



SUMMER READING

Get in the Game: READ! ~ Grades 7-8

*Suggested hero-themed summer reading titles
compiled for the Connecticut Department of Education by
Linda Williams, Connecticut State Library*

FICTION

The Crossover by Kwame Alexander

Fourteen-year-old twin basketball stars Josh and Jordan wrestle with highs and lows on and off the court as their father ignores his declining health. | Lexile: 750 | [ALA](#), [IRA](#)

Lost Girl Found by Leah Bassoff and Laura DeLuca

When war comes to her village in southern Sudan, Poni is forced to flee, and join thousands of refugees travelling on foot and experiencing great hardship on their way to a refugee camp. | Lexile: 770 | [ALA](#)

Skinny by Donna Cooner

After undergoing gastric-bypass surgery, a self-loathing, obese teenaged girl loses weight and makes the brave decision to start participating in high school life, including pursuing her dream of becoming a singer and finding love. | Lexile: 670 | [ALA](#), [ILA](#)

Crackback by John Coy

Miles barely recalls when football was fun after being sidelined by a new coach, constantly criticized by his father, and pressured by his best friend to take performance-enhancing drugs. | Lexile: 490 | [ALA](#), [Nutmeg](#) 2010

Foul Trouble by John Feinstein

College recruiters are clamoring to sign up Terrell Jamerson, the #1 high school basketball player in the country. But not all of these recruiters are straight shooters, and Terrell will have to think fast if he wants to stay in the game. | Lexile: 770 | [ALA](#)

Looks by Madeleine George

Two high school girls, one an anorexic poet and the other an obese loner, form an unlikely friendship. | Lexile: 1060 | [ALA](#), [NCSS](#)

Rash by Pete Hautman

In a future society that has decided it would "rather be safe than free," sixteen-year-old Bo's anger control problems land him in a tundra jail where he survives with the help of his running skills and an artificial intelligence program named Bork. | Lexile: 730

Dairy Queen by Catherine Gilbert Murdock

After spending her summer running the family farm and

training the quarterback for her school's rival football team, sixteen-year-old D.J. decides to go out for the sport herself, not anticipating the reactions of those around her. | Lexile: 990 | [ALA](#), [Nutmeg Nominee 2009](#)

Keeper by Mal Peet

In an interview with a young journalist, World Cup hero, El Gato, describes his youth in the Brazilian rain forest and the events, experiences, and people that helped make him a great goalkeeper and renowned soccer star. | Lexile: 780 | [ALA](#)

The Berlin Boxing Club by Robert Sharenow

In 1936 Berlin, fourteen-year-old Karl Stern, considered Jewish despite a non-religious upbringing, learns to box from the legendary Max Schmeling while struggling with the realities of the Holocaust. | Lexile: 880 | [ALA](#), [NCSS](#)

Curveball: The Year I Lost My Grip by Jordan Sonnenblick

After an injury ends former star pitcher Peter Friedman's athletic dreams, he concentrates on photography which leads him to a girlfriend, new fame as a high school sports photographer, and a deeper relationship with the beloved grandfather who, when he realizes he is becoming senile, gives Pete all of his professional camera gear. | Lexile: 800 | [ALA](#)

The Running Dream by Wendelin Van Draanen

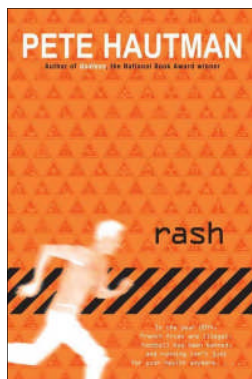
When a school bus accident leaves sixteen-year-old Jessica an amputee, she returns to school with a prosthetic limb and her track team finds a wonderful way to help rekindle her dream of running again. | Lexile: 650 | [ALA](#), [Nutmeg Nominee 2013](#)

The Final Four by Paul Volponi

Four players at the Final Four of the NCAA basketball tournament struggle with the pressures of tournament play and the expectations of society at large. | Lexile: 870 | [ALA](#)

Now is the Time for Running by Michael Williams

When soldiers attack a small village in Zimbabwe, Deo goes on the run with Innocent, his older, mentally disabled brother, carrying little but a leather soccer ball filled with money, and after facing prejudice, poverty, and tragedy, it is in soccer that Deo finds renewed hope. | Lexile: 650 | [Nutmeg Nominee 2014](#)

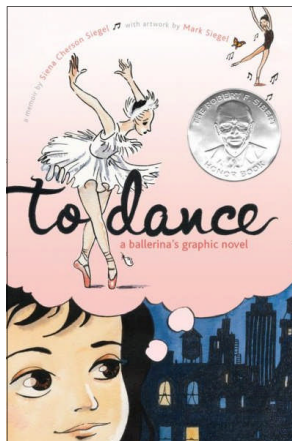


SUMMER READING LIST*

GRAPHIC NOVEL

To Dance: A Ballerina's Graphic Novel by *Siena Cherson Siegel and Mark Seigel*

In graphic format, the author shares her story of how, after being diagnosed with flat feet, she decided to take ballet classes at the age of six and was accepted to the School of American Ballet when she was eleven. | Lexile: 610 | [ALA](#), [ILA](#), [NCTE](#)



POETRY

Shakespeare Makes the Playoffs by *Ron Koertge*

Fourteen-year-old Kevin Boland, poet and first baseman, is torn between his cute girlfriend — Mira — and Amy, who is funny, plays Chopin on the piano, and is also a poet. | [ALA](#)

NONFICTION

Pinstripe Pride: The Inside Story of the New York Yankees by *Marty Appel*

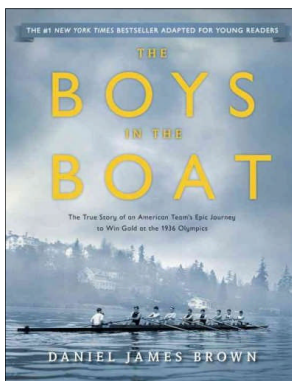
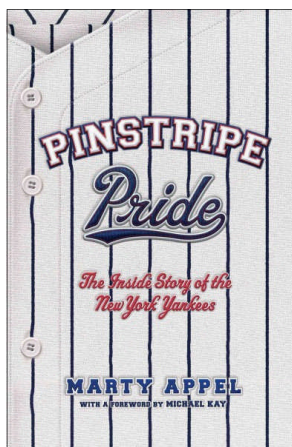
Profiles the New York Yankees team and chronicles the team's World Series championships and American League pennants. | Lexile: 1080

The Boys in the Boat: The True Story of an American Team's Epic Journey to Win Gold at the 1936 Olympics by *Daniel James Brown, adapted by Gregory Mone*

Describes the American rowing team's triumphant and unlikely win during the 1936 Olympics. | Lexile: 1000

Chocolate: Sweet Science and Dark Secrets of the World's Favorite Treat by *Kay Frydenborg*

A fascinating account for teen readers that captures the history, science, and economic and cultural implications of the harvesting of cacao and creation of chocolate. | Lexile: 1330 | [NSTA](#)



Fourth Down and Inches: Concussions and Football: Make-or-Break Moment by *Carla McClafferty*

Offers a look at the origins of football and the latest research on concussion and traumatic brain injuries in the sport. | Lexile: 1070

The Omnivore's Dilemma for Kids by *Michael Pollan*

An adaptation of the famous book offers insight into food consumption in the twenty-first century, explaining how an abundance of unlimited food varieties reveals the responsibilities of consumers to protect their health and the environment. | Lexile: 930

BIOGRAPHY

Meet the Dancers: From Ballet, Broadway, and Beyond by *Amy Nathan*

Dancers from all kinds of backgrounds talk about their different paths to success as ballerinas, modern dancers, music video performers, and Broadway showstoppers. | Lexile: [NCSS](#)

No Summit Out of Sight: The True Story of the Youngest Person to Climb the Seven Summits by *Jordan Romero*

The story of Jordan Romero, who at the age of 13 became the youngest person ever to reach the summit of Mount Everest. At age 15, he reached the summits of the world's 7 highest mountains. | Lexile: 850

Breakaway: Beyond the Goal by *Alex Morgan*

The Olympic gold medal-winning soccer player details her path to success, from her childhood in California to her time on the United States' National team. | Lexile: 960

Legends: The Best Players, Games, and Teams in Football by *Howard Bryant*

Offers highlights and entertaining facts from twenty of the greatest Super Bowls in the history of professional football. | Lexile: 1080

*Many listed books were selected as exemplary by one or more of the following organizations: the American Library Association (ALA), the International Literacy Association (ILA), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) or the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBYP).



SUMMER READING

Favorites & Classics

For Grades 7-8

Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson

When their owner dies at the start of the Revolution, Isabel and her younger sister are sold to Loyalists in New York, where Isabel is offered the chance to spy for the Patriots. | Lexile: 780

City of Orphans by Avi

In 1893 New York, thirteen-year-old Maks, a newsboy, teams up with Willa, a homeless girl, to clear his older sister, Emma, from charges that she stole from the brand new Waldorf Hotel, where she works. Includes historical notes. | Lexile: 570

Diamonds in the Shadow by Caroline B. Cooney

The Finches, a Connecticut family, sponsor an African refugee family of four, all of whom have been scarred by the horrors of civil war, and who inadvertently put their benefactors in harm's way. | Lexile: 750

Elijah of Buxton by Christopher Paul Curtis

In 1859, eleven-year-old Elijah Freeman, the first free-born child in Buxton, Canada, which is a haven for slaves fleeing the American south, 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. | Lexile: 1070

Eva by Peter Dickinson

After a terrible accident, a young girl wakes up to discover that she has been given the body of a chimpanzee. | Lexile: 1010

Whirligig by Paul Fleischman

While traveling to each corner of the country to build a whirligig in memory of the girl whose death he caused, sixteen-year-old Brian finds forgiveness and atonement. | Lexile: 760

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman

After the grisly murder of his entire family, a toddler wanders into a graveyard where the ghosts and other supernatural residents agree to raise him as one of their own. | Lexile: 820

House of Dies Drear by Virginia Hamilton

A black family of five moves into an enormous house once used as a hiding place for runaway slaves. Mysterious sounds and events as well as the discovery of secret passageways make the family believe they are in grave danger. | Lexile: 670

Chomp by Carl Hiaasen

When the difficult star of the reality television show "Expedition Survival" disappears while filming an episode in the Florida Everglades using animals from the wildlife refuge run by Wahoo Crane's family, Wahoo and classmate Tuna Gordon set out to find him while avoiding Tuna's gun-happy father. | Lexile: 800

The Thing About Luck by Cynthia Kadohata

Just when twelve-year-old Summer thinks nothing else can possibly go wrong in a year of bad luck, an emergency takes her parents to Japan, leaving Summer to care for her little brother while helping her grandmother cook and do laundry for harvest workers. | Lexile: 700

The Silver Kiss by Annette Curtis Klause

A mysterious teenage boy harboring a dark secret helps Zoë come to terms with her mother's terminal illness. | Lexile: 690

Listen Slowly by Thanhha Lai

Assisting her grandmother's investigation of her grandfather's fate during the Vietnam War, Mai struggles to adapt to an unfamiliar culture while redefining her sense of family. | Lexile: 800

Ask My Mood Ring How I Feel by Diana Lopez

When thirteen-year-old Erica "Chia" Montenegro finds out her mother has breast cancer, she makes a promise to God to raise money for breast cancer awareness and discovers that when family and friends work together, miracles can happen. | Lexile: 700

The Giver by Lois Lowry

Given his lifetime assignment at the Ceremony of Twelve, Jonas becomes the receiver of memories shared by only one other in his community and discovers the terrible truth about the society in which he lives. | Lexile: 760

The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano by Sonia Manzano

It is 1969 in Spanish Harlem, and fourteen-year-old Evelyn Serrano is trying hard to break free from her conservative Puerto Rican surroundings, but when her activist grandmother comes to stay and the neighborhood protests start, things get a lot more complicated--and dangerous. | Lexile: 720

Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson

After his anger erupts into violence, Cole, in order to avoid going to prison, agrees to participate in a sentencing alternative based on the native American Circle Justice, and he is sent to a remote Alaskan Island where an encounter with a huge Spirit Bear changes his life. | Lexile: 670

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell

Left alone on a beautiful but isolated island off the coast of California, a young Indian girl spends eighteen years, not only merely surviving through her enormous courage and self-reliance, but also finding a measure of happiness in her solitary life. | Lexile: 1000



SUMMER READING

Favorites & Classics

For Grades 7-8

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen

After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the Canadian wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce. | Lexile: 1020

All of the Above by Shelley Pearsall

Five urban middle school students, their teacher, and other community members relate how a school project to build the world's largest tetrahedron affects the lives of everyone involved. | Lexile: 1000

The River Between Us by Richard Peck

During the early days of the Civil War, the Pruitt family takes in two mysterious young ladies who have fled New Orleans to come north to Illinois. | Lexile: 740

The Wee Free Men by Terry Pratchett

Tiffany, a young witch-to-be in the land of Discworld, teams up with the Wee Free Men, a clan of six-inch-high blue men, to rescue her baby brother and ward off a sinister invasion from Fairyland. | Lexile: 680

Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli

In this story about the perils of popularity, the courage of nonconformity, and the thrill of first love, an eccentric student named Stargirl changes Mica High School forever. | Lexile: 590

Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind by Suzanne Fisher Staples

When eleven-year old Shabanu, the daughter of a nomad in the Cholistan Desert of present-day Pakistan, is pledged in marriage to an older man whose money will bring prestige to the family, she must either accept the decision, as is the custom, or risk the consequences of defying her father's wishes. | Lexile: 970

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor

A black family living in the South during the 1930s are faced with prejudice and discrimination which their children don't understand. | Lexile: 920

The Hobbit by J. R. R. Tolkien

Bilbo Baggins, a respectable, well-to-do hobbit, lives comfortably in his hobbit-hole until the day the wandering wizard Gandalf chooses him to take part in an adventure from which he may never return. | Lexile: 1000

Izzy, Willy-Nilly by Cynthia Voigt

A car accident causes fifteen-year-old Izzy to lose one leg and face the need to start building a new life as an amputee. | Lexile: 790

Howl's Moving Castle

by Diana Wynne Jones

Eldest of three sisters in a land where it is considered to be a misfortune, Sophie is resigned to her fate as a hat shop apprentice until a witch turns her into an old woman and she finds herself in the castle of the greatly feared wizard Howl. | Lexile: 800

American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang

Alternates three interrelated stories about the problems of young Chinese Americans trying to participate in the popular culture. | Lexile: 530

The Pigman by Paul Zindel

A teenage boy and girl, high school sophomores from unhappy homes, tell of their bizarre relationship with an old man. | Lexile: 950

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

Death tells the story of a young German girl, Liesel, whose book-stealing and story-telling talents during World War II help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors. | Lexile: 730

FAVORITE SERIES

The Princess Diaries series by Meg Cabot

Artemis Fowl series by Eoin Colfer

Young Wizards series by Diane Duane

The Rangers Apprentice by John Flanagan

Lunar Chronicles by Marissa Meyer

The Squire's Tales series by Gerald Morris

The News Crew series by Walter Dean Myers

Song of the Lioness quartet by Tamora Pierce

His Dark Materials series by Phillip Pullman

Divergent trilogy by Veronica Roth

Secrets of the Immortal Nicholas Flamel series
by Michael Scott

The Tillermans series by Cynthia Voigt

Leviathan series by Scott Westerfield
