

SUMMER READING LIST*

Dig Into Reading! ~ Grades 5-6

Suggested summer reading compiled for the Connecticut Department of Education by Linda Williams, Connecticut State Library

FICTION

The Underneath by Kathi Appelt

An old hound that has been chained up at his hateful owner's run-down shack, and two kittens born underneath the house, endure separation, danger, and many other tribulations before they finally end up reunited and free. Lexile: 830

ALA, National Book Award

Perloo the Bold by Avi

Perloo, a peaceful scholar who has been chosen to succeed Jolaine as leader of the furry underground people called the Montmers, finds himself in danger when Jolaine dies and her evil son seizes control of the burrow. Lexile: 730 *Nutmeg Nominee 2003*

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

A ten-year-old orphan comes to live in a lonely house on the Yorkshire moors where she discovers an invalid cousin and the mysteries of a locked garden. Lexile: 970

Gregor the Overlander by Suzanne Collins

When eleven-year-old Gregor and his two-year-old sister are pulled into a strange underground world, they trigger an epic battle involving men, bats, rats, cockroaches, and spiders while on a quest foretold by ancient prophecy. Lexile: 630

Nutmeg Nominee, Connecticut Author

Family Reminders by Julie Danneberg

In 1890s Cripple Creek, Colorado, when young Mary McHugh's father loses his leg in a mining accident, she tries to help, both by earning money and by encouraging her father to go back to carving wooden figurines and playing piano. Lexile: 780

NCSS

Where the Ground Meets the Sky by Jackie Davies

During World War II, a twelve-year-old girl is uprooted from her quiet, East coast life and moved to a secluded army post in the New Mexico desert where her father and other scientists are working on a top secret project. Lexile: 590

NCSS

The City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau

In the year 241, twelve-year-old Lina trades jobs on Assignment Day to be a Messenger to run to new places in

her decaying but beloved city, perhaps even to glimpse Unknown Regions. Lexile: 680

ALA, IRA

Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman

One by one, a number of people of varying ages and backgrounds transform a trash-filled inner-city lot into a productive and beautiful garden, and, in doing so, the gardeners are themselves transformed. Lexile: 710

ALA, IRA, NCSS

Out of the Dust by Karen Hesse

In a series of poems, fifteen-year-old Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the dust bowl years of the Depression. Lexile: NP

Hoot by Carl Hiaasen

Roy, who is new to his small Florida community, becomes involved in another boy's attempt to save a colony of burrowing owls from a proposed construction site. Lexile: 760

ALA

The Ghost's Grave by Peg Kehret

Apprehensive about spending the summer in Washington State with his Aunt Ethel when his parents get an overseas job, twelve-year-old Josh soon finds adventure when he meets the ghost of a coal miner. Lexile:

Nutmeg Nominee

Rabbit Hill by Robert Lawson

When a new family moves into the neighborhood, the animals of Rabbit Hill are very curious about how these human inhabitants will act. Lexile: 1050

ALA, Connecticut Author

The Boneshaker by Kate Milford

When Jake Limberleg brings his traveling medicine show to a small Missouri town in 1913, thirteen-year-old Natalie senses that something is wrong and, after investigating, learns that her love of automata and other machines make her the only one who can set things right. Lexile: 900

AI A

Words in the Dust by Trent Reedy

Zulaikha, a thirteen-year-old girl in Afghanistan, faces a series of frightening but exhilirating changes in her life as she defies her father and secretly meets with an old woman who teaches her to read, her older sister gets married, and American troops offer her surgery to fix her disfiguring cleft lip. Lexile: 670

NCSS

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Canary in the Coal Mine by Madelyn

Rosenberg

Tired of his twelve-hour shifts and facing danger daily, Bitty, a canary whose courage more than makes up for his small size, treks to the state capital to try to improve working conditions in coal mines.

The Grave Robber's Apprentice by Allan Stratton

Hans, a foundling raised by a grave robber, helps Countess Angela Gabriela, nearly thirteen, when she is torn away from her dream of being a professional puppeteer by an evil archduke out to destroy her and her parents. Lexile: 650

GRAPHIC NOVEL

Old Man's Cave by Jeff Smith

The adventure starts when cousins Fone Bone, Phoney Bone, and Smiley Bone are run out of Boneville and later get separated and lost in the wilderness, meeting monsters and making friends as they attempt to return home. (*Bone series #6*)

POETRY

Roots and Blues: A Celebration by Arnold Adoff

Lyrical text explores how Blues have been part of everyday life throughout history, from its origins in the sounds of the earth, through slaves' voices singing of freedom, to today's greatest performers—and listeners.

NCSS

NONFICTION

If Stones Could Speak by Marc Aronson

Explores the mysterious monument of Stonehenge and reveals some of its secrets and history. Lexile: 1070 NCSS

Growing Up in Coal Country by Susan Campbell Bartoletti

Describes what life was like, especially for children, in coal mines and mining towns in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lexile: 1110

ALA, NCTE

Zombie *Makers*: True Stories of Nature's Undead *by Rebecca L. Johnson*

Examines real-life accounts of zombies in nature, including a fly-enslaving fungus, a suicide worm, and a cockroach-taming wasp, and related topics. Lexile: 800

Beneath the Streets of Boston by Joe McKendry

Presents an illustrated study of America's first subway system built in Boston in 1897, and explores how it was dug, problems encountered, and opposition to it.

Life in the Ocean: The Story of Oceanographer Sylvia Earle by Claire A. Nivola

A picture book biography of oceanographer Sylvia Earle, discussing her childhood along the Gulf of Mexico, her passion for the environment, and her experiences in ocean exploration. Lexile: 1170

ALA

The Emperor's Silent Army: Terra-

cotta Warriors of Ancient China by Jane O'Connor

Describes the archaeological discovery of thousands of life-sized terracotta warrior statues in northern China in 1974, and discusses the emperor who had them created and placed near his tomb. Lexile: 980

NCS

The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families by Susan L. Roth

A cumulative verse, alternating with additional narrative, describes the ecological and social transformation resulting from the work of Dr. Gordon Sato, a Japanese American cell biologist who made saltwater and desert land productive through the planting of mangrove trees in the tiny African country of Eritrea. Lexile: 1190

Buried Alive!: How 33 Miners Survived 69 Days Deep Under the Chilean Desert by Elaine Scott

Describes the 2010 mining accident in San Jose, Chile, in which thirty-three men became trapped underground for over sixty days, and details the rescue efforts and the worldwide media coverage of the event. Lexile: 1060

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



SUMMER READING LIST*

Books by Connecticut Authors & Illustrators

Grades 5-6

A few newer books written or illustrated by Connecticut residents. See a list of Connecticut authors and illustrators at:

FICTION

Lunch-Box Dream by Tony Abbott (Trumbull) Told from multiple points of view, a white family on a 1959 road trip between Ohio and Florida, visiting Civil War battlefields along the way, crosses paths with a black family near Atlanta, where one of their children has gone missing. Lexile: 800

The Puzzling World of Winston Breen

by Eric Berlin (Milford)

Puzzle-crazy, twelve-year-old Winston and his ten-year-old sister Katie find themselves involved in a dangerous mystery involving a hidden ring. Puzzles for the reader to solve are included throughout the text.

Missing on Superstition Mountain by Elise Broach (Easton)

Simon, Henry, and Jack Barker decide to ignore their parents' warning to stay away from Superstition Mountain in order to search for their missing cat Josie, but they begin to see the wisdom of their mom and dad's advice when they find three human skulls.

Happenstance Found by P. W. Catanese (Connecticut)

A boy awakens, blindfolded, with no memory of even his name, but soon meets Lord Umber, an adventurer and inventor, who calls him Happenstance and tells him that he has a very important destiny--and a powerful enemy.

Waiting for Normal by Leslie Connor (Madison)

Twelve-year-old Addie tries to cope with her mother's erratic behavior and being separated from her beloved stepfather and half-sisters when she and her mother go to live in a small trailer by the railroad tracks on the outskirts of Schenectady, New York.

Also Known as Harper by Ann Haywood Leal (Connecticut)

Writing poetry helps fifth-grader Harper Lee Morgan cope with her father's absence, being evicted, and having to skip school to care for her brother while their mother works, and things look even brighter after she befriends a mute girl and a kindly disabled woman.

The Underdogs by Mike Lupica (Connecticut) Small but fast twelve-year-old Will Tyler, an avid football player in the down-and-out town of Forbes, Pennsylvania, takes matters into his own hands to try and finance the city's football team, giving the whole community hope in the process.

True Blue by Jane Smiley, illustrations by Elaine Clayton (Westport)

In 1960s California, eighth-grader Abby Lovitt has trouble with True Blue, the newest horse on her family's ranch, a beautiful dappled gray who is so often spooked, Abby wonders if he is haunted by the ghost of his deceased former owner. Lexile: 950

Stuck in the Middle (of Middle School)

by Karen Romano Young (Bethel)

Doreen has vowed to make her new middle school work for her, but it is still a challenge given her ADHD, her younger sister's growing popularity, and tensions between her parents. Good thing Doreen has her doodle journal!

POETRY

At the Sea Floor Cafe: Odd Ocean Critter

Poems by Leslie Bulion (Durham)

An illustrated collection of poems that provides information about some of the creatures that live in the sea. Includes a glossary of scientific terms. Lexile: 1130.

NONFICTION

Tsunami Warning by Taylor Morrison (Meriden)

Describes tsunamis and how people can be warned about them.

The Ink Garden of Brother Theophane

by C. M. Millen, illustrated by Andrea Wisnewski (Connecticut)

In medieval Ireland, Theophane's boredom with his duties as a scribe distracts the other monks, but when he is sent to the kitchens he discovers that he can make inks of many colors from plants, allowing the others to illustrate their work. Includes facts about the history of monasteries, scriptoriums, and illuminated manuscripts.

Across the Wide Ocean by Karen Romano

Young (Bethel)

In the world's last uncharted frontier, most things are on the move--often a long move. Using maps and charts, oceanography and navigational tools, intrepid explorers and researchers have followed the ocean's pathways and created some of their own