

Reading is a wonderful way to meet new books and authors, make new discoveries, keep your literacy skills sharp, and be entertained.

We hope you read one, some, or many of the books on this suggested list. Parents and guardians – please help your child choose a book that is appropriate for their interest/reading level. We encourage you to read and discuss the books with your children.

Use the \* indicators to help you find an appropriate level.

You can order books from our favorite, local bookstore, *The Book Oasis* on Main Street, or check them out from the Stoneham Public Library.

**\*Easy    \*\*Medium    \*\*\*Challenging**

**\*The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind** (The Illustrated Version) by William Kamkwamba, Bryan Mealer, Elizabeth Zunon (Illustrator) When fourteen-year-old William's Malawi village was hit by a drought, everyone's crops began to fail. Without enough money for food, let alone school, William spent his days in the library . . . and figured out how to bring electricity to his village. Persevering against the odds, William built a functioning windmill out of junkyard scraps, and thus became the local hero who harnessed the wind. Non-fiction.

**\*The One and Only Ivan** by Katherine Applegate. Inspired by a true story, Ivan, a silverback gorilla has been confined to a small "domain" of concrete, metal, and glass for 27 years. Joining Ivan at the Exit 8 Big Top Mall and Video Arcade are Stella, an aging elephant, and Bob, a feisty stray dog. Could they ever escape? Realistic Fiction. Newbury Medal.

**\*Serafina's Promise** by Ann E. Burg. Serafina has a secret dream. She wants to go to school and become a doctor with her best friend, Julie Marie. Will Serafina have to let go of that dream in the face of crippling poverty and especially after the terrible earthquake that turns her town and country, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, into an unrecognizable landscape? Realistic fiction. Told in verse.

**\*Dogs of War** by Sheila Keenan. This graphic novel tells the stories of the canine military heroes of World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War. It was inspired by historic battles and real military practice. Each story tells the remarkable adventures of a soldier and his service dog and is rendered with fascinating and beautiful detail, bringing to life the faithful dogs who braved bombs, barrages, and battles to save the lives of countless soldiers. Graphic novel. War.

**\*\*A Smart Girl's Guide to Starting Middle School** by Julie Williams. The secret to feeling more confident as you start middle school is having a little insight into what to expect. This book provides that information as well as "Smart Girl's tips" from girls who have already made the grade in the big school. Nonfiction.

**\*\*Sky Raiders** by Brandon Mull. Cole was just trying to have a fun time with his friends on Halloween (and maybe get to know Jenna Hunt a little better). But when a spooky haunted house turns out to be a portal to something much creepier, Cole finds himself on an adventure on a whole different level. And once you come to the Outskirts, it's very hard to leave. Fantasy. Series.

**\*\*Waiting for Unicorns** by Beth Hautala. Since her mother died of cancer, 12-year-old Talia has been lost in grief. Her father's whale research takes them up to Canada where they will live with his old friend, an Inuit woman. Talia hopes to find a unicorn whale (a narwhal), which she believes can make her most important wish come true: the chance to say one last goodbye to her mother. Talia discovers that while some wishes go unanswered, others come true in their own ways. Fiction.

**\*\*The Screaming Staircase** by Jonathan Stroud. Unfriendly ghosts are appearing throughout London. Only young people have the psychic abilities required to see-and eradicate-these supernatural foes. Lucy, Anthony, and George are forced to take part in the perilous investigation of Combe Carey Hall, one of the most haunted houses in England. Will they survive the Red Room to see another day? Mystery. Fantasy.

**\*\*Malcolm at Midnight** by W.H. Beck. When Malcolm the rat arrives as the pet at McKenna School, he revels in the attention. He also meets the Midnight Academy, a secret society of classroom pets that keeps the nutters (kids) safe. There's just one problem...rats have a terrible reputation! So when the Academy's iguana leader is kidnapped, Malcolm must prove his innocence—and that even rats can be good guys. Mystery

**\*\*Rain Reign** by Ann M. Martin. For fifth-grader Rose, school isn't easy. Watching the news when there are two maps, three announcers, and noise is almost impossible. But Rose's dog Rain is an anchor. So is her uncle. So is her classroom. When Rain is lost in a storm, however, Rose learns what bravery really means. Fiction.

**\*\*Gregor the Overlander** by Suzanne Collins. Gregor hadn't planned to leave his home and literally fall into another world, or to tumble into an adventure, or to become a hero. But when he is asked to lead a quest in the Underland, he rises to the occasion. A wild fantasy of a ride involving rats, bats, his baby sister, and a princess. Adventure. Fantasy. Series- try the next one too!

**\*\*Anne of Green Gables** by L.M. Montgomery. Anne Shirley is the plucky, imaginative, red-haired orphan who gets in trouble frequently, even though she doesn't mean to do so! Until she was eleven, she moved around orphanages and foster homes until a mistake brings her to Avonlea and to Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert, a pair of farmers who never thought they would be raising a girl in their old age. Wonderful series! Fiction.

**\*\*\*Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science** by John Fleischman. True story, with gory pictures, of a railroad construction foreman blasting rock in 1848 when a thirteen-pound iron rod was shot through his brain. Miraculously, he survived to live another eleven years and become a textbook case in brain science. His story still fascinates today. Non-fiction.

**\*\*\**The Mysterious Benedict Society*** by Trenton Lee Stewart. "Are you a gifted child looking for special opportunities?" This peculiar ad attracts dozens of children (and readers) who try to solve mind-bending tests. The four children who do solve them are sent on a secret mission. At the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened, the only rule is - there are no rules. Mystery. Series.

**\*\*\**Woods Runner*** by Gary Paulsen. Samuel, 13, spends his days in the forest, hunting for food for his family far away from the Revolutionary War that has begun near Boston. But when Samuel's parents are taken away as prisoners, Samuel follows, hiding, moving silently, and determined to find a way to rescue them. Historical fiction.