



# SUMMER READING LIST\*

## UNMASK! ~ Grades 7-8

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

### FICTION

**Code Talker:** A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two by *Joseph Bruchac*

After being taught in a boarding school run by whites that Navajo is a useless language, Ned Begay and other Navajo men are recruited by the Marines to become Code Talkers, sending messages during World War II in their native tongue. | Lexile: 910 [ALA](#)

**Storm Warriors** by *Elisa Carbone*

In 1895, after his mother's death, twelve-year-old Nathan moves with his father and grandfather to Pea Island off the coast of North Carolina, where he hopes to join the all-black crew at the nearby lifesaving station, despite his father's objections. [ALA](#)

**Fire from the Rock** by *Sharon M. Draper*

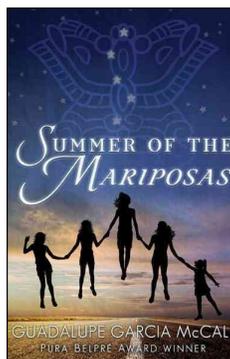
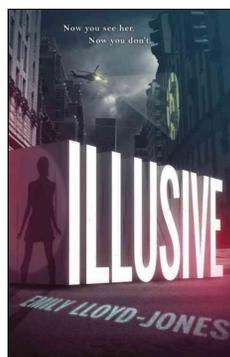
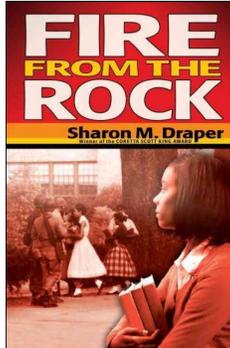
In 1957, Sylvia Patterson's life — that of a normal African American teenager — is disrupted by the impending integration of Little Rock's Central High when she is selected to be one of the first black students to attend the previously all white school. Includes author's note and related websites. | Lexile: 830 [NCSS](#)

**Michael Vey:** The Prisoner of Cell 25 by *Richard Paul Evans*

Michael Vey seems like an ordinary teenager, but he has a unique power. After his mother is kidnapped, he and his friends have to find his mother and fight the hunters to save other kids with the same powers. | Lexile: 500 [NSTA](#), [Nutmeg Nominee 2014](#)

**A Soldier's Secret:** The Incredible True Story of Sarah Edmonds, a Civil War Hero by *Marissa Moss*

Nineteen-year-old Sarah masquerades as a man during the Civil War, serving as a nurse on the battlefield and a spy for the Union Army, escaping from the Confederates, and falling in love with one of her fellow soldiers. Based on the life of Sarah Emma Edmonds.



**Heck, Superhero** by *Martine Leavitt*

Abandoned by his mentally ill mother, thirteen-year-old Heck tries to survive on his own as his mind bounces between the superhero character he imagines himself to be and the harsh reality of his life. [ALA](#)

**Illusive** by *Emily Lloyd-Jones*

After a vaccine accidentally creates superpowers in a small percentage of the population, seventeen-year-old Ciere, an illusionist, teams up with a group of fellow high-class, super-powered thieves to steal the vaccine's formula while staying one step ahead of mobsters and deadly government agents.

**Hero** by *Mike Lupica*

Fourteen-year-old Billy learns he has the same special abilities as his father, who was the President's globe-trotting troubleshooter until "the Bads" killed him, and now Billy must decide whether to use his powers in the same way at the risk of his own life. | Lexile: 730

**Heroes Don't Run** by *Harry Mazer*

To honor his father who died during the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor, seventeen-year-old Adam eagerly enlists in the Marines in 1944, survives boot camp, and faces combat on the tiny island of Okinawa. | Lexile: 650

**Summer of the Mariposas**

by *Guadalupe Garcia McCall*

In an adventure reminiscent of Homer's Odyssey, fifteen-year-old Odilia and her four younger sisters embark on a journey to return a dead man to his family in Mexico, aided by La Llorona, but impeded by a witch, a warlock, chupacabras, and more. | Lexile: 840 [ALA](#)

**Heroes of the Valley** by *Jonathan Stroud*

Halli Sveinsson, a mischievous young man who does not fit in with his peers and siblings, plays a trick on Ragnar that goes too far, forcing him to embark on a hero's quest in which he will face highway robbers, monsters, an intriguing girl, and truths about his family and the legends he grew up with. (TW) [ALA](#)

# SUMMER READING LIST\*

## GRAPHIC NOVEL

### **The Shadow Hero** by Gene Luen Yang

Collects new stories of the Green Turtle, a masked hero in the 1940s whose alter-ego is Chinese-American.

### **Battling Boy** by Paul Pope

A twelve-year-old demigod is sent to help the people of Arcopolis, a city infested with monsters. [ALA](#), [IRA](#)



## FOLKLORE

### **Gilgamesh, the Hero** adapted by Geraldine McCaughrean

A retelling, based on seventh-century B.C. Assyrian clay tablets, of the wanderings and adventures of the god king, Gilgamesh, who ruled in ancient Mesopotamia (now Iraq) in about 2700 B.C., and of his faithful companion, Enkidu. | Lexile: 780 [NCSS](#)

## NONFICTION

### **With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Woman's Right to Vote** by Ann Bausum

Chronicles the long history of the fight for women's voting rights, beginning in 1848, with a focus on the years between 1913 and 1920 when the Nineteenth Amendment was passed, and includes profiles of notable women in the struggle. | Lexile: 1080 [ALA](#), [NCSS](#)

### **Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickels: America's First Black Paratroopers** by Tanya Lee Stone

Examines the role of African-Americans in the military through the history of the Triple Nickels, America's first black paratroopers, who fought against attacks perpetrated on the American West by the Japanese during World War II. [ALA](#), [IRA](#), [NCSS](#)

### **Stubby the War Dog: The True Story of World War I's Bravest Dog** by Ann Bausum

American soldier J. Robert Conroy befriended a stray dog with a stumpy tail while training to fight overseas in WWI. They bonded so closely that Conroy smuggled him to

Europe, where Stubby accompanied Conroy's regiment on the Western Front, lending both his superior olfactory senses and amiable temperament to the war effort.

### **Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement** by Ann Bausum

Recounts the freedom ride of John Lewis and Jim Zwerg into the South in 1961 as part of the Civil Rights Movement. | Lexile: 1090

## BIOGRAPHY

### **Women Heroes of World War II: 26 Stories of Espionage, Sabotage, Resistance, and Rescue** by Kathryn J. Atwood

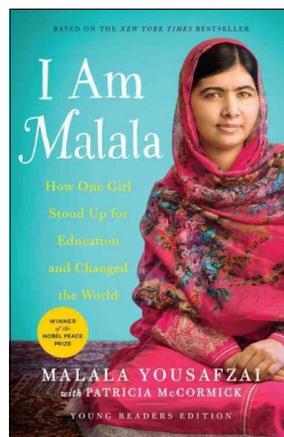
These twenty-six suspense-filled stories unfold from across Germany, Poland, Great Britain, the United States, and more, providing an inspiring reminder of women and girls' refusal to sit on the sidelines around the world and throughout history.

### **Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice** by Phillip M. Hoose

The life of the Alabama teenager who played an integral role in the Montgomery bus strike, once by refusing to give up a bus seat, and again, by becoming a plaintiff in the landmark civil rights case against the bus company. | Lexile: 1000 [ALA](#)

### **Heroes of the Environment** by Harriet Rohmer

Highlights the accomplishments of twelve people from across North America who have worked to protect the environment, including a Mexican superstar wrestler who protects turtles and whales. | Lexile: 1070 [NCSS](#)



### **I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World** by Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai describes her fight for education for girls under Taliban rule, the support she received from her parents to pursue an education, and how the Taliban retaliated against her by trying to kill her. | Lexile: 830

\*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), the *American Association for the Advancement of Science* (AAAS) or the *United States Board on Books for Young People* (USBYP).



# SUMMER READING

## Favorites & Classics

*For Grades 7-8*

### **Chains** by Laurie Halse Anderson

When their owner dies at the start of the Revolution, Isabel and her younger sister are sold to Loyalists in New York, where Isabel is offered the chance to spy for the Patriots. | Lexile: 780

### **City of Orphans** by Avi

In 1893 New York, thirteen-year-old Maks, a newsboy, teams up with Willa, a homeless girl, to clear his older sister, Emma, from charges that she stole from the brand new Waldorf Hotel, where she works. Includes historical notes. | Lexile: 570

### **Zombie Baseball Beatdown** by Paolo Bacigalupi

While practicing for their next baseball game, thirteen-year-old friends Rabi, Miguel, and Joe discover that the nefarious activities of the Delbe, Iowa, meatpacking plant have caused cows to turn into zombies. | Lexile: 650

### **Diamonds in the Shadow** by Caroline B. Cooney

The Finches, a Connecticut family, sponsor an African refugee family of four, all of whom have been scarred by the horrors of civil war, and who inadvertently put their benefactors in harm's way. | Lexile: 750

### **Elijah of Buxton** by Christopher Paul Curtis

In 1859, eleven-year-old Elijah Freeman, the first free-born child in Buxton, Canada, which is a haven for slaves fleeing the American south, uses his wits and skills to try to bring to justice the lying preacher who has stolen money that was to be used to buy a family's freedom. | Lexile: 1070

### **Eva** by Peter Dickinson

After a terrible accident, a young girl wakes up to discover that she has been given the body of a chimpanzee. | Lexile: 1010

### **Whirligig** by Paul Fleischman

While traveling to each corner of the country to build a whirligig in memory of the girl whose death he caused, sixteen-year-old Brian finds forgiveness and atonement. | Lexile: 760

### **The Graveyard Book** by Neil Gaiman

After the grisly murder of his entire family, a toddler wanders into a graveyard where the ghosts and other supernatural residents agree to raise him as one of their own. | Lexile: 820

### **House of Dies Drear** by Virginia Hamilton

A black family of five moves into an enormous house once used as a hiding place for runaway slaves. Mysterious sounds and events as well as the discovery of secret passageways make the family believe they are in grave danger. | Lexile: 670

### **Chomp** by Carl Hiaasen

When the difficult star of the reality television show "Expedition Survival" disappears while filming an episode in the Florida Everglades using animals from the wildlife refuge run by Wahoo Crane's family, Wahoo and classmate Tuna Gordon set out to find him while avoiding Tuna's gun-happy father. | Lexile: 800

### **Standing Against the Wind** by Traci L. Jones

As she tries to escape her poor Chicago neighborhood by winning a scholarship to a prestigious boarding school, shy and studious eighth-grader Patrice discovers that she has more options in life than she previously realized. | Lexile: 780

### **The Silver Kiss** by Annette Curtis Klause

A mysterious teenage boy harboring a dark secret helps Zoë come to terms with her mother's terminal illness. | Lexile: 690

### **Ask My Mood Ring How I Feel** by Diana Lopez

When thirteen-year-old Erica "Chia" Montenegro finds out her mother has breast cancer, she makes a promise to God to raise money for breast cancer awareness and discovers that when family and friends work together, miracles can happen. | Lexile: 700

### **The Giver** by Lois Lowry

Given his lifetime assignment at the Ceremony of Twelve, Jonas becomes the receiver of memories shared by only one other in his community and discovers the terrible truth about the society in which he lives. | Lexile: 760

### **Touching Spirit Bear** by Ben Mikaelson

After his anger erupts into violence, Cole, in order to avoid going to prison, agrees to participate in a sentencing alternative based on the native American Circle Justice, and he is sent to a remote Alaskan Island where an encounter with a huge Spirit Bear changes his life. | Lexile: 670



# SUMMER READING

## Favorites & Classics

For Grades 7-8

### **Island of the Blue Dolphins** by Scott O'Dell

Left alone on a beautiful but isolated island off the coast of California, a young Indian girl spends eighteen years, not only merely surviving through her enormous courage and self-reliance, but also finding a measure of happiness in her solitary life. | Lexile: 1000

### **Hatchet** by Gary Paulsen

After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the Canadian wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce. | Lexile: 1020

### **All of the Above** by Shelley Pearsall

Five urban middle school students, their teacher, and other community members relate how a school project to build the world's largest tetrahedron affects the lives of everyone involved. | Lexile: 1000

### **The River Between Us** by Richard Peck

During the early days of the Civil War, the Pruitt family takes in two mysterious young ladies who have fled New Orleans to come north to Illinois. | Lexile: 740

### **The Wee Free Men** by Terry Pratchett

Tiffany, a young witch-to-be in the land of Discworld, teams up with the Wee Free Men, a clan of six-inch-high blue men, to rescue her baby brother and ward off a sinister invasion from Fairyland. | Lexile: 680

### **Stargirl** by Jerry Spinelli

In this story about the perils of popularity, the courage of nonconformity, and the thrill of first love, an eccentric student named Stargirl changes Mica High School forever. | Lexile: 590

### **Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind**

by Suzanne Fisher Staples

When eleven-year old Shabanu, the daughter of a nomad in the Cholistan Desert of present-day Pakistan, is pledged in

marriage to an older man whose money will bring prestige to the family, she must either accept the decision, as is the custom, or risk the consequences of defying her father's wishes. | Lexile: 970

### **Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry**

by Mildred D. Taylor

A black family living in the South during the 1930s are faced with prejudice and discrimination which their children don't understand. | Lexile: 920

### **The Hobbit** by J. R. R. Tolkien

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. | Lexile: 1000

### **Izzy, Willy-Nilly** by Cynthia Voigt

A car accident causes fifteen-year-old Izzy to lose one leg and face the need to start building a new life as an amputee. | Lexile: 790

### **Howl's Moving Castle**

by Diana Wynne Jones

Eldest of three sisters in a land where it is considered to be a misfortune, Sophie is resigned to her fate as a hat shop apprentice until a witch turns her into an old woman and she finds herself in the castle of the greatly feared wizard Howl. | Lexile: 800

### **The Pigman** by Paul Zindel

A teenage boy and girl, high school sophomores from unhappy homes, tell of their bizarre relationship with an old man. | Lexile: 950

### **The Book Thief** by Markus Zusak

Death tells the story of a young German girl, Liesel, whose book-stealing and story-telling talents during World War II help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding, as well as their neighbors. | Lexile: 730

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## FAVORITE SERIES

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**The Princess Diaries** series by Meg Cabot

**Artemis Fowl** series by Eoin Colfer

**Young Wizards** series by Diane Duane

**The Rangers Apprentice** by John Flanagan

**Lunar Chronicles** by Marissa Meyer

**The Squire's Tales** series by Gerald Morris

**The News Crew** series by Walter Dean Myers

**Song of the Lioness** quartet by Tamora Pierce

**His Dark Materials** series by Phillip Pullman

**Divergent** trilogy by Veronica Roth

**Secrets of the Immortal Nicholas Flamel** series by Michael Scott

**The Tillermans** series by Cynthia Voigt

**Leviathan** series by Scott Westerfield

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