suspect. Because Link is one of the most popular guys in school, everyone's looking to him to figure it out. And because Dana's the only Jewish girl in the whole town, everyone's treating her more like an outsider than ever.

The mystery deepens as more swastikas begin to appear. Some students decide to fight back by starting a project to bring people together rather than divide them further. The closer Link, Michael, and Dana get to the truth, the more there is to face—not just the crimes of the present, but the crimes of the past.

With *Linked*, Gordon Korman, the author of the acclaimed novel *Restart*, poses a mystery for all readers: Who did it? isn't nearly as important as the *why*?



Not If I Can Help It, by Carolyn Mackler

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.9

Points: 8.0

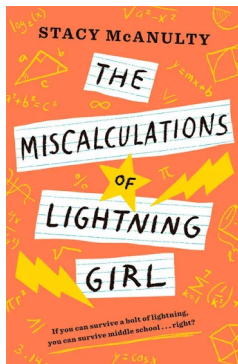
Recommended reading age: 9–12 years

From award-winning Carolyn Mackler, the story of Willa, who has been living with Sensory Processing Disorder, but is thrown for a BIG loop when her dad announces he's dating Willa's best friend's mom.

***Not If I Can Help It* joins the Scholastic Gold line, which features award-winning and beloved novels. Includes exclusive bonus content!**

Willa likes certain things to be certain ways. Her socks have to be soft... and definitely can't have irritating tags on the inside. She loves the crunch of popcorn and nachos... but is grossed out by the crunch of a baby carrot. And slimy foods? Those are the worst.

Willa can manage all these things, but there are some she can't deal with, like her father's big news. He's been keeping a big secret from her... that he's been dating the mom of Willa's best friend, Ruby. Willa does NOT like the idea of them being together. And she does NOT like the idea of combining families. And she does NOT like the idea of her best friend becoming her sister overnight. Will she go along with all of these changes? NOT if she can help it!



The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl, by Stacy McAnulty

Accelerated Reader Level: 3.7

Points: 7.0

Recommended reading age: 8–12 years

Lucy Callahan was struck by lightning—and now she's a math genius with obsessive-compulsive tendencies.

After years of homeschooling, Lucy is suddenly required to attend middle school. While math comes easily, making friends does not. As she navigates this new world, Lucy must learn that life isn't always about numbers—and sometimes the most important equations involve people.



Radiant, by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson

Accelerated Reader Level: 3.4

Points: 3.0

Recommended reading age: 10–14 years

Written in powerful free verse, this biography tells the story of Jean-Michel Basquiat, a groundbreaking artist who rose from the streets of New York City to international fame.

From his early days as a graffiti artist to his emergence in the world of fine art, Basquiat's journey is one of creativity, identity, and self-expression. His work challenged expectations and redefined what art could be, leaving a lasting impact on the art world.



Wish, by Barbara O'Connor

Accelerated Reader Level: 5.0

Points: 6.0

Recommended reading age: 8–12 years

The #1 *New York Times*–bestselling middle-grade novel about a girl who, with the help of a true-blue friend, a big-hearted aunt and uncle, and the dog of her dreams, unexpectedly learns the true meaning of family in the least likely of places. Perfect for fans of Katherine Applegate and Kate

DiCamillo.

Eleven-year-old Charlie Reese has been making the same secret wish every day since fourth grade. She even has a list of all the ways there are to make the wish, such as cutting off the pointed end of a slice of pie and wishing on it as she takes the last bite. But when she is sent to the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina to live with a family she barely knows, it seems unlikely that her wish will ever come true. That is, until she meets Wishbone, a skinny stray dog who captures her heart, and Howard, a neighbor boy who proves surprising in lots of ways. Suddenly, Charlie is in serious danger of discovering that what she thought she wanted may not be what she needs at all.



Wildfire, by Rodman Philbrick

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.5

Points: 5.0

Recommended reading age: 9–12 years

Sam Castine thought a summer hike in the mountains would be a chance to bond with his father. But when a wildfire erupts, turning the forest into a dangerous inferno, Sam is suddenly fighting for survival.

Separated from his father and surrounded by flames, Sam must rely on his instincts, courage, and the help of others to find a way out. As the fire rages, every decision could mean the difference between life and death.

The smell of smoke.

A layer of stinky fog dims the sky. Except along the horizon, which is suddenly flickering orange above the treetops.

Wildfire, moving fast.

Heading in our direction.

Birds, deer, squirrels, and raccoons explode from the surrounding forest, racing to stay ahead of the flames. The message couldn't be clearer. Run. If you want to live, run.

Rodman Philbrick pulls listeners through a nightmare that has become much too real in the US. In 2017-2018, wildfires broke out in all 50 states. During the 2018 California Camp Fire, CNN reported that at its fastest, flames "spread at more than a football field a second, or around 80 football fields per minute."

Wildfire. Will it be fact or fiction in your own life someday? For now, join Sam and his friend, Delphy, as they face dangers that have shaken the lives of so many people across our world - with no end in sight.



Root Magic, by Eden Royce

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.6

Points: 12.0

Recommended reading age: 8–12 years

"A poignant, necessary entry into the children's literary canon, *Root Magic* brings to life the history and culture of Gullah people while highlighting the timeless plight of Black Americans. Add in a fun, magical adventure, and you get everything I want in a

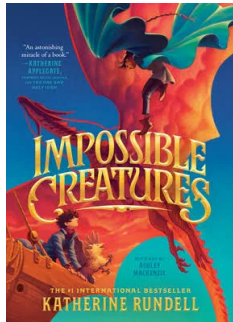
book!" —Justina Ireland, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Dread Nation*

Walter Dean Myers Honor Award for Outstanding Children's Literature! A Mythopoeic Fantasy Award winner!

Debut author Eden Royce arrives with a wondrous story of love, bravery, friendship, and family, filled to the brim with magic great and small.

It's 1963, and things are changing for Jezebel Turner. Her beloved grandmother has just passed away. The local police deputy won't stop harassing her family. With school integration arriving in South Carolina, Jez and her twin brother, Jay, are about to begin the school year with a bunch of new kids. But the biggest change comes when Jez and Jay turn eleven— and their uncle, Doc, tells them he's going to train them in rootwork.

Jez and Jay have always been fascinated by the African American folk magic that has been the legacy of their family for generations—especially the curious potions and powders Doc and Gran would make for the people on their island. But Jez soon finds out that her family's true power goes far beyond small charms and elixirs...and not a moment too soon. Because when evil, both natural and supernatural, comes to show itself in town, it's going to take every bit of the magic she has inside her to see her through.



Impossible Creatures, by Katherine Rundell

Accelerated Reader Level: 5.1

Points: 11.0

Recommended reading age: 9–13 years

Two kids race to save the world’s last magical place in this instant classic from “a writer with an utterly distinctive voice and a wild imagination.” (Philip Pullman, author of *The Golden Compass*)

The day that Christopher saved a drowning baby griffin from a hidden lake would change his life forever.

It’s the day he learned about the Archipelago—a cluster of unmapped islands where magical creatures of every kind have thrived for thousands of years, until now. And it’s the day he met Mal—a girl on the run, in desperate need of his help.

Mal and Christopher embark on a wild adventure, racing from island to island, searching for someone who can explain why the magic is fading and why magical creatures are suddenly dying. They consult sphinxes, battle kraken, and negotiate with dragons. But the closer they get to the dark truth of what’s happening, the clearer it becomes: no one else can fix this. If the Archipelago is to be saved, Mal and Christopher will have to do it themselves.



The Elephant in the Room, by Holly Goldberg Sloan

Accelerated Reader Level: 5.1

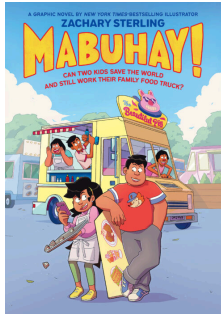
Points: 7.0

Recommended reading age: 10-14 years

It’s been almost a year since Sila’s mother traveled halfway around the world to Turkey, hoping to secure the immigration paperwork that would allow her to return to her family in the United States.

The long separation is almost impossible for Sila to withstand. But things change when Sila accompanies her father (a mechanic) outside their Oregon town to fix a truck. There, behind an enormous stone wall, she meets a grandfatherly man who only months before won the state lottery. Their new alliance leads to the rescue of a circus elephant named Veda, and then to a friendship with an unusual boy named Mateo, proving that comfort and hope come in the most unlikely of places.

A moving story of family separation and the importance of the connection between animals and humans, this novel has the enormous heart and uplifting humor that readers have come to expect from the beloved author of *Counting by 7s*.



Mabuhay!, by Zachary Sterling

Graphic Novel

Accelerated Reader Level: 2.6

Points: 2.0

Recommended reading age: 8–12 years

An Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature (APALA) Honor Book

An Eisner Award Nominee

From rising star Zachary Sterling comes a humorous and heartwarming middle-grade graphic novel that celebrates food, family, and folklore.

Can two kids save the world *and* work their family's food truck?

First-generation Filipino siblings JJ and Althea struggle to feel at home at school. JJ wants to fit in with the crowd, while Althea wants to be accepted as she is. To make matters worse, they have to help their parents run the family food truck by dressing up as a dancing pig and passing out samples. *Ugh!* And their mom is always pointing out lessons from Filipino folklore -- annoying tales they've heard again and again. But when witches, ogres, and other creatures from those same stories threaten their family, JJ and Althea realize that the folklore may be more real than they'd suspected. Can they embrace who they really are and save their family?



A Rover's Story, by Jasmine Warga

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.1

Points: 6.0

Recommended reading age: 8-12 years

Meet Resilience, a Mars rover determined to live up to its name.

Res was built to explore Mars. He was not built to have human emotions. But as he learns new things from the NASA scientists who assemble him, he begins to develop humanlike feelings. Maybe there's a problem with his programming....

Human emotions or not, launch day comes, and Res blasts off to Mars, accompanied by a friendly drone helicopter named Fly. But Res quickly discovers that Mars is a dangerous place filled with dust storms and giant cliffs. As he navigates Mars's difficult landscape, Res is tested in ways that go beyond space exploration.

As millions of people on Earth follow his progress, will Res have the determination, courage, and resilience to succeed... and survive?

2026–2027 Middle School Battle of the Books Reading List:



Agent Most Wanted: The Never-Before-Told Story of the Most Dangerous Spy of World War II, by Sonia Purnell

Nonfiction

Accelerated Reader Level: 8.6

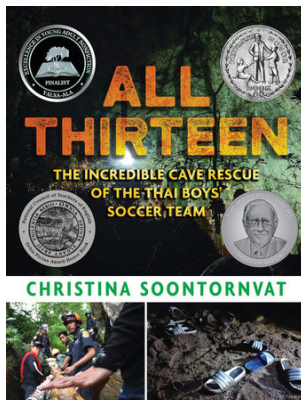
Points: 8.0

Recommended reading age: 12-15 years

A young readers' adaptation of Sonia Purnell's *New York Times* bestselling book, *A Woman of No Importance*, the story of Virginia Hall, the unassuming American spy who helped the Allies win World War II.

Virginia Hall was deemed "the most dangerous of all Allied spies" by the Gestapo. Armed with her wits and her prosthetic leg, she was deployed behind enemy lines to inspire resistance in France, providing crucial support to fighting the Nazi occupation. In this largely untold story, Sonia Purnell uncovers the truth behind a Baltimore socialite who was essential to Allied victory.

Adapted for the elementary-to-middle school audience, *Agent Most Wanted* is equal parts an inspiring tale of feminism in a time when women weren't taken seriously, an epic spy story, and, of course, a retelling of one of the largest global conflicts in modern history.



All Thirteen, by Christina Soontornvat

Nonfiction

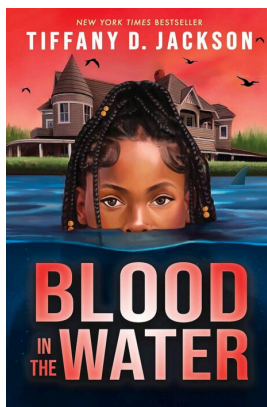
Accelerated Reader Level: 7.2

Points: 7.0

Recommended reading age: 10–12 years

A unique account of the amazing Thai cave rescue told in a heart-racing, you-are-there style that blends suspense, science, and cultural insight.

On June 23, 2018, twelve young players of the Wild Boars soccer team and their coach entered a cave in northern Thailand seeking an afternoon's adventure. But when they turn to leave, rising floodwaters block their path out. The boys are trapped! Before long, news of the missing team spreads, launching a seventeen-day rescue operation involving thousands of rescuers from around the globe. As the world sits vigil, people begin to wonder: how long can a group of ordinary kids survive in complete darkness, with no food or clean water? Luckily, the Wild Boars are a very extraordinary "ordinary" group. Combining firsthand interviews of rescue workers with in-depth science and details of the region's culture and religion, author Christina Soontornvat—who was visiting family in Northern Thailand when the Wild Boars went missing—masterfully shows how both the complex engineering operation above ground and the mental struggles of the thirteen young people below proved critical in the life-or-death mission. Meticulously researched and generously illustrated with photographs, this page-turner includes an author's note describing her experience meeting the team, detailed source notes, and a bibliography to fully immerse readers in the most ambitious cave rescue in history.



Blood in the Water, by Tiffany D. Jackson

Accelerated Reader Level: 3.9

Points:6.0

Recommended reading age: 10–14 years

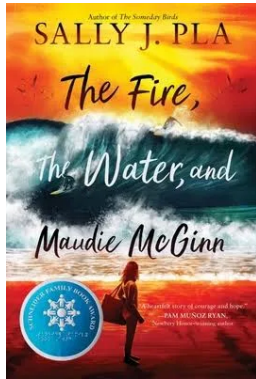
Mega bestselling and award-winning author Tiffany D. Jackson (*The Weight of Blood*; *White Smoke*) makes her thrilling middle-grade debut with a can't-put-it-down murder mystery set on Martha's Vineyard. R.L. Stine, bestselling author of *Goosebumps*, says, "Don't miss this one!"

This summer, beware of sharks...

Brooklyn girl Kaylani McKinnon feels like a fish out of water. She's spending the summer with family friends in their huge house on Martha's Vineyard, and the vibe is definitely snooty. Still, there are beautiful beaches, lots of ice cream, and a town full of fascinating Black history. Plus a few kids her age who seem friendly.

Until the shocking death of a popular teenage boy rocks the community to its core. Was it a drowning? A shark attack? Or the unthinkable--murder?

Kaylani is determined to solve the mystery. But her investigation leads her to uncover shocking secrets that could change her *own* life as she knows it... If she survives.



The Fire, the Water, and Maudie McGinn, by Sally J. Pla

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.3

Points: 8.0

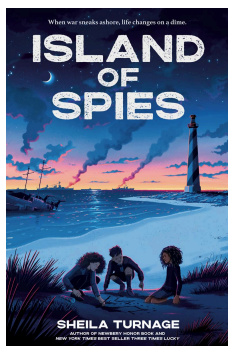
Recommended reading age: 12+ years

Neurodivergent Maudie is ready to spend an amazing summer with her dad, but will she find the courage to tell him a terrible secret about life with her mom and new stepdad? This contemporary novel is a must-read for fans of Leslie Connor and Ali Standish. A Schneider Family Book Award winner!

Maudie always looks forward to the summers she spends in California with her dad. But this year, she must keep a troubling secret about her home life—one that her mom warned her never to tell. Maudie wants to confide in her dad about her stepdad's anger, but she's scared.

When a wildfire strikes, Maudie and her dad are forced to evacuate to the beach town where he grew up. It's another turbulent wave of change. But now, every morning, from their camper, Maudie can see surfers bobbing in the water. She desperately wants to learn, but could she ever be brave enough?

As Maudie navigates unfamiliar waters, she makes friends—and her autism no longer feels like the big deal her mom makes it out to be. But her secret is still threatening to sink her. Will Maudie find the strength to reveal the awful truth—and maybe even find some way to stay with Dad—before summer is over?



Island of Spies, by Sheila Turnage

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.2

Points: 12.0

Recommended reading age: 11-14 years

From the Newbery Honor-winning author of *Three Times Lucky* comes a middle grade WWII spy mystery with as much humor and heart as high stakes

Twelve-year-old Stick Lawson lives on Hatteras Island, North Carolina, where life moves steadily as the tides, and mysteries abound as long as you look *really* hard for them. Stick and her friends Rain and Neb are good at looking hard. They call themselves the Dime Novel Kids. And the only thing Stick wants more than a paying case for them to solve is the respect that comes with it. But on Hatteras, the tides are changing. World War II looms, curious newcomers have appeared on the small island, and in the waters off its shores, a wartime menace lurks that will upend Stick's life and those of everyone she loves. The Dimes are about to face more mysteries than they ever could have wished for, and risk more than they ever could have imagined.



The Last Cuentista, by Donna Barba Higuera

Accelerated Reader Level: 5.0

Points: 11.0

Recommended reading age: 10–14 years

Winner of the Newbery Medal—a brilliant journey through the stars, to the very heart of what makes us human.

“Gripping in its twists and turns, and moving in its themes — truly a beautiful cuento.”—*New York Times*

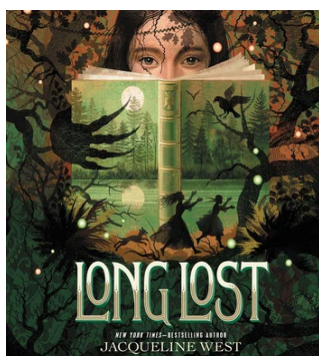
Había una vez . . .

There lived a girl named Petra Peña, who wanted nothing more than to be a storyteller, like her abuelita.

But Petra’s world is ending. Earth has been destroyed by a comet, and only a few hundred scientists and their children — among them Petra and her family — have been chosen to journey to a new planet. They are the ones who must carry on the human race.

Hundreds of years later, Petra wakes to this new planet — and the discovery that she is the only person who remembers Earth. A sinister Collective has taken over the ship during its journey, bent on erasing the sins of humanity’s past. They have systematically purged the memories of all aboard — or purged them altogether.

Petra alone now carries the stories of our past, and with them, any hope for our future. Can she make them live again?



Long Lost, by Jacqueline West

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.7

Points: 8.0

Recommended reading age: 8-12 years

Once there were two sisters who did everything together. But only one of them disappeared.

***New York Times*–bestselling author Jacqueline West’s *Long Lost* is an atmospheric, eerie mystery brimming with suspense. Fans of**

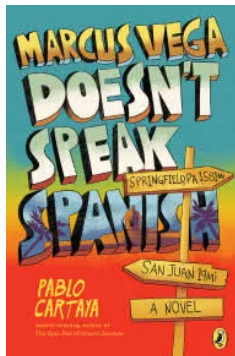
Katherine Arden’s *Small Spaces* and Victoria Schwab’s *City of Ghosts* series will lose themselves in this mesmerizing and century-spanning tale.

Eleven-year-old Fiona has just read a book that doesn’t exist.

When Fiona's family moves to a new town to be closer to her older sister's figure skating club—and far from Fiona's close-knit group of friends—nobody seems to notice Fiona's unhappiness. Alone and out of place, Fiona ventures to the town's library, a rambling mansion donated by a long-dead heiress. And there she finds a gripping mystery novel about a small town, family secrets, and a tragic disappearance.

Soon, Fiona begins to notice strange similarities that blur the lines between the novel and her new town. With a little help from a few odd Lost Lake locals, Fiona uncovers the book's strange history. Lost Lake is a town of restless spirits, and Fiona will learn that both help and danger come from unexpected places—maybe even from the sister she thinks doesn't care about her anymore.

New York Times–bestselling and acclaimed author Jacqueline West weaves a heart-pounding, intense, and imaginative mystery that builds anticipation on every page, while centering on the strong and often tumultuous bond between sisters. Laced with suspense, *Long Lost* will fascinate readers of Trenton Lee Stewart's *The Secret Keepers* and fans of ghost stories.



Marcus Vega Doesn't Speak Spanish, by Pablo Cartaya
Accelerated Reader Level: 3.9

Points: 6.0

Recommended reading age: 10–14 years

One boy's search for his father leads him to Puerto Rico in this moving middle-grade novel, for fans of *Ghost* and *See You in the Cosmos*.

Marcus Vega is six feet tall, 180 pounds, and the owner of a premature mustache. When you look like this, and you're only in the eighth grade, you're both a threat and a target. After a fight at school leaves Marcus facing suspension, Marcus's mom decides it's time for a change of environment. She takes Marcus and his younger brother to Puerto Rico to spend a week with relatives they don't remember or have never met. But Marcus can't focus, knowing that his father — who walked out of their lives ten years ago — is somewhere on the island.

So begins Marcus's incredible journey, a series of misadventures that take him all over Puerto Rico in search of his elusive namesake. Marcus doesn't know if he'll ever find his father, but what he ultimately discovers changes his life. And he even learns a bit of Spanish along the way.



Nyxia, by Scott Reintgen

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.6

Points: 13

****YA Book Recommended reading age: 13–17 years, 7th grade+**

Every life has a price in this sci-fi thriller—the first in a trilogy—that has the nonstop action of *The Maze Runner* and the high-stakes space setting of *Illuminae*.

What would you be willing to risk for a lifetime of fortune?

Emmett Atwater isn't just leaving Detroit; he's leaving Earth. Why the Babel Corporation recruited him is a mystery, but the number of zeroes on their contract has him boarding their lightship and hoping to return to Earth with enough money to take care of his family.

Forever.

Before long, Emmett discovers that he is one of ten recruits, all of whom have troubled pasts and are a long way from home. Now each recruit must earn the right to travel down to the planet of Eden—a planet that Babel has kept hidden—where they will mine a substance called Nyxia that has quietly become the most valuable material in the universe.

But Babel's ship is full of secrets. And Emmett will face the ultimate choice: win the fortune at any cost, or find a way to fight that won't forever compromise what it means to be human.



Other Words for Home: A Newbery Honor Award Winner—A Middle Eastern Girl's Immigration Story in Verse, by Jasmine Warga

In-Verse

Accelerated Reader Level: 5.3

Points: 5.0

Recommended reading age: 9-15 years

A gorgeously written, hopeful middle-grade novel in verse about a young girl who must leave Syria to move to the United States, perfect for fans of Jason Reynolds and Aisha Saeed.

Jude never thought she'd be leaving her beloved older brother and father behind, all the way across the ocean in Syria. But when things in her hometown start becoming volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives.

At first, everything in America seems too fast and too loud. The American movies that Jude has always loved haven't quite prepared her for starting school in the US—and her new label of "Middle Eastern," an identity she's never known before.

But this life also brings unexpected surprises—new friends, a whole new family, and a school musical that Jude might just try out for. Maybe America, too, is a place where Jude can be seen as she really is.

This lyrical, life-affirming story is about losing and finding home and, most importantly, finding yourself.



Restart, by Gordon Korman

Accelerated Reader Level: 5.1

Points: 9.0

Recommended reading age: 10–13 years

The amazing *New York Times* bestseller about what you can do when life gives you a second chance.

Chase's memory just went out the window.

Chase doesn't remember falling off the roof. He doesn't remember hitting his head. He doesn't, in fact, remember *anything*. He wakes up in a hospital room and suddenly has to learn his whole life all over again . . . starting with his own name.

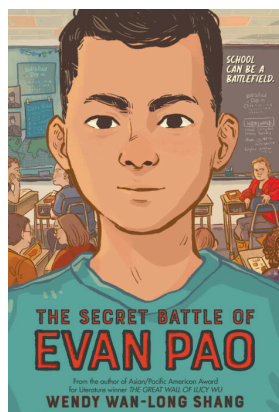
He knows he's Chase. But who *is* Chase? When he gets back to school, he sees that different kids have very different reactions to his return.

Some kids treat him like a hero. Some kids are clearly afraid of him.

One girl in particular is so angry with him that she pours her frozen yogurt on his head the first chance she gets.

Pretty soon, it's not only a question of who Chase is--it's a question of who he *was* . . . and who he's going to be.

From the #1 bestselling author of *Swindle* and *Slacker*, *Restart* is the spectacular story of a kid with a messy past who has to figure out what it means to get a clean start.



The Secret Battle of Evan Pao, by Wendy Wan-Long Shang

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.3

Points: 7.0

Recommended reading age: 8-12 years

Middle school can be a battlefield... From award-winning author Wendy Wan-Long Shang comes a poignant and timely take on prejudice, bullying, and claiming our own histories, perfect for fans of *Front Desk*.

***The Secret Battle of Evan Pao* joins the Scholastic Gold line, which features award-winning and beloved novels. Includes exclusive bonus content!**

A fresh start. That's all Evan Pao wants as he flees California with his mother and sister to Haddington, Virginia, hoping to keep his father's notoriety a secret.

But Haddington is a southern town steeped in tradition, and moving to a place immersed in the past comes at a price. Although Evan quickly makes friends, one boy, Brady Griggs, seems determined to make sure that, as a Chinese American, Evan feels that he does not belong. When Evan finds a unique way to make himself part of the school's annual Civil War celebration, the reaction is swift and violent. As all of his choices at home and at school collide, Evan must decide whether he will react with the same cruelty shown to him or choose a different path.

Wendy Wan-Long Shang, the critically acclaimed author of the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association Award for Children's Literature winner *The Great Wall of Lucy Wu*, weaves a timely and deeply moving portrait of all the secret battles Evan Pao must fight as he struggles to figure out how he fits into this country's past and how he will shape its future.



Shark Teeth, by Sherri Winston

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.3

Points: 10.0

Recommended reading age: 9-11 years

From National Book Award longlisted author Sherri Winston comes an important middle-grade novel about a girl's tumultuous journey to keep her family together, even when she's falling apart.

Schneider Family Book Award: Best Middle Grade Honor Book

Kirkus Prize Finalist

Lone Star Reading List Selection

Named a Best Book of the Year by *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus*, and *School Library Journal*

Sharkita "Kita" Hayes is always waiting.

Waiting for her mama to mess up.

Waiting for social services to be called again.

Waiting for her and her siblings to be separated.

Waiting for her worst fear to come true.

But Mama promises things are different now. She's got a good job, she's stopped drinking, stopped going out every night—it's almost enough to make Kita believe her this time. But even as Kita's life is going well, she can't shake the feeling that everything could go up in flames at any moment. When her assistant principal and trusted dance coach starts asking questions about her home life, Kita is more determined than ever to keep up appearances and make sure her family stays together—even if it means falling apart herself.

As the threat of her family being separated circles like a shark in the water, the pressure starts to get to Kita. But could it be that Kita's worst fear is actually the best thing that could happen to her family . . . and to her?



Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky, by Kwame Mbalia

Accelerated Reader Level: 4.8

Points: 15.0

Recommended reading age: 8-12 years

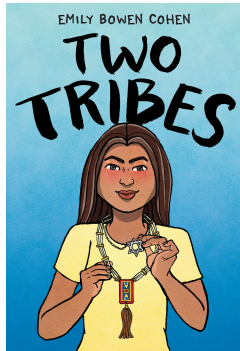
Best-selling author Rick Riordan presents Kwame Mbalia's epic fantasy, a middle-grade *American Gods* set in a richly-imagined world populated with African American folk heroes and West African gods.

*****Mbalia expertly weaves a meaningful portrayal of family and community with folklore, myth, and history—including the legacy of the slave trade—creating a fast-paced, heroic series starter."--*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)**

Seventh grader Tristan Strong feels anything but strong ever since he failed to save his best friend when they were in a bus accident together. All he has left of Eddie is the journal his friend wrote stories in. Tristan is dreading the month he's going to spend on his grandparents' farm in Alabama, where he's being sent to heal from the tragedy.

But on his first night there, a sticky creature shows up in his bedroom and steals Eddie's notebook. Tristan chases after it—is that a doll?—and a tug-of-war ensues between them underneath a Bottle Tree. In a last attempt to wrestle the journal out of the creature's hands, Tristan punches the tree, accidentally ripping open a chasm into the MidPass, a volatile place with a burning sea, haunted bone ships, and iron monsters that are hunting the inhabitants of this world.

Tristan finds himself in the middle of a battle that has left Black American folk heroes John Henry and Brer Rabbit exhausted. In order to get back home, Tristan and these new allies will need to entice the god Anansi, the Weaver, to come out of hiding and seal the hole in the sky. But bartering with the trickster Anansi always comes at a price. Can Tristan save this world before he loses more of the things he loves?



Two Tribes, by Emily Bowen Cohen

Graphic Novel

Accelerated Reader Level: 2.9

Points: 1.0

Recommended reading age: 8-12 years

Graphic Novel

In her poignant debut graphic novel inspired by her own life, Emily Bowen Cohen embraces the complexity, meaning, and deep love that come from being part of two vibrant tribes.

Mia is still getting used to living with her mom and stepfather, and to the new role their Jewish identity plays in their home. Feeling out of place at home and at her Jewish day school, Mia finds herself thinking more and more about her Muscogee father, who lives with his new family in Oklahoma. Her mother doesn't want to talk about him, but Mia can't help but feel like she's missing a part of herself without him in her life.

Soon, Mia makes a plan to use the gifts from her bat mitzvah to take a bus to Oklahoma—without telling her mom—to visit her dad and find the connection to her Muscogee side she knows is just as important as her Jewish side.

This graphic novel by Muscogee-Jewish writer and artist Emily Bowen Cohen is perfect for fans of *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang. It is published by Heartdrum, an imprint that centers stories about contemporary Indigenous young people.



When We Flew Away, by Alice Hoffman

Accelerated Reader Level: 6.1

Points: 8.0

Recommended reading age: 9-12 years

Bestselling author Alice Hoffman delivers a stunning novel about one of the most acclaimed figures of contemporary history, exploring the little-known details of Anne Frank's life before she went into hiding.

Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* has captivated and inspired readers for decades. Published posthumously by her bereaved father, Anne's journal, written while she and her family were in hiding during World War II, has become one of the central texts of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust, as well as a work of literary genius.

With the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, the Frank family's life is turned inside out, blow by blow, restriction by restriction. Prejudice, loss, and terror run rampant, and Anne is forced to bear witness as ordinary people become monsters, and children and families are caught up in the inescapable tide of violence.

In the midst of impossible danger, Anne, audacious and creative and fearless, discovers who she truly is. With a wisdom far beyond her years, she will become a writer who will go on to change the world as we know it.

Critically acclaimed author Alice Hoffman weaves a lyrical and heart-wrenching story of the way the world closes in on the Frank family from the moment the Nazis invade the Netherlands until they are forced into hiding, bringing Anne to bold, vivid life.

Based on extensive research and published in cooperation with the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, *When We Flew Away* is an extraordinary and moving tour de force.

All suggested reading ages and book descriptions taken from Amazon.com