

West Orange Public Schools

Grades 6-8 Suggested Summer Reading List

*Prepared by Ms. Lisa Touzeau, Ms. Sandy Bochese, and Ms. Meara Franowicz
Middle School Library Media Specialists*

**It's Trevor Noah : born a crime : stories from a South African childhood : adapted for young readers
By Trevor Noah**

5-8 Genres: Memoir / Prejudice & Race

A television host, political commentator, and comedian, Trevor Noah has a reputation for wit. In this insightful memoir, adapted from the adult volume *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* (2016), his clever mind and grasp of languages are unveiled. Noah intersperses his life experiences with a layered look at the history of South Africa. Growing up at the end of apartheid, he was evidence of a crime—his mother was Black and his father was white, and mixed-race children were illegal—and it made him an outsider. Noah grew up understanding that many aspects of his upbringing were fundamentally different: his mother raised him with an imagination and showed that there were no barriers to whatever he wanted to be. Readers will find this journey through Noah's formative years humorous and exciting. He has lived during a tumultuous time in South African history and has come through it to become one of the most prominent voices in the world.

Look both ways a tale told in ten blocks by Jason Reynolds

5-8 Genres: Adventure / Realistic Fiction

From National Book Award finalist and #1 New York Times bestselling author Jason Reynolds comes a novel told in ten blocks, showing all the different directions kids' walks home can take. Jason Reynolds conjures ten tales (one per block) about what happens after the dismissal bell rings, and brilliantly weaves them into one wickedly funny, piercingly poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life.

Stamped : racism, antiracism, and you By Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi

7-12 Genres: Prejudice & Racism / Social Issues

"This is not a history book" declares Reynolds at the outset, an announcement that instantly absorbs readers, displaying the author's singular way of communicating with young people. Reynolds' "remix" begins in 1415 and travels into the present in five well-paced sections, following the general outline of Kendi's comprehensive title. Throughout the book, Reynolds inserts literal pauses ("Record scratch"), and interjects with commentary ("Let that sink in") and clarifications, a way of insisting that the pages are not merely text, but a conversation. Readers will undoubtedly experience a mixture of feelings after finishing this book, but the encouragement to emerge as critical thinkers who can decipher coded language and harmful imagery stemming from racist ideas, which still linger in modern society and popular culture, will be the most empowering result. Thankfully, extensive back matter is included, with source notes and a dynamic further reading list. Required reading for everyone, especially those invested in the future of young people in America.

This book is anti-racist --20 lessons on how to wake up, take action, and do the work by Jewell, Tiffany

7-12 Genres: Prejudice & Racism / Social Issues

How does one relate the complexities of racism to young people? In her debut nonfiction title, Jewell gives tweens and teens the background information and language to understand how racism was created, how it continues to work, and why it's important to fight against it. The author begins with a thorough overview of identity, intersectionality, privilege, ethnicity, and other concepts necessary to recognize the dominant culture and those who have been marginalized. Accompanied by vibrant digital artwork featuring real and imagined people of color, the short, dense chapters continue with descriptions of key individuals and events in racist history from around the world and culminate with myriad strategies to take action against racism, both

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individually and in solidarity with others. Throughout the primer, Jewell interjects insight from her own life as a biracial cisgender woman and offers related, thought-provoking activities.

Monday's not coming by Tiffany D Jackson

7-12 Genres: Thriller / Urban Fiction

Claudia and Monday have been friends since childhood. When Claudia returns from summer vacation, Monday isn't at school, and she's not returning calls. No one seems to know where she is. Claudia knows something is wrong, but what reason would anyone have to lie about Monday's whereabouts? The plot weaves through time, slowly piecing together clues, until the painful truth is revealed. Jackson doesn't hold anything back when it comes to the pain of abuse and the ramifications of turning a blind eye. This is a powerful and emotional novel that is gripping and heartbreaking and hits upon serious topics. It's a frank, devastating read filled with real and flawed characters, and it's a story that needs to be read.

Bloom by Kevin Panetta; illustrated by Savanna Ganucheau

7-12 Genres: LGBTQIA+ / Realistic Fiction/ Romance

Now that high school is over, Ari is dying to move to the big city with his ultra-hip band, if he can just convince his dad to let him quit their struggling family bakery. Though he loved working there as a kid, Ari cannot fathom a life wasting away his days over rising dough and hot ovens. But in the midst of interviewing candidates for his replacement, Ari meets Hector, an easy-going guy who loves baking as much as Ari wants to escape it. As they become closer over batches of breads, love begins to bloom . . . that is, if Ari doesn't ruin everything.

Wilder girls by Rory Power

7-12 Genres: Apocalyptic / Thriller

Sixteen-year-old scholarship student Hetty was one of the first to show signs of the Tox. Over the last 18 months, she's watched it ravage her classmates and teachers as they wait, quarantined within their boarding school grounds, for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop and deliver a cure. The Tox affects everyone differently: Hetty's right eye sealed itself shut; her best friend, Byatt, grew a second, exterior spine; Reese has a sharp, silver-scaled left hand and glowing hair. Not everyone adapts to the Tox's cyclical flare-ups—a girl brought to the infirmary rarely returns. The two remaining staff maintain tenuous order, but a flare-up that lands Byatt in the infirmary—with Hetty determined to protect her—quickly escalates into events that irrevocably shape the fates of everyone left on the island. Part survival thriller, part post-apocalyptic romance, and part ecocritical feminist manifesto, a staggering gut punch of a book.

New Kid by Jerry Craft

Grades 5-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction

After his parents send him to a prestigious private school known for its academics, Jordan Banks finds himself torn between two worlds. Newbery Award Winner-2020

Guts by Raina Telgemeier Grades

4-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction, Graphic Novel

Developing a chronic upset stomach that she initially dismisses as a bug, young Raina discovers that her symptoms are related to her anxieties about school, food and changing friendships, in a story based on the Eisner Award-winning author's childhood.

Illegal by Eoin Colfer Grades

5-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction, Graphic Novel

Resolved to join the siblings who left months earlier, 12-year-old Ebo ventures through the Sahara and the dangerous streets of Tripoli before embarking on a hazardous voyage from Ghana to a safe haven in Europe.

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A Good Kind of Trouble by Lisa Moore Ramee Grades

5-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction

Strictly following the rules to pursue her junior-high ambitions, 12-year-old Shayla is forced to choose between her education and her identity when her sister joins the Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of a powerful protest.

Merci Suárez Changes Gears by Meg Medina

Grades 5-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction

Using humor and grace, Merci, a charming and plucky protagonist, cycles through life's challenges with the support of her intergenerational family. This richly nuanced novel tackles the complexity of navigating a multicultural identity amidst changing family dynamics. Newbery Award winner-2019

The Night Diary by Veera Hiranandani

Grade 5-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction

Following introspective Nisha and her family as they flee their homeland for an uncertain future, Hiranandani illuminates the 1947 partition of India with unprecedented balance and sensitivity. Through spare evocative diary entries addressed to her late mother, Nisha discovers the complex beauty of her Hindu-Muslim identity. Newbery Honor-2019

Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes Grades

5-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction.

After seventh-grader Jerome is shot by a white police officer, he observes the aftermath of his death and meets the ghosts of other fallen black boys including historical figure Emmett Till.

Genesis Begins Again by Alicia D, Williams

Grades 5-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction

There are ninety-six things Genesis hates about herself. She knows the exact number because she keeps a list. Like #95: Because her skin is so dark, people call her charcoal and eggplant—even her own family. And #61: Because her family is always being put out of their house, belongings laid out on the sidewalk for the world to see. When your dad is a gambling addict and loses the rent money every month, eviction is a regular occurrence.

A Corner of the Universe by Ann Martin

Grade: 5-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction

The summer that Hattie turns twelve, she meets the childlike uncle she never knew and becomes friends with a girl who works at the carnival that comes to Hattie's small town.

The Alchemyst by Michael Scott

Grade: 6-9 Genre: Fantasy

Fifteen-year-old twins Sophie and Josh Newman continue their magical training in Paris with Nicholas Flamel, Scatty, and the Counte de Sant Germaine, pursued by Doctor Dee and the immortal Niccolo Machiavelli.

Along for the Ride by Sarah Dessen

Grade: 8 Up Genre: Realistic Fiction

When Auden impulsively goes to stay with her father, stepmother, and new baby sister the summer before she starts college, all the trauma of her parents' divorce is revived, even as she is making new friends and having new experiences such as learning to ride a bike and dating.

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Bronx Masquerade by Nikki Grimes

Grade: 8 Up **Genre: Poetry; Realistic fiction**

While studying the Harlem Renaissance, students at a Bronx high school read aloud poems they've written, revealing their innermost thoughts and fears to their formerly clueless classmates.

Copper Sun by Sharon Draper

Grade: 8 Up **Genre: Historical fiction**

Two fifteen-year-old girls--one a slave and the other an indentured servant--escape their Carolina plantation and try to make their way to Fort Moses, Florida, a Spanish colony that gives sanctuary to slaves.

Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney

Grade: 5-8 **Genre: Diary novels; First person narratives; Humorous stories**

While trying to find a new best friend after feuding with Rowley, middle-school slacker Greg Heffley is warned by older family members that adolescence is a time to act more responsibly and to think seriously about his future.

Fearless Fernie by Gary Soto

Grade: 5-8 **Genre: Poetry**

A collection of poetry about the trials and tribulations of two middle school grade boys, who have achieved great success in their studies and school sports while sharing similar comical disasters on the dating scene.

Flags of Our Fathers by James Bradley, adapted for young people by Michael French

Grade: 7 up **Genre: Collective biographies**

Chronicles one of the bloodiest battles of World War II, focusing on the men who raised the flag at Iwo Jima.

Harlem Summer by Walter Dean Myers

Grade: 6-8 **Genre: Historical fiction**

It's the summer of 1925, 16-year-old Mark Purvis has been hired to unload a boat which turns out to contain bootleg whiskey. Before you can say Prohibition, the liquor vanishes, and Mark finds himself in serious trouble with its owner, mobster Dutch Schultz.

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Grade: 7 up **Genre: Fantasy**

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.

The Iron Trial by Holly Black and Cassandra Clare

Grade: 5+ **Genre: Fantasy; series bk. 1**

Warned away from magic all of his life, Callum endeavors to fail the trials that would admit him to the Magisterium only to be drawn into its ranks against his will and forced to confront dark elements from his past.

Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life by Wendy Mass

Grade: 6-8 **Genre: Self-realization Fiction**

Just before his thirteenth birthday, Jeremy Fink receives a keyless locked box--set aside by his father before his death five years earlier--that purportedly contains the meaning of life.

The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan

Grade: 6-8 **Genre: Adventure/Fantasy fiction**

After learning that the father he never knew is Poseidon, God of the Sea, Percy Jackson is transferred from boarding school to Camp Half-Blood, a summer camp for demigods, and becomes involved in a quest to

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prevent a war between the gods.

Mare's War by Tanita A. Davis

Grade: 7-8 **Genre: Historical fiction**

Teens Octavia and Tali learn about strength, independence, and courage when they are forced to take a car trip with their grandmother, who tells about growing up Black in 1940's Alabama and serving in Europe during World War II as a member of the Women's Army Corps.

Middle School is Worse Than Meatloaf by Jennifer Holm

Grade: 5-7 **Genre: Diaries**

Ginny starts out with ten items on her to-do list for seventh grade, but notes, cartoons, and other "stuff" reveal what seems like a thousand things that go wrong between September and June, both at school and at home.

Ninth Ward by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Grade: 5-8 **Genre: Coming-of Age**

In New Orleans' Ninth Ward, twelve-year-old Laneshia, who can see spirits, and her adopted grandmother have no choice but to stay and weather the storm as Hurricane Katrina bears down upon them.

One Piece by Eiichiro Oda

Grade: 7+ **Genre: Manga/Fantasy**

When Monkey D. Luffy accidentally gains the power to stretch like rubber at the cost of never being able to swim again, he and his crew of pirate wannabes set off in search of the "One Piece," the greatest treasure in the world.

Scat by Carl Hiaasen

Grade: 5-8 **Genre: Eco-fiction; Humorous**

Nick and his friend Marta decide to investigate when a mysterious fire starts near a Florida wildlife preserve and an unpopular teacher goes missing.

The Road to Paris Nikki Grimes

Grade: 5-7 **Genre: Realistic fiction**

Inconsolable at being separated from her older brother, eight-year-old Paris is apprehensive about her new foster family but just as she learns to trust them, she faces a life-changing decision.

Who Will Tell My Brother by Marlene Carvell

Grade 5-8 **Genre: Realistic fiction**

During his lonely crusade to remove offensive mascots from his high school, a Native American teenager learns more about his heritage, his ancestors, and his place in the world.

Kane Chronicles by Rick Riordan

Grade 5-8 **Genre: Adventure/Fantasy fiction**

Brilliant Egyptologist Dr. Julius Kane accidentally unleashes the Egyptian god Set, who banishes the doctor to oblivion and forces his two children to embark on a dangerous journey, bringing them closer to the truth about their family and its links to a secret order that has existed since the time of the pharaohs.

Deadend in Norvelt by Jack Gantos

Grade 5-8 **Genre: Historical Fiction; Humorous**

In the historic town of Norvelt, Pennsylvania, twelve-year-old Jack Gantos spends the summer of 1962 grounded for various offenses until he is assigned to help an elderly neighbor with a most unusual chore involving the newly **dead**, molten wax, twisted promises, Girl Scout cookies, underage driving, lessons from history, typewriting, and countless bloody noses.

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Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow by Susan Campbell Bartoletti

Grade: 5-8 Genre: Non-Fiction

Explores the various factors which led many of Germany's young people to pledge their loyalty and support to the dictator and join the Hitler Youth during his rise to power.

The New Way Things Work by David Macaulay

Grade: 5 Up Genre: Non-Fiction

Text and numerous detailed illustrations introduce and explain the scientific principles and workings of hundreds of machines. Includes new material about digital technology.

Chinese Cinderella: the True Story of an Unwanted Daughter by Adeline Yen Mah

Grade: 7 Up Genre: Biography

The daughter of a wealthy Hong Kong businessman describes her very difficult childhood and the psychological abuse she suffered at the hands of her stepmother.

The Great Fire by Jim Murphy

Grade: 5 Up Genre: Historical Fiction

An account of the Great Chicago Fire combines archival photographs and drawings with personal accounts by its survivors and historical documents.

We Beat the Street: How a Friendship Pact Helped Us Succeed by Sampson Davis

Grade: 7 Up Genre: Biography

Three boys, who made a pact to stick together through the rough times in their impoverished Newark neighborhood, found the strength to work through their difficulties and complete high school, college, and medical school together.

Hole in My Life by Jack Gantos

Grade: 7 Up Genre: Biography

The author relates how, as a young adult, he became a drug user and smuggler, was arrested, did time in prison, and eventually got out and went to college, all the while hoping to become a writer.

Flora & Ulysses by Kate DiCamillo

Grade: 5 Up Genre: Fantasy fiction

Rescuing a squirrel after an accident involving a vacuum cleaner, comic-reading cynic Flora Belle Buckman is astonished when the squirrel, Ulysses, demonstrates astonishing powers of strength and flight after being revived. Newbery Award winner 2013

City of Bones by Cassandra Clare

Grade: 8 Up Genre: Fantasy

Suddenly able to see demons and the Dark hunters 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.

The Finest Hours: The True Story of a Heroic Sea Rescue by Michael J. Tougias and Casey Sherman

Grade: 6-9 Genre: Non-Fiction

On the night of February 18, 1952, during one of the worst winter storms that New England has ever seen, two oil tankers just off the shore of Cape Cod were torn in half by the force of the storm. This middle-grade adaptation of an adult nonfiction book tells the story of a harrowing Coast Guard rescue when four men in a tiny lifeboat overcame insurmountable odds and saved more than 30 stranded sailors.

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Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Grade: 5-9 **Genre: Family Saga**

Chronicles the joys and sorrows of the four March sisters as they grow into young women in nineteenth-century New England.

El Deafo by Cece Bell

Grade: 3-7 **Genre: Fantasy Fiction**

Cece loses her hearing from spinal meningitis, and takes readers through the arduous journey of learning to lip read and decipher the noise of her hearing aid, with the goal of finding a true friend. This warmly and humorously illustrated full-color graphic novel set in the suburban '70s has all the gripping characters and inflated melodrama of late childhood: a crush on a neighborhood boy, the bossy friend, the too-sensitive-to-her-Deafness friend, and the perfect friend, scared away. ****Newbery Honor Book***

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson

Grade: 5 and up **Genre: Realistic Fiction; Free Verse**

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. ****Newbery Honor Book***

Booked by Kwame Alexander

Grade: 6-10 **Genre: Realistic Fiction**

Twelve-year-old Nick loves soccer, and he and his best friend Coby have big plans for winning the Dr. Pepper Dallas Cup, the renowned world youth soccer tournament, even though they will be playing on opposing teams. Besides the big game, Nick has a lot of other things on his mind. For one thing, his mother wants to move away to pursue her dream of training race horses, and his linguistics professor father is pressuring him to improve his vocabulary by reading the dictionary

Circus Mirandus by Cassie Beasley

Grade: 5-8 **Genre: Fantasy Fiction**

Micah's parents died when he was just a toddler, and now he happily lives with Grandpa Ephraim, who tells him fantastic stories, the best of which are about Circus Mirandus, a circus kids can only attend if they believe in magic

Pax by Sara Pennypacker

Grade: 5-8 **Genre: Fiction**

When his father enlists in the military and makes him return his beloved pet fox to the wild, Peter, who has been sent to live with his grandfather hundreds of miles away, embarks on a journey filled with astonishing discoveries in order to be reunited with his fox.

Raymie Nightingale by Kate DiCamillo

Grade: 5-8 **Genre: Fiction; Historical Fiction**

Hoping that if she wins a local beauty pageant her father will come home, Raymie practices twirling a baton and performing good deeds as she is drawn into an unlikely friendship with a drama queen and a saboteur. National Book Award Finalist

The Girl Who Drank the Moon by Kate Barnhill

Grade: 4-8 **Genre: Fantasy**

An epic fantasy about a young girl raised by a witch, a swamp monster, and a Perfectly Tiny Dragon, who must unlock the powerful magic buried deep inside her. ****2017 Newbery Award Winner***

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Short by Holly Goldberg Sloan

Grade: 5-8 **Genre: Realistic Fiction**

Very **short** for her age, Julia grows into her sense of self while playing a munchkin in a summer regional theater production of The Wizard of Oz.

Drama by Raina Telgemeier

Grade: 5-8 **Genre: Graphic Novel**

Callie rides an emotional roller coaster while serving on the stage crew for a middle school production of Moon over Mississippi as various relationships start and end, and others never quite get going.

George by Alex Gino

Grade: 4-6 **Genre: LGBTQIA fiction; Realistic fiction**

Knowing herself to be a girl despite her outwardly male appearance, **George** is denied a female role in the class play before teaming up with a friend to reveal her true self.

Where the Watermelon Grows by Cindy Baldwin

Grade: 5-8 **Genre: Realistic fiction**

When twelve-year-old Della Kelly finds her mother furiously digging black seeds from a watermelon in the middle of the night and talking to people who aren't there, Della worries that it's happening again—that the sickness that put her mama in the hospital four years ago is back. That her mama is going to be hospitalized for months like she was last time. It's up to Della to heal her mama for good.

Aru Shah and the End of Time by Roshani Chokshi

Gr 3-6 **Genre: Fantasy**

Seventh grader Aru should never have lit the ancient lamp. When she put the lighter to the wick, the world froze and she released the awful Sleeper. Aru is suddenly launched into the world of the gods and surrounded by mythical characters come to life. Aru discovers she is a Pandava, born with the soul of one of the five brothers featured in the Mahabharata. She also has a soul sister, Mini, to assist her in this quest—highly unusual for a Pandava. Aru and Mini must enter the Kingdom of Death to find out the secret that will destroy the Sleeper.

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus by Dusti Bowling

Grade 5-8 **Genre: Realistic Fiction**

Aven Green was born without arms—so when her dad takes a job running a dying western theme park in Arizona, she knows she'll become the center of unwanted attention at her new school. But she bonds with Connor, a classmate with his own disability to conquer. Then they discover a room at the park that holds bigger secrets than Aven ever could have imagined. Can Aven face her fears, solve a mystery, and help her friend, too?

Ghost by Jason Reynolds

Grade 5-8 **Genre: Realistic Fiction**

Ghost, a naturally talented runner and troublemaker, is recruited for an elite middle school track team. He must stay on track, literally and figuratively, to reach his full potential.

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Rebound by Kwame Alexander

Grades 6 and up Genre: Realistic Fiction, Novels in Verse

In this prequel/companion to the acclaimed *The Crossover*, readers meet a young Charlie Bell, father of the twins from the first book. It's 1988, and Charlie just lost his dad to a heart attack. Suppressing his grief and alienating himself from his concerned mother, Charlie gets in trouble, which results in him spending the summer with his paternal grandparents.

Hello, Universe by Erin Entrada Kelly

Grades 3-7 Genre: Realistic Fiction

Four middle-schoolers' fates intertwine one summer in Kelly's (*The Land of Forgotten Girls*, 2016) touching tale of friendship. Scrawny, taciturn Virgil Salinas can generally be found caring for his guinea pig and avoiding neighborhood bully Chet Bullens. The only people he feels comfortable around are his lola (his Filipino grandmother) and his Japanese American friend Kaori, who fancies herself a psychic. Kaori's quirky self-confidence is a foil to Virgil's insecurities, and when he comes to her for help befriending a girl in his class, Valencia Somerset, she can't wait to consult her star chart. . **Newbery Award Winner, 2018*

Lucky Broken Girl by Ruth Behar

Grades 5-8 Genre: Historical Fiction

A semi-autobiographical story about a multicultural girl's coming-of-age in the 1960s describes how Cuban-Jewish Ruthie Mizrahi emigrates with her family from Castro's Cuba to New York, where a devastating accident challenges her perceptions about mortality and strength. **Pura Belpre Award Winner, 2018*

For Every One by Jason Reynolds

Grade: 6-12 Genre: Poetry

Originally performed at the Kennedy Center for the unveiling of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, and later as a tribute to Walter Dean Myers, this stirring and inspirational poem is New York Times bestselling author and National Book Award finalist Jason Reynolds's rallying cry to the dreamers of the world.

The 57 Bus by Dashka Slater

Grades: 6-12 Genre: Non fiction / Prejudice & Racism / Social Issues

Tells the true story of an agender teen who was set on fire by another teen while riding a bus in Oakland, a crime that focuses on the concepts of race, class, gender, crime, and punishment.

Harbor Me by Jacqueline Woodson

Grades: 4-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction

When six students are chosen to participate in a weekly talk with no adults allowed, they discover that when they're together, it's safe to share the hopes and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world.

The Stars Beneath Our Feet by Moore, David Barclay

Grades: 5-8 Genre: Realistic Fiction/ Urban Fiction

Unable to celebrate the holidays in the wake of his older brother's death in a gang-related shooting, 12-year-old Lolly Rachpaul struggles to avoid being forced into a gang himself while constructing a fantastically creative LEGO city at the Harlem community center.

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The Hate You Give by Angie Thomas

Grades: 8+ Genre: Realistic Fiction / Racism Fiction / Race Relations Fiction

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr. But what Starr does--or does not--say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds

Grades: 8+ Genre: Suspense / Verse / Graphic novel

Fifteen-year-old Will's big brother has been shot and killed. According to the rules that Will has been taught, it is now his job to kill the person responsible. He easily finds his brother's gun and gets on the elevator to head down from his eighth-floor apartment. But it's a long way down to the ground floor. At each floor, a different person gets on to tell a story. Each of these people is already dead. As they relate their tales, readers learn about the cycle of violence in which Will is caught up. The protagonist faces a difficult choice, one that is a reality for many young people. Teens are left with an unresolved ending that goes beyond the simple question of whether Will will seek revenge.

Torn to Pieces by Margot McDonnell

Grades 7+ Genres: Suspense/Thriller/Mystery

Anne is used to her single mother's being away on extended business trips. But when her mom is a few days late coming home and her hotel phone has been disconnected, Anne knows something is wrong. Then a strange man starts leaving messages on their answering machine, threatening a woman Anne has never heard of. Frightened and worried, Anne confides in her grandparents, who give Anne a sealed envelope containing a letter that her mother wrote before she left. With each page, the fabric of Anne's relatively normal life is torn to pieces. Not only does her mother explain why she disappeared, but she reveals other dark secrets that put Anne in grave danger. Now Anne doesn't know whom to trust . . . especially since those closest to her are not who they claim to be.

The One and only Bob by Katherine Applegate

4-7 Genres: Fantasy

Bob sets out on a dangerous journey in search of his long-lost sister with the help of his two best friends, Ivan and Ruby. As a hurricane approaches and time is running out, Bob finds courage he never knew he had and learns the true meaning of friendship and family. Bob, Ivan, and Ruby have touched the hearts of millions of readers, and their story isn't over yet. Catch up with these beloved friends before the star-studded film adaptation of *The One and Only Ivan* hits theaters in August 2020