

SUMMER READING LIST*

Dig Into Reading! ~ Grades 7-8

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

FICTION

Kit's Wilderness by David Almond

Thirteen-year-old Kit goes to live with his grandfather in the decaying coal mining town of Stoneygate, England, and finds both the old man and the town haunted by ghosts of the past. Lexile: 470

ALA

The Compound by S. Bodeen

After his parents, two sisters, and he have spent six years in a vast underground compound built by his wealthy father to protect them from a nuclear holocaust, fifteen-year-old Eli, whose twin brother and grandmother were left behind, discovers that his father has perpetrated a monstrous hoax on them all. Lexile: 570

ALA

Incident at Hawk's Hill by Allan W. Eckert

A shy, lonely six-year-old wanders into the Canadian prairie and spends a summer under the protection of a badger.

ALA

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman

Nobody Owens is a normal boy, except that he has been raised by ghosts and other denizens of the graveyard. Lexile:

ALA

The Water Seeker by Kimberly Willis Holt

Traces the hard life, filled with losses, adversity, and adventure, of Amos, son of a trapper and dowser, from 1833 when his mother dies giving birth to him until 1859, when he himself has grown up and has a son of his own.

The Breaker Boys by Pat Hughes

In 1897, Nate Tanner, the hot-tempered twelve-year-old son of wealthy Pennsylvania mine owners, goes against his father's wishes by befriending some of the boys who work in the mines and gets caught up in a disasterous clash between mine workers and the law. Lexile: 640

Bone by Bone by Bone by Tony Johnston

In 1950s Tennessee, ten-year-old David's racist father refuses to let him associate with his best friend Malcolm, an African American boy. Lexile: 680

ALA

Under the Mesquite by Guadalupe Garcia McCall

Throughout her high school years, as her mother battles cancer, Lupita takes on more responsibility for her house and seven younger siblings, while finding refuge in acting and writing poetry. Includes glossary of Spanish terms. Lexile: 990

ALA, IRA

Beneath My Mother's Feet by Amjed Qamar

When her father is injured, fourteen-year-old Nazia is pulled away from school, her friends, and her preparations for an arranged marriage, to help her mother clean houses in a wealthy part of Karachi, Pakistan, where she finally rebels against the destiny that is planned for her. Lexile: 770

ALA

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. Lexile: 660

ALA, NCTE

Downsiders by Neal Shusterman

When fourteen-year-old Lindsay meets Talon, who lives in the secret Downsider community that evolved in the subterranean passages of the subway built in New York in 1867, she and her new friend try to bridge the differences between their two cultures. Lexile: 1110

ALA

Lockdown by Alexander Gordon Smith

When fourteen-year-old Alex is framed for murder, he becomes an inmate in the Furnace Penitentiary, where brutal inmates and sadistic guards reign, boys who disappear in the middle of the night sometimes return weirdly altered, and escape might just be possible.

ALA

Under the Persimmon Tree by Suzanne Fisher Staples

During the 2001 Afghan War, the lives of Najmal, a young refugee from Kunduz, Afghanistan, and Nusrat, an American-Muslim teacher who is awaiting her huband's return from Mazar-i-Sharif, intersect at a school in Peshawar, Pakistan. Lexile: 1010

ALA, IRA, NCSS

SUMMER READING LIST

POETRY

Fortune's Bones: The Manumission Requiem *by Marilyn Nelson*

A series of poems on the life of Fortune, an eighteenthcentury African-American slave in New England whose skeleton came to be an exhibit at Connecticut's Mattatuck Museum; includes notes and archival photos.

ALA

NONFICTION

Trapped: How the World Rescued 33 Miners From 2,000 Feet Below the Chilean Desert by Marc Aronson

Tells the story of thirty-three miners trapped in a copper-gold mine in

San Jose, Chile and how experts from around the world, from drillers, to astronauts, to submarine specialists, came together to make their remarkable rescue possible. Lexile: 1070

NCSS

Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine, 1845-1850 by Susan Campbell Bartoletti Draws from letters, diaries, and other documents to chronicle the Irish potato famine of 1845-50, describing the political and personal impact it had on Ireland and its people, and presenting illustrations from contemporary newspapers. Lexile: 1040

ALA

The Prairie Builders: Reconstructing America's Lost Grasslands *by Sneed B. Collard* Join the scientists working in the Neal Smith National Wild-

Join the scientists working in the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge as they work to rebuild the tallgrass prairie that once covered much of the Midwest and restore the native plants and animals to the region. Lexile:

Faces From the Past: Forgotten People of North America *by James M. Deem*

Describes the discovery of bodies in North America from fifteen to twenty thousand years ago, and discusses the evidence their remains reveal about themselves and the civilizations in which they lived. Lexile: 1190 NSTA

Alien Deep: Revealing the Mysterious Living World at the Bottom of the Ocean *by Bradley Hague*

Embarks on a recent, specific deepwater exploration that illuminates new knowledge about our oceans and enable young readers to observe the processes involved in marine exploration. Lexile: 1120

NSTA

Mysterious Bones: The Story of Kennewick Man *by Katherine Kirkpatrick*

Presents the story of Kennewick Man, one of the oldest and most complete skeletons found in America near the Columbia River in Washington. Lexile: 1150

Years of Dust: The Story of the Dust Bowl by Albert Marrin

The causes and results of the Dust Bowl and how the lessons learned are still used today. Lexile: 1040

Every Bone Tells a Story by Jill Rubalcaba & Peter Robertshaw

When did language begin? How did early humans populate the globe? By looking closely at four of the most significant hominins ever discovered, the authors explain how Turkana Boy, Lapedo Child, Kennewick Man, and Iceman have influenced debates about the nature of the earliest members of the family Hominidae. Lexile: 1010

ALA, NCSS, NSTA

Secret Subway: The Fascinating Tale of an Amazing Feat of Engineering by Martin Sandler

In 1869, Alfred Beach wanted to build America's first airpowered railway below New York City, but Boss Tweed, powerful politician and notorious crook, opposed. Working under night cover, Beach and his crew carved a three-hundred-foot tunnel beneath a department store. Before long, the project was discovered and the public raved about its potential. But no further tunnels were ever built. What happened to Beach's railway, and where is it now? Lexile: 1260

Secrets of a Civil War Submarine by Sally M. Walker

Tells the story of the "H. L. Hunley," the Confederate submarine that in 1864 became the first to ever sink an enemy ship but lay missing on the ocean floor for more than a century, describing its creation, its discovery, skeletons and objects found onboard, and facial reconstructions of several crew members by forensic anthropologists. Lexile: 1060

*Many listed books were selected as exemplary 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).