

Great Books for Middle School Readers

Tangerine by Edward Bloor

Twelve-year-old Paul, who lives in the shadow of his football hero brother Erik, fights for the right to play soccer despite his near blindness and slowly begins to remember the incident that damaged his eyesight.

The Ender Quintet by Orson Scott Card

Book 1: *Enders Game*: An expert at simulated war games, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin believes that he is engaged in one more computer war game when, in truth, he is commanding the last Earth fleet against an alien race seeking Earth's complete destruction.

Al Capone at Alcatraz Series by Jennifer Choldenko

Book 1: *Al Capone does my Shirts*: A twelve-year-old boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there, and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.

The Mortal Instruments by Cassandra Clare

Book 1: *City of Bones*: Suddenly able to see demons and the Darkhunters who are dedicated to returning them to their own dimension, fifteen-year-old Clary Fray is drawn into this bizarre world when her mother disappears and Clary herself is almost killed by a monster.

Things Series by Andrew Clements

Book 1: *Things Not Seen*: When fifteen-year-old Bobby wakes up and finds himself invisible, he and his parents and his new blind friend Alicia try to find out what caused his condition and how to reverse it.

The Supernaturalist by Eoin Colfer

In futuristic Satellite City, fourteen-year-old Cosmo Hill escapes from his abusive orphanage and teams up with three other people who share his unusual ability to see supernatural creatures, and together they determine the nature and purpose of the swarming blue Parasites that are invisible to most humans.

Book of Ember by Jeanne Duprau

Book 1: *City of Ember*: When the lights in Ember begin to flicker, twelve-year-old messenger Lina struggles to find out what's happening to her city. The secrets she discovers have the power to either save or destroy her world. What will happen when the lights go out?

Inkworld Series by Cornelia Funke

Book 1: *Inkspell*: Meggie's father used to read to her, but when she was five her mother went away, and he stopped. It's not until she's twelve that Meggie learns the reason why: when Mo reads aloud, he can read characters out of books. And when he reads a character out, someone or something from the real world goes in. Now Meggie and Mo are on the run from an evil character from a book called Inkheart, who is trying to force Mo to read out a horrible monster. Can Meggie and her father escape from Capricorn? Or will Capricorn force them to do his bidding?

Paper Towns by John Green

One month before graduating from his Central Florida high school, Quentin "Q" Jacobsen basks in the predictable boringness of his life until the beautiful and exciting Margo Roth Spiegelman, Q's neighbor and classmate, takes him on a midnight adventure and then mysteriously disappears.

Love Among the Walnuts by Jean Ferris

Born and raised in isolation in a wealthy, eccentric family, Sandy is shocked when he, his parents, and their servants become victims of a vicious plot by his greedy uncles to incapacitate them and take their money.

The Misfits by James Howe

A marvelous story of friendship, *The Misfits* chronicles the efforts made by a group of outcasts to elect one of their own as student council president. Their goal is to force the teachers at their school and their peers to recognize them as worthy individuals. Throughout the tale the kids evolve as they take their protest against labeling and name-calling to a whole new level.

Journey to the River Sea by Eva Ibbotson

Sent with her governess to live with the dreadful Carter family in exotic Brazil in 1910, Maia endures many hardships before fulfilling her dream of exploring the Amazon River.

Evolution of Calpurnia Tate by Jacqueline Keller

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

No More Dead Dogs by Gordon Korman

Wallace Wallace can't tell a lie. When asked to write a book review about "Old Shep, My Pup" he had to admit that it "couldn't be any lousier than if it came with a letter bomb", and he "wouldn't recommend it to his worst enemy." For his honesty, Wallace is rewarded with a detention that keeps him at school every afternoon rehearsing the play version of "Old Shep" with the drama nerds, instead of playing football with his team. His team mates are getting annoyed, in fact the whole school is upset that Wallace is off the team, but will Wallace decide to end his detention in time to save the team? Find out in the hilarious conclusion.

The Green Glass Sea by Ellen Klages

In 1943, eleven-year-old Dewey Kerrigan lives with her scientist father in Los Alamos, New Mexico, as he works on a top secret government program, and befriends an aspiring artist who is a misfit just like her.

Every Soul a Star by Wendy Mass

Ally, Bree, and Jack meet at the one place the Great Eclipse can be seen in totality, each carrying the burden of different personal problems, which become dim when compared to the task they embark upon and the friendship they find.

Airborn by Kenneth Oppel

Matt Cruse has the life he has always dreamed of as a cabin boy on the Aurora, a luxury passenger airship that sails hundreds of feet above the ocean. Then one night he meets a dying balloonist who speaks of beautiful creatures drifting through the skies who are completely real and utterly mysterious.

Wonder by R. J. Palacio

Ten-year-old Auggie Pullman, who was born with extreme facial abnormalities and was not expected to survive, goes from being home-schooled to entering fifth grade at a private middle school in Manhattan, which entails enduring the taunting and fear of his classmates as he struggles to be seen as just another student.

Maximum Ride by James Patterson

Book 1: *Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment*: After the mutant Erasers abduct the youngest member of their group, the "bird kids," who are the result of genetic experimentation, take off in pursuit and find themselves struggling to understand their own origins and purpose.

The Teachers Funeral by Richard Peck

In rural Indiana in 1904, fifteen-year-old Russell's dreams of quitting school and joining a wheat threshing crew are disrupted when his older sister takes over the teaching at his one-room schoolhouse after mean old Myrt Arbuckle "hauls off and dies."

The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin

The mysterious death of an eccentric millionaire brings together an unlikely assortment of heirs who must uncover the circumstances of his death before they can claim their inheritance.

Holes by Louis Sachar

As further evidence of his family's bad fortune which they attribute to a curse on a distant relative, Stanley Yelnats is sent to a hellish correctional camp in the Texas desert where he finds his first real friend, a treasure, and a new sense of himself.

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznik

Hugo can't let anyone know that his uncle has disappeared. He lives alone in the train station, trying to survive. Hugo has only 2 things of his own: his father's notebook and the damaged remains of the mechanical man that was almost destroyed in the fire that killed his father. The old man at the toy booth is also interested in the notebook, but why does he seem so threatened by it? What is he so afraid of?

Stargirl Series by Jerry Spinelli

Book 1: *Stargirl*: It's all about being accepted for who you are and not conforming to boys' expectations—themes middle school girls will talk about at length. (RW) This is one of the great books about how rotten kids can be to each other, and even though it is set in high school, it is a perfect encapsulation of the emotional turmoil of middle school.

Mysterious Benedict Society Series by Trenton Lee Stewart

Book 1: *The Mysterious Benedict Society*: After passing a series of mind-bending tests, four children are selected for a secret mission that requires them to go undercover at the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened, where the only rule is that there are no rules.