

## **Intermediate Reading Recommendations 2023**

This is your recommended summer reading list. Please use it as a guide to select the books you read this summer. You will notice that we have organized the titles by genre: realistic fiction; historical fiction; adventure and mystery; animal; fantasy and science fiction; poetry; and other non-fiction. Most titles should be available at your public library or local bookstore in print, as audiobooks, or ebooks.

We made this list to address what we know of you as readers, but also to introduce you to new and exciting titles we've discovered this year. Of course, there are so many more great books out there for you to explore, and there are new books being published all the time! A few of our favorite curated lists can be found [here](#) and [here](#). You can use these links to find even more books to fill up your summer reading stacks.

Happy summer reading!

### **Realistic Fiction**

[\*Thirst\*](#) by Varsha Bajaj

While studying for final exams, 12 year-old Minni discovers a theft ring taking water from her neighborhood in Mumbai, India. She combats this injustice while also working through her responsibilities in her family.

[\*Falling Short\*](#) by Ernesto Cisneros

Two good friends, Isaac and Marco, help each other to become the middle grade students they want to be. They support each other in ways that their fathers cannot by having honest conversations, admiring each other's good qualities, and supporting each other through anxiety attacks and family problems.

[\*Jennifer Chan is Not Alone\*](#) by Tae Keller

Thanks to her best friend, Reagan, Mallory Moss knows the rules of middle school. The most important one? You have to fit in to survive. But then Jennifer Chan moves in across the street, and that rule doesn't seem to apply. When Jennifer goes missing, Mallory uses clues from Jennifer's journals to try and find her. But the closer she gets, the more Mallory has to confront why Jennifer might have run...and face the truth within herself.

[\*Tumble\*](#) by Celia C Perez

Twelve-year-old Adela has never met her biological father. After learning that he is a member of a professional wrestling family, she finds a way to meet him, and new relationships evolve.

[\*When the World Turned Upside Down\*](#) by K. Iburu

Four friends, living in the same apartment building during the COVID-19 pandemic, discover that taking action assisting neighbors and participating in social justice protests help them through turbulent times.

[\*Wildoak\*](#) by CC Harrington

To combat Maggie's stuttering, her parents send her to her grandfather's house in the country. Her mission there is to save a wounded snow leopard, and by doing so she liberates her own voice.

[\*Hello, Universe\*](#) by Erin Entrada Kelly

Virgil Salinas is shy and kindhearted, and feels out of place in his loud family. Valencia Somerset is deaf, smart, brave, and secretly lonely. Kaori Tanaka is a self-proclaimed psychic. And Chet Bullens wishes the weird kids would just act normal so that he can concentrate on basketball. They aren't friends -- at least not until Chet pulls a prank that traps Virgil and his pet guinea pig at the bottom of a well. This disaster leads Kaori, Gen, and Valencia on an epic quest to find the missing Virgil.

[\*Handful of Stars\*](#) by Cynthia Lord

A 2015 novel by Newbery Honor author Cynthia Lord begins when a blind dog slips his collar and 12-year-old Lily meets Salma Santiago. Salma is in Maine for the blueberry-picking season with her family, and, based partly on their mutual love of dogs, the two forge a friendship.

[\*Harbor Me\*](#) by Jacqueline Woodson

Six kids have to meet for a weekly chat—by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, in the room they soon dub the ARTT Room (short for "A Room to Talk"), they discover it's safe to talk about all of the things bothering them. When the six are together, they can express the feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. Together they grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives.

### **Historical Fiction**

[\*Prairie Lotus\*](#) by Linda Sue Park

Hanna is determined to fit in and realize her dreams: getting an education, becoming a dressmaker in her father's shop, and making at least one friend. She is a girl in a small town in America's heartland in 1880. Hanna struggles with adjustment to her new surroundings and the townspeople's prejudice against Asians, ultimately learning the importance of standing out and being true to herself.

[\*The Seventh Most Important Thing\*](#) by Shelley Pearsall

For the rest of the country, it is the year President Kennedy was assassinated, but for Arthur Owens, it will always be the year his Dad died. When Arthur sees his Dad's hat being worn by the neighborhood "Junk Man," he is overwhelmed with anger. Arthur isn't a bad kid, but he picks up that brick and throws it just the same. The judge decides that Arthur must spend every weekend of his community service helping "Junk Man," James Hampton, complete his artistic masterpiece. Inspired by real life artist James Hampton's life and work.

[\*One Crazy Summer\*](#) (*Gaither Girls series*) by Rita Williams-Garcia

Set in 1968, Delphine Gaither and her two younger sisters, Vonetta and Afua "Fern" Gaither, spend a month in Oakland, California, with Cecile Johnson, the mother who abandoned them almost six years prior. This vibrant novel shows the subtle ways that political movements affect personal lives; but just as memorable is the finely drawn, universal story of children reclaiming a reluctant parent's love.

[\*Freewater\*](#) by Amina Luqman-Dawson

After escaping a Southern plantation, Homer and Ada join Freewater, a swampland community of formerly enslaved people. But can they ever return to free their mother? Winner of the 2022 Newbery Award.

[\*Isla to Island\*](#) by Alexis Castellanos

After escaping Cuba in 1961, Marisol struggles to adapt to her new family and to her life in Brooklyn. Graphic novel.

[\*Yonder\*](#) by Ali Standish

Set in small-town Appalachia during WWII, this is a story about Danny Timmons, 13, who goes looking for his friend Jack after he goes missing. He searches using clues from a story Jack told him, about a place called Yonder.

[\*A Sky Full of Song\*](#) by Susan Lynn Meyer

It's the year 1905, and Shoshana, her mother and sisters have fled their home in Ukraine and moved to reunite with her father and older brother in North Dakota. There, the family lives in a prairie dugout and Shoshana and her big sister Libke start attending school. Soon, the girls—especially Shoshana—begin to experience prejudice because of their Jewish religion and culture. Shoshana is tempted to blend into the mostly Christian community around her, but is that the right path to acceptance?

[\*Maizy Chen's Last Chance\*](#) by Lisa Yee

Maizy and her mother return to Last Chance, Minnesota, when Maizy's grandfather becomes ill, to help run the family restaurant. Maizy learns of her family history from her grandfather in a sprawling story, which is interwoven with love, racism, and community. At the same time, The Golden Palace experiences a hate crime, and Maizy is shocked to discover who the perpetrator is.

[\*A Place to Hang the Moon\*](#) by Kate Albus

This book follows three orphaned kids in England during the WWII evacuation. Orphans William, Edmund, and Anna (aged 12, 11, and 9) are evacuated after their (not nice) grandmother dies. The kids are instructed not to disclose how well off their family is until they're placed with a new family that feels like a forever family.

[\*Bud, Not Buddy\*](#) by Christopher Curtis

*Bud, Not Buddy* is the story of a young boy's search for the father he has never met. Following clues from the few possessions he carries that were his momma's, Bud escapes from a difficult life in Flint to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to find his father.

[\*Esperanza Rising\*](#) by Pam Muñoz Ryan

The novel focuses on Esperanza, the only daughter of wealthy Mexican parents, and follows the events that occur after her father's murder. Esperanza, her mother, and their former household servants flee to California with no money during the Great Depression, where they find agricultural work that pays very little.

### **Adventure and Mystery**

[\*Cress Watercress\*](#) by Gregory Maguire

After mother Bunny moves Cress and baby Kip to the basement of Broken Arms, Cress experiences danger, adventure and a colorful group of residents.

[\*When you Reach Me\*](#) by Rebecca Stead

As her mother prepares to be a contestant on the 1980s television game show, “The \$20,000 Pyramid,” 12-year-old, Miranda, tries to make sense of mysterious notes received from anonymous sources that seem to defy the laws of time and space.

[\*The Candymakers\*](#) by Wendy Mass

Four children have been chosen to compete in a national competition to find the tastiest confection in the country. Who will invent a candy more delicious than the Oozing Crunchorama or the Neon Lightning Chew? Logan, the Candymaker's son, who can detect the color of chocolate by touch alone?

[\*Greenglass House\*](#) by Kate Milford

Twelve year-old Milo's Christmas looks ruined when five eccentric guests arrive at his parents' inn on the first day of vacation. But his new friend Meddy has other ideas, and soon the pair is investigating a series of thefts and creating alter egos based on the role-playing game Odd Trails.

[\*The Wild Robot\*](#) by Peter Brown

Roz struggles to survive on a remote, wild island. As it turns out, Roz doesn't just survive, she adapts, and learns to communicate with the wildlife, developing animal friends and even a family.

[\*The Whiz Mob and the Grenadine Kid\*](#) by Colin Meloy

Charlie, the shy son of an American diplomat in France, discovers a thrilling, dangerous underworld whose young denizens prey on the unsuspecting elite of 1961 Marseille.

## **Animal**

[\*Odder\*](#) by Katherine Applegate

A rescued otter pup encounters both joy and peril when he is introduced back into the wild. Based on actual Monterey Bay Aquarium animals.

[\*Violet and Jobie in the Wild\*](#) by Lynn Rae Perkins

House mice get trapped and released to a wild they've never experienced. Can they learn to survive without humans, upon whom they've come to rely?

[\*Wishtree\*](#) by Katherine Applegate

Red is an oak tree which is many rings old. Red is the neighborhood "wishtree"—people write their wishes on pieces of cloth and tie them to Red's branches. Along with a crow named Bongo and other animals who seek refuge in Red's hollows, this wishtree watches over the neighborhood. Funny, deep, warm, and nuanced, this is a great read-aloud book as well.

[\*The Last Wild\*](#) by Piers Torday

In a world where animals are slowly fading into extinction, twelve-year-old Kester Jaynes feels as if he hardly exists either. He's been locked away in a home for troubled children and is unable to speak a word. Then one night, a flock of talking pigeons and a bossy cockroach come to help him escape, and he discovers that he *can* speak—to them.

[\*The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane\*](#) by Kate DiCamillo

Edward Tulane is a china rabbit given to a ten-year-old girl named Abilene by her grandmother in the 1930s. He enjoys a pleasant but vain life with his young mistress, who treats him with the utmost love and respect, until an unfortunate incident finds him falling overboard while vacationing on the Queen Mary.

### **Fantasy and Science Fiction**

[\*Aviva vs. the Dybbuk\*](#)

Avivia's dybbuk always gets her in trouble in her Orthodox Jewish community. Is her mischievous spirit a friend or enemy? Comes with a Hebrew and Yiddish glossary.

[\*The Last Mapmaker\*](#) by Christina Soontornvat

The daughter of a con man apprentices herself to an elderly mapmaker, leading to the ocean adventure of a lifetime!

[\*The Marvellers\*](#) (series) by Dhonielle Clayton

Conjuror Ella Durand enters the Arcanum Training Institute, a magical school in the clouds. Not everyone welcomes her, and when a dangerous criminal named the Ace of Anarchy escapes prison, Ella becomes a target of suspicion.

[\*Endling: The Last\*](#) (series) by Katherine Applegate

After her pack is hunted down and slaughtered, Byx fears she may be the last of her species: the endling. Together with a ragtag group of animals and humans, the group puts into motion events that could bring the kingdom to the brink of war.

[\*The Wild Book \(Yonder\)\*](#) by Juan Villaro

This is a wonderful adventure story about a boy who goes to live with his kooky, book-obsessed uncle in a library where books have supernatural powers. He soon discovers that he is a Princeps Reader, which means books respond magically to him. Will his powers help him to find the elusive, never-before-read Wild Book before the story-stealing Pirate Book does?

[\*The Wizard of Earthsea\*](#) by Ursula K LeGuin

The story is set in the fictional archipelago of Earthsea and centers on a young mage named Ged, born in a village on the island of Gont. He displays great power while still a boy and joins a school of wizardry, where his prickly nature drives him into conflict with a fellow student.

[\*Where the Mountain Meets the Moon\*](#) by Grace Lin

A young Chinese girl named Minli goes on a journey to meet the Old Man in the Moon in order to ask him to change her family's wealth. Along the way, Minli makes friends with a flightless dragon, a talking goldfish, a King, and a boy with a buffalo. The characters she meets all play a role in helping her find her way to the Old Man in the Moon.

### **Poetry**

[\*Behold Our Magical Garden: Poems Fresh from a School Garden\*](#) by Allan Wolf

The many wonders of a garden, flora and fauna, are depicted in playful and varied verse forms. With whimsical illustrations and an activity for each poem.

*Marshmallow Clouds: Two Poets at Play among Figures of Speech* by Ted Kooser and Connie Wanek

Thirty free verse poems about fire, water, air, and earth play imaginatively with words, imagery, similes, and metaphors.

*Voices in the Air* by Naomi Shihab Nye

This collection of almost one hundred original poems written by the award-winning poet Naomi Shihab Nye in honor of the artists, writers, poets, historical figures, ordinary people, and diverse luminaries from past and present who have inspired her. Full of words of encouragement, solace, and hope, this collection offers a message of peace and empathy.

*Before We Stood Tall* by Jessica Kulekjian

In this beautiful book, expressive text and art tell the story of the life cycle of trees in reverse. This is a lyrical depiction of the life cycle of trees, told one step at a time, based on newly researched information.

*They Only See the Outside* by Kalli Dakos

This wonderful collection of poetry contains poems on homework, chronic illness, the death of a friend, bullying, lying, shyness, and other significant issues.

*The 1619 Project: Born on the Water* by Renee Watson and Nikole Hannah-Jones

As the authors explain, this powerful collection of poems shows “that Black Americans have their own proud origin story...that bridges the gap between Africa and the United States of America.” This legacy is bookended by a story of a girl who receives a school assignment to explore her origins.

### **Biography and Memoir**

*Hope is an Arrow: The Story of Lebanese American Poet Kahlil Gibran* by Cory McCarthy

Before Kahlil Gibran became the world’s third-best-selling poet of all time, he was Gibran Khalil Gibran, an immigrant child from Lebanon with a secret hope to bring people together despite their many differences. Amazing collage and acrylic illustrations by Euka Holmes

*Maya’s Song* by Renee Watson, illustrated by Bryan Collier

This unforgettable picture book introduces readers to the life and work of Maya Angelou, whose words have uplifted and inspired generations of readers. Before Maya was a writer and an activist, she lost her voice for five years after experiencing childhood trauma.

*Troublemakers in Trousers: Women and What they Wore to get Things Done* by Sarah Albee, illustrated by Kaja Kajfez

From Joan of Arc to Frida Kahlo, this book highlights twenty-one women who, for different reasons, wore men’s clothing, pretended to be men, and broke the rules in order to do something they wanted—or needed—to do.

*Choosing Brave: Mamie Till-Mobley and Emmett Till Sparked the Civil Rights Movement* by Angela Joy

The resourcefulness and steel of a mother seeking justice for her son's heinous murder is dramatized in free verse.

[The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian's Art Changed Science](#) by Joyce Sidman

An artist at a time when women weren't allowed to be. A scientist before there were scientists. An adventurer who journeyed far and wide in search of the truth of metamorphosis. Dive into this fully-illustrated account of her life, bursting with art, history and juicy details.

### **Other non-fiction**

[A River's Gifts: The Mighty Elwha River Reborn](#) by Patricia Newman

A Washington State river, central to the life of the Lower Elwha Tribe, is restored after being dramatically altered by damming over 100 years ago.

[Copycat: Nature Inspired Design Around the World](#) by Christy Hale

Robotic arms, space-saving cars, and apartments that stack like honeycombs, are just a few inventions highlighted here that mimic nature.

[Infinity: Figuring Out Forever](#) by Sarah C Campbell

The mathematical concept of endlessness is presented in simple terms with clear and colorful photography.

[Swoop and Soar: How Science Rescued Two Osprey Orphans and Found them a New Family in the Wild](#)

by Deborah Lee Rose and Jane Veltkamp

The title says it all. Beautiful color photographs.

[The Owner's Manual for Driving Your Adolescent Brain](#) by JoAnn Deak and Terrence Deak

The manual explains in detail what adolescence is and how it affects the entire body, starting in the brain. By comparing the brain to a car, it covers brain functions, nervous system, spinal cord, and cells.