

2023 Summer Reading Suggestions from Rowley Middle School Library

We hope you find something on this list that sparks your interest! Look out for books with #lab—they have a connection to our school. Books with a Young Adult designator contain mature themes or intense language meant for older middle school readers.

Adler, Dahlia (editor). *At Midnight: Fifteen Beloved Fairy Tales Reimagined. (Young Adult)*

Rumpelstiltskin, Cinderella, The Little Match Girl, and other stories get an update from YA authors like Stacey Lee and Darcie Little Badger. This collection of fifteen original and retold fairy tales, reimagined with fresh perspectives and unexpected twists, will leave you thinking differently about “Once upon a time...”

Alkaf, Hanna. *Hamra & the Jungle of Memories.*

On Hamra's thirteenth birthday, she receives nothing but endless nagging and yet another errand to run in the Langkawi jungle that looms behind her home. Angry, Hamra ignores something she shouldn't: the rules of the jungle. After she steals a magical fruit, an enormous weretiger stalks her dreams, demanding payment for her crimes—and Hamra must embark on a quest deep into the jungle to set things right.

Arango, Andrea Beatriz. *Iveliz Explains It All.*

Seventh grade is going to be Iveliz's year. She's going to make a new friend, help her abuela, Mimi, get settled after moving from Puerto Rico, and she is not going to get into any more trouble at school...Except no matter how hard Iveliz tries, sometimes people say things that make her so mad. And worse, Mimi keeps saying Iveliz's medicine is unnecessary—even though it helps Iveliz feel less sad. But how do you explain your feelings to others when you're not even sure what's going on yourself?



Ata, Iasmin Omar. *Nayra and the Djinn. (Graphic Novel)*

Nothing is going right for Nayra Mansour. The only other Muslim girl at school is exhausting, her classmates are cruel, and her parents are too strict. Then Marjan appears. As a djinn, a mythical being from her family's stories, Marjan uses their powers and wisdom to help Nayra navigate her overwhelming life. But Marjan's past is fraught with secrets, guilt, and trouble, and if they don't face what they've done, Nayra could be the one to pay the price.

Bow, Erin. *Simon Sort of Says.*

Two years after a tragedy saddles him with the wrong kind of fame, Simon O'Keeffe and his family move to Grin And Bear It, Nebraska, where the internet and cell phones are banned so astrophysicists can scan the sky for signs of alien existence. With the help of two new friends, a puppy, and a giant radio telescope, Simon is determined to spin a new story about his life.

Cho, John, with Sarah Suk. *Troublemaker.*

In the wake of the acquittal of the police officers filmed beating Rodney King, as well as the shooting of a young Black teen, Los Angeles—and the country—is at the precipice of confronting its racist past and present. As tensions escalate, Jordan's father leaves to check on the family store, spurring Jordan and his friends to embark on a dangerous journey to come to his aid. Jordan feels like he can never do anything right, so how will he help his dad and their community?

Christmas, Johnnie. *Swim Team. (Graphic Novel)*

Bree can't wait for her first day at her new middle school, home to the Mighty Manatees...until she's stuck with the only elective that fits her schedule, the dreaded Swim 101. The thought of swimming

makes Bree more than a little queasy, yet she's forced to dive headfirst into one of her greatest fears. With unexpected help from a neighbor and a lot of hard work, Bree suddenly finds her swim-crazed community counting on her to turn the school's failing team around. Can Bree defy the odds and guide her team to a state championship, or have the Manatees swum their last lap—for good?

Davis, Tanita S. *Figure It Out, Henri Weldon.*

When Henri changes from the special school she attends for her dyscalculia to a mainstream school, she expects to find math class a challenge. But now she's struggling to balance other parts of her life—a family feud, drama on the soccer team, and her passion for poetry. She needs to figure it all out, and fast!

Deakin, Ava Lorelei. *Tomorrow Begins Now: Teen Heroes Who Faced Down Injustice. #lab*

A current Lab high school student writes the inspiring true stories of teen activists fighting for their civil rights and liberties—from racial equality to freedom of speech to LGBTQ+ rights—covering the 1950s to today. These stories, told through exclusive interviews, show the real impact teens have had on the most important issues of their day.

Dee, Barbara. *My Life in the Fish Tank.*

When Zinnia's brother is diagnosed with a mental illness, the family's world is turned upside down. Mom and Dad want to keep his condition "private," which means she can't talk about it with her two best friends, and she can't discuss it during the weird lunch club her guidance counselor makes her attend. When Zinny gets an awesome opportunity to spend the summer at a marine biology camp, she has to decide if she can move forward even when her family needs help.

Farid, Diana. *Wave.*

Ava loves surfing, singing, and catching waves with her best friend, Phoenix, which lets her fit in—her olive skin looks tan, not foreign. Then Phoenix's past lymphoma resurges, threatening Ava's hold on the one place and the one person that make her feel like she belongs. Ava is going to have to ride the waves, tumble, and find her way back to shore.



Fleming, Candace. *Crash from Outer Space: Unraveling the Mystery of Flying Saucers, Alien Beings, and Roswell.*

Something crashed outside of Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947. Was it a Russian spy? Secret military tech? Or was it really, like some people believe, a UFO carrying aliens? One of our greatest nonfiction writers explores the evidence in this thrilling history.

Florio, John. *Doomed: Sacco, Vanzetti, and the End of the American Dream. (Young Adult)*

The chilling true story of what happened when, in the early 1920s, fear of Communism gripped America and two Italian immigrants, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, were wrongly accused. The duo made front-page headlines as they maintained their innocence to the very end. Great for fans of true crime, like *Murder Among Friends*.

Gow, Robin. *Dear Mothman.*

Noah feels all alone. His best friend (the only other trans boy he knows) is gone because of a terrible accident. The only person he imagines can understand how he feels might not even be real, but he decides to write letters to him anyway. When Mothman doesn't respond and his friends and family doubt him, Noah decides to go on a mission: to find Mothman in the forest—and he will go alone.

Hardinge, Frances. *Unraveller.*

In a world where anyone can create life-destroying curses, only one person has the power to unravel them. Kellen does not fully understand his talent, but he uses it to help those who have been cursed, including his ally and closest friend, Nettle. But Kellen himself is cursed, and unless he and Nettle can release him, he is in danger of unravelling everything—and everyone—around him.

Hautman, Pete. *The Rat Queen.*

There's a monster living under Annie's house...sort of. It's the burna, or the "sin-eater," and Annie learns from her father that every time she does something wrong, she can just write her misdeed on a piece of paper to feed to the burna. But with no guilt to plague her, things start getting...weird...for Annie, and maybe for everyone else in town, too. Every book by Hautman is a mind-bending adventure, and this fairy tale is no different.

Isabelle, S. *The Witchery. (Young Adult)*

Mesmortes Coven Academy sits over a hellmouth, the Haunting Season is about to begin, and the Wolves are howling...which means they're out for blood. Enter Logan, who just wanted to get her life (and her witchcraft) under control. All hell is about to break loose, and Logan and her new friends are right in the middle...



Klise, James. *I'll Take Everything You Have. (Young Adult)*

Joe's move to the big city—Chicago in 1934—promises to be more than he bargained for. His cousin pulls him into a con to earn some quick cash, while new friends show him the queer underbelly of the city. When danger closes in and the con comes to an abrupt halt, Joe needs to skedaddle. But he has to decide who he's going to be, first.

Lesperance, Nicole. *The Depths. (Young Adult)*

Eulalie Island should be a paradise, but to Addie Spencer, it's more like a prison. Forced to tag along to the remote island on her mother's honeymoon, Addie isn't thrilled about being trapped there for two weeks. The island is stunning, but there's something eerie and unsettling about the place. Beneath its gorgeous surface, Eulalie Island is hiding dark, tangled secrets. And if Addie doesn't unravel them soon, the island might never let her go.

Levi, Lia. *Just a Girl: A True Story of World War II.*

When Prime Minister Mussolini joins forces with Hitler, life for Jewish girl Lia and her family will never be the same. This is the author's true story of surviving World War II in Fascist Italy by hiding in a convent, while longing to be "just a girl."

Lewis, Britney S. *The Undead Truth of Us. (Young Adult)*

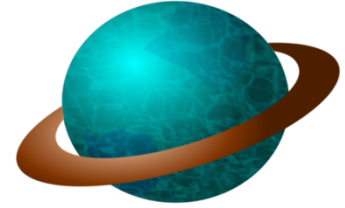
Zharie can't seem to figure out why. Why her mother died, why her aunt doesn't want her around, why all her dreams seem suddenly, hopelessly out of reach. And why she's been seeing zombies everywhere. Then, Bo moves into her apartment building. Z wants nothing to do with him, but when he transforms into a half zombie right before her eyes, something feels different. As Zharie sifts through what's real and what's magic, she discovers a new truth about the world: Love can literally change you—for good or for dead.

Lincoln, Beth. *The Swifts: A Dictionary of Scoundrels.*

When someone gives Arch-Aunt Schadenfreude a deadly push down the stairs during the Swift Family Reunion, Shenanigan Swift, who has a penchant for mischief, decides to solve this mysterious case. So what if everyone thinks she'll never be more than a troublemaker, just because of her name? Shenanigan knows she can become whatever she wants, even a detective. And she's determined to follow the twisty clues and catch the killer.

Lowry, Lois. *The Windeby Puzzle: History and Story.*

In 1952, men digging for peat found instead a mummy deep within the bog. Apparently blindfolded and left to drown, the teenager wore only an animal hide across their shoulders. Who was the Windeby Child? Lowry, author of *The Giver*, tells the Iron Age story of two teenagers—a boy who longs for a family and a girl who wishes to be a warrior—in her breathtaking imagining of the real-life mummy’s story.



Lugman-Dawson, Amina. *Freewater.*

Under the cover of night, twelve-year-old Homer flees Southerland Plantation with his little sister Ada, unwillingly leaving their beloved mother behind. Homer knows there’s no turning back, not with the overseer on their trail. Through tangled vines, secret doorways, and over a sky bridge, the two find a secret community called Freewater, deep in the swamp. In this society created by formerly enslaved people and some freeborn children, Homer finds new friends, almost forgetting where he came from. But when he learns of a threat that could destroy Freewater, he crafts a plan to find his mother and help his new home.

Maraniss, Andrew. *Inaugural Ballers: The True Story of the First US Women’s Olympic Basketball Team.*

Toronto, 1976. The first women’s Olympic basketball team took to the court, making history and putting women’s basketball on the map. Though they were unknowns from small schools, the American team included a roster of players who would go on to become some of the most legendary figures in the history of basketball. Packed with photos and behind-the-scenes details, this is a fascinating look at the women who paved the way for girls everywhere.

McDunn, Gillian. *Honestly Elliott.*

The kitchen is the only place Elliott really feels at home, now that middle school feels out of control; his ADHD makes things much harder than it used to and his best friend has moved away. But cooking won’t help out much when he’s paired with super-smart Maribel for a school project—but maybe they can help each other out in this funny story about being a good friend.

Monsef, Kiyash. *Once There Was.*

“Once was, once wasn’t” was the way Marjan’s father started all of the stories he told her when he was still alive. Now that he’s passed, she’s barely keeping it together when a strange woman shows up with a plane ticket to England and a sick griffon. Turns out, all the mythical creatures Marjan’s dad told her about were real. He was their vet. It’s her turn now. And that’s wayyyyyyy more dangerous than it sounds.

Montague, Liz. *Maybe an Artist.*

Just before 6th grade, Liz declared herself an artist. Then middle school happened. Young artists will love Liz’s funny and poignant journey as she learns to navigate life as a Black girl in her predominately white town, overcome severe dyslexia, and find confidence to pursue her passion. A can’t-miss graphic memoir perfect for fans for Raina Telgemeier or anyone looking to find their voice!



Moore, David Barclay. *Holler of the Fireflies.*

Javari knew that West Virginia would be different from his home in Bushwick, Brooklyn, but his first day at STEM Camp in a little Appalachian town is still a shock. Though run-ins with the police are just the same here—not good. Javari will learn a lot about science..and also about wealth, racism, and hidden agendas. But it’s Cricket, a local boy, budding activist, and occasional thief, who will show him a different side of the holler—and blow his mind wide open.

Nayeri, Daniel. *The Many Assassinations of Samir, the Seller of Dreams.*

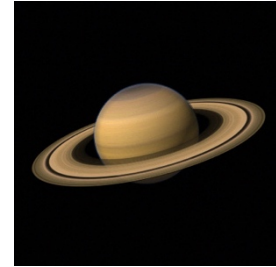
“The first time I was stoned to death, I wasn’t even a criminal.” Monkey’s story starts off in a pickle, and things don’t get much better once he meets Samir, the “Seller of Dreams,” who takes him in after saving his life. The man is a scammer; his biggest skill is the ability to talk his way into getting what he wants. That’s left a lot of people furious with Samir—furious enough to hire assassins. If Monkey can save Samir six times, he’ll be a free man...but will they all survive that long?

Nielsen, Jennifer A. *Iceberg.*

You know how the story ends: the Titanic sinks. What you won’t be prepared for is the pulse-pounding adventure as Hazel, who snuck aboard the ship as a stowaway, uncovers a mystery that only increases the terror as the water starts to close in.

Ocker, J. W. *The Black Slide.*

The slide just showed up one day. The old orange slide is gone, and there’s a black one in its place. And there’s something weird about it. Griffin isn’t sure how he feels, but when his best friend Laila takes a trip down the slide—and doesn’t come back—Griffin has no choice. What he finds on the other side will terrify you. Read this one with the lights on.



Olsberg, Karl. *Boy in a White Room. (Young Adult)*

A fifteen-year-old boy wakes to find himself locked in a white, cube-shaped room: no windows, no doors, total silence. He has no memories. No clue how he got there. No idea who he is. A computer-generated voice named Alice responds to his questions. Through her, he is able to access the internet. As the boy uncovers snippets of his story—an attempted abduction, a critical injury, a murder—it becomes clearer. But when some of the pieces don’t fit, how can he tell what’s real and what’s not? Who can he trust? And who is he really?

Oshiro, Mark. *You Only Live Once, David Bravo.*

Middle school is kicking David’s butt—and the worst part is that his best friend isn’t in a single one of his classes. After a particularly disastrous day, David wishes he could get a do-over. What he doesn’t expect is to get it! A talking dog has shown up to be his guide to travelling through time, in hopes that he can fix the biggest mistake. But that’s not as easy as it sounds...

Pasternak, Sofiya. *Black Bird, Blue Road.*

Ziva would do anything to save her twin brother, Pesah, from his illness. Then, Pesah has a vision: The Angel of Death will come for him on Rosh Hashanah, just one month away. Ziva takes her brother and runs away to find doctors who can cure him. But when they meet and accidentally free a half-demon boy, he suggests paying his debt by leading them to the fabled city of Luz, where no one ever dies—the one place Pesah will be safe. They just need to run faster than The Angel of Death can fly.

Pérez, Celia C. *Tumble.*

Addie loves Alex, the only father figure she’s ever known, but when he proposes adoption, everything suddenly feels like it’s moving too fast. She has a million questions, and the first is about the young man in the photo she found hidden away in her mother’s things. Addie’s sleuthing leads her to the New Mexico ranch of the legendary Bravos, the family of professional wrestlers she’s never met—including her biological father, who’s in the midst of a career comeback. As luchadores, the Bravos’ legacy is strong. But being part of a family will require Addie to take off her mask and find a different kind of strength.



Preus, Margi. *Windswept*.

“Do you think they’re out there somewhere? And do you think they can still be found?” Tag’s sisters went Outside years ago and promptly vanished in the snow. Now, she’s setting out to rescue the lost Youngers, accompanied by an unlikely crew: Boots, who can climb anything; Ant, who will eat anything; and Ren, who will say anything. An unusual fairy tale that will sweep you away.

Rogers, Andrea L. *Man Made Monsters. (Young Adult)*

“Tsalagi should never have to live on human blood, but sometimes things just happen to sixteen-year-old girls.” Vampires. Zombies. Werewolves. All the classic monsters show up in this collection of stories, but so do human-made horrors. Empire. Violence. Dispossession. And at the beating heart of this collection is one Cherokee family, moving through centuries and surviving it all, from the 1830s into the future. Blood-curdling...but you won’t be able to put it down.

Rubin, Adam. *The Human Kaboom*.

In a swanky New York City hotel, a reclusive guest appears to have spontaneously combusted. On a school field trip to a human anatomy museum in space, two kids try to pull off the greatest prank in history. Somewhere on a deserted island, three siblings try to make a life for themselves after the rest of the planet has been decimated by gigantic rock monsters. And then there's the small town where a boy visiting his sister stumbles across an ancient curse, the traveling circus where a young girl becomes the assistant to a death-defying human cannonball, and the rugged wilderness where one kid with superpowers just can't seem to find some peace. A different artist illustrates each explosive story for a memorable summer reading experience.

Selznick, Brian. *Big Tree*.

Louise and Merwin find themselves thrust out of their home and into a big adventure. The catch? They’re Sycamore seeds anxious to become big trees just like their Mama. Selznick’s famous black-and-white pencil illustrations bring their world of meteors, dinosaurs, and scientists to life.



Skrypuch, Marsha Forchuk. *Winterkill*.

Alice has just arrived in Ukraine from Canada, and she’s starting to see that there’s something wrong. Her new friend Nyl’s family is struggling to have enough food, even though they’re farmers. It’s clear to Alice that Stalin is orchestrating the famine that is harming the Ukrainians. But will the two of them be able to pull off their plan to save the village before it’s too late? Based on the true-life events of the Holodomor—death by starvation—this is a can’t-miss historical thriller.

Soontornvat, Christina. *The Last Mapmaker*.

Sai is a mapmaker’s assistant, and she’s joined an expedition to chart the southern seas. In order to get on board, she’s posing as a well-bred young lady with a glittering future instead of the daughter of a con man she actually is. Sai realizes she's not the only one harboring secrets when she discovers the ship's true destination: a land of dragons, dangers, and treasures beyond compare.

Swinarski, Claire. *What Happened to Rachel Riley?*

Anna’s the new kid in her eighth-grade class, and there’s something weird going on. Rachel Riley was one of the most popular girls in school last year, but for some reason no one will even talk to her this year—and no one will talk about why. Anna decides to start an investigative podcast to get to the bottom of the mystery. But Anna finds out that if you ask a big question, you have to be ready to find some big answers...

Thomas, Angie. *Nic Blake and the Remarkables: The Manifestor Prophecy.*

It's not easy being a Remarkable in the Unremarkable world. Some things are cool—like getting a pet hellhound for your twelfth birthday. Others, not so much—like not being trusted to learn magic because you might use it to take revenge on an annoying neighbor. All Nic wants is to be a powerful Manifestor like her dad. Before she has a chance to convince him to teach her the gift, she learns shocking secrets—including that her father may be guilty of a crime. Now Nic and her friends are on a hunt for a powerful magic tool in order to save her father from imprisonment. Time is running out, and Nic must prove how remarkable she truly is. If you liked *Amari and the Night Brothers*, try this!

Warga, Jasmine. *A Rover's Story.*

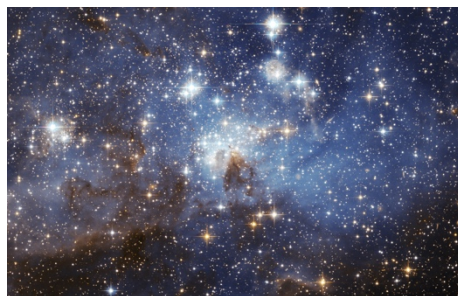
Resilience was built to explore Mars. He was not built to have human emotions. But as Res learns new things from the NASA scientists who assemble him, he begins to develop humanlike feelings. After Res blasts off to Mars, accompanied by a friendly drone helicopter named Fly, he quickly discovers that 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 back on Earth follow his progress, will Res have the determination, courage, and resilience to succeed... and survive?

Weinersmith, Zach. *Bea Wolf*. (Graphic Novel)

When evil neighbor Grindle lays siege to kid sanctuary Treeheart, turning its spirited child occupants into pimply teenagers and sullen adults, the survivors of the onslaught call out for a warrior whose will is unbreakable and whose appetite for mischief is unbounded. They call for Bea Wolf.

Yang, Kelly. *Finally Seen.*

When Lina Gao steps off the plane in Los Angeles, it's her first time in America *and* the first time seeing her parents and her little sister in five years! She's been waiting for this moment every day while living with her grandmother in Beijing, getting teased by kids at school who called her "left behind girl." *Finally*, her parents are ready for her to join their fabulous life in America! Except, it's not exactly like in the postcards. As she reckons with her hurt, Lina tries to keep a lid on her feelings, both at home and at school. It will take all of Lina's courage and resilience to get over her fear and choose a future where she's finally seen.



To round out this year's list, you'll find next year's Caudill list attached, in case you want a head start. Enjoy your summer! Happy reading!