



# READING LIST

Grades  
6—8

## BOOKS

### ALMA PRESSES PLAY

BY TINA CANE

MAKE ME A WORLD, 2021  
ISBN: 9780593121146

In this verse novel, half-Chinese, half-Jewish Alma comes to terms with her parents' divorce, her mother's move to a new state, a challenging end-of-the-year project, and her feelings about boys.

### BLACK BIRD, BLUE ROAD

BY SOFIYA PASTERNAK

VERSIFY, 2022  
ISBN: 9780358572039

This historical fantasy novel includes deep philosophical questions about life and death, alongside adrenaline-filled action, as a Jewish girl attempts to save her dying brother by any means necessary.

### THE CHRONICLES OF DELTOVIA

BY OLIVIA JAIMES

ANDREWS MCMEEL, 2022  
ISBN: 9781524871567

Middle-schoolers June, Misha, and Ollie decide to cowrite and illustrate their own book about a magical land called Deltovia. Their individual personalities and quirks come through in the different ways they approach the story and life.

### THE DAVENPORTS

BY KRYSTAL MARQUIS

DIAL, 2023  
ISBN: 9780593463338

In this historical fiction novel set in 1910s Chicago, a group of Black teens takes us into an often-overlooked side of American history: the lives of wealthy African Americans and their experience of classism, familial expectations, and gender norms.

### DEMON IN THE WOOD

BY LEIGH BARDUGO,  
ILLUSTRATED BY DANI PENDERGAST

ROARING BROOK, 2022  
ISBN: 9781250624642

The first graphic novel in the Grishaverse world offers a new format for fans and welcomes those new to the series. Readers will dive into the Darkling's backstory.

### THE DOOR OF NO RETURN

BY KWAME ALEXANDER

LITTLE, BROWN, 2022  
ISBN: 9780316441865

Kofi, an eleven-year-old boy from the village of Upper Kwanta, is ripped away from his family and community in this gripping novel in verse.

### FREESTYLE

BY GALE GALLIGAN

GRAPHIX, 2022  
ISBN: 9781338045819

Cory navigates changing friendships and social pressures while learning cool yo-yo tricks in this graphic novel.

### FRIZZY

BY CLARIBEL A. ORTEGA,  
ILLUSTRATED BY ROSE BOUSAMRA

FIRST SECOND, 2022  
ISBN: 9781250259622

Dominican tween Marlene learns to care for and appreciate her curly hair in this vibrant graphic novel about colorism, beauty standards, and self-acceptance.

### GROWING PANGS

BY KATHRYN ORMSBEE,  
ILLUSTRATED BY MOLLY BROOKS

RANDOM HOUSE, 2022  
ISBN: 9780593301289

A graphic novel about the first time at sleepaway camp, feeling different as a homeschooled student, and traversing the ever-present effects of OCD.

### I LIKE ME BETTER

BY ROBBY WEBER

INKYARD PRESS, 2023  
ISBN: 9781335453648

Another heartwarming summer rom-com from Weber. When your summer plans fall apart, love can show up in unexpected places. Zack takes the fall for his soccer team and ends

up having to do community service for the summer.

### INVISIBLE

BY CHRISTINA DIAZ GONZALEZ,  
ILLUSTRATED BY GABRIELA EPSTEIN

GRAPHIX, 2022  
ISBN: 9781338194555

In this graphic novel, five middle-school students find out that they have been lumped together because their teachers assumed, since they all speak Spanish, that they'd have tons in common. This couldn't be farther from the truth!

### KARTHIK DELIVERS

BY SHEELA CHARI

AMULET, 2022  
ISBN: 9781419755224

Rising ninth-grader Karthik spends the summer of 2009 working as the delivery boy for his family's failing grocery store. Unbeknownst to his family, he's also acting in a play about Leonard Bernstein.

### THE KATE IN BETWEEN

BY CLAIRE SWINARSKI

QUILL TREE BOOKS, 2021  
ISBN: 9780062912701

Kate is being celebrated after rescuing a classmate from drowning, but what happens when everyone finds out what really happened that day at the lake?

### THE LAST MAPMAKER

BY CHRISTINA SOONTORNVAT

CANDLEWICK, 2022  
ISBN: 9781536204957

Sai, an assistant to Mangkon's best mapmaker, is working hard to make her life better. A mapmaking trip to explore the Sunderlands, a place with dragons and other treasures, might be the way to achieve that.

### LOLO'S LIGHT

BY LIZ GARTON SCANLON

CHRONICLE BOOKS, 2022  
ISBN: 9781797212944

The morning after twelve-year-old Millie babysits for her neighbors, she learns that the infant she watched passed away

overnight. This coming-of-age novel explores the complex, intertwining processes of loss, guilt, grief, and acceptance with honesty and empathy.

### **RABBIT CHASE**

**BY ELIZABETH LAPENSÉE,  
ILLUSTRATED BY K. C. OSTER**

ANNICK PRESS, 2022  
ISBN: 9781773216201

Aimée, a nonbinary Anishinaabe middle-schooler, is on a field trip when they are transported to an alternate dimension, in an Indigenous spin on Alice in Wonderland, leading them to explore their identity and culture.

### **RAIN RISING**

**BY COURTNE COMRIE**

HARPERCOLLINS, 2022  
ISBN: 9780063159730

In this novel in verse, middle-schooler Rain is secretly dealing with depression and low self-esteem. After her brother is brutally beaten in a hate crime attack, Rain confronts her trauma and begins a challenging yet rewarding journey to healing.

### **RIDE ON**

**BY FAITH ERIN HICKS**

FIRST SECOND, 2022  
ISBN: 9781250772817

In this graphic novel, Victoria loves to ride horses but is tired of riding competitions. When this leads to a disagreement with her best friend, she decides to start riding at Edgewood Stables. However, this also means meeting new people and maybe making new horse-riding friends.

### **SOLITO**

**BY JAVIER ZAMORA**

HOGARTH, 2022  
ISBN: 9780593498064

Javier is only nine years old when he makes the journey from El Salvador to the United States to reunite with his parents. During his trip, Javier faces the dangers that, similarly, thousands of children face today as they journey north to make it to the U.S. border.

### **SUMMER AND JULY**

**BY PAUL MOSIER**

HARPERCOLLINS, 2020  
ISBN: 9780062849366

Juillet accompanies her mother on a month-

long work trip to a California beach town. There she meets surfer girl Summer, who helps Juillet come out of her shell. Each navigates their own family pain: Juillet's parents are recently divorced; Summer's brother is in a coma.

### **THE TROUBLED GIRLS OF DRAGOMIR ACADEMY**

**BY ANNE URSU**

WALDEN POND PRESS, 2021  
ISBN: 9780062275127

Constantly overshadowed by her older brother, who is rumored to hold the potential to become a heroic sorcerer, Marya is invited to a mysterious all-girls school where she begins to discover the truth about power and control.

### **TWIN CITIES**

**BY JOSE PIMIENTA**

RANDOM HOUSE GRAPHIC, 2022  
ISBN: 9780593180631

Twins Fernando and Teresa have always gone to school and hung out together in their hometown of Mexicali. But when Teresa decides to attend seventh grade across the border in Calexico, their sibling bond is put to the test.

### **WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER: A YOUNG READERS EDITION OF WE ARE NOT HERE TO BE BYSTANDERS**

**BY LINDA SARSOUR**

SALAAM READS, 2022  
ISBN: 9781534439290

Sarsour, a Muslim Palestinian American woman, details her childhood and journey toward civic activism in this inspiring and informative adaptation of the memoir of one of the co-organizers of the historic Women's March on Washington that took place on January 21, 2017.

## **DIGITAL**

### **BOOK CLUB FOR KIDS**

<https://www.bookclubforkids.org/>

Hosted by Kitty Felde, the Book Club for Kids podcast explores middle-grade books with real young people discussing each book, along with an interview with the author.



ALSC reading lists are created by children's librarians as a resource to share with patrons. These titles may also be available in ebook, audio book, braille, and large print formats. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to explore this list to find resources that may match or spark their child's interest. Connect with your local library to find out what's happening this summer.

### **GRIMM, GRIMMER, GRIMMEST**

<https://pinna.fm/library/kids-shows/pinna-podcasts/grimm-grimmer-grimmest>

Award-winning author of A Tale Dark and Grimm, Adam Gidwitz retells classic fairy tales to curious kids who respond to the weird and macabre stories with humor and surprise. Podcast listeners are also told where each tale lands on the Grimm, Grimmer, Grimmest scale. This subscription service charges monthly. A free trial is available with account setup.

### **NEAL.FUN**

<https://neal.fun/>

Creative coder Neal Agarwal shares quirky, engaging digital experiences on this interactive website.

### **SMITHSONIAN FUN STUFF FOR KIDS AND TEENS**

<https://www.si.edu/kids>

Take a virtual trip to one of the best museums in the world with lots of activities to try from home on this interactive website.

[www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc)

The 2023 Summer Reading Book List was created by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). Titles on this list were selected by members of ALSC's Quicklists Consulting Committee.

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