

# Great Books for Middle School Avid Readers

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These are books that will appeal to readers who just can't get their hands on enough books to keep them satisfied. The reading level, bountiful description, text structure, or content will challenge the reader and provoke thoughtful conversations. The content is considered appropriate, or typical, for middle school reading. Almost all of these books have received a 1 or 2 rating by the *Horn Book Guide*. Because of the interesting, believable plot, outstanding character development and language use, and/or strong themes, these books could be used as independent, whole-class, or small group texts. Some have higher reading levels, but most are still at a middle school level. Although reluctant readers may enjoy these texts as well, they may need more support and guidance in the beginning to appreciate the stories.

**Title: 19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East**

Author: Naomi Shihab Nye

HB Rating: 1

Other Ratings: School Library Journal Starred Review

Awards: National Book Award Finalist

Genre: Poetry

Themes: Family, Arab Americans, Middle East, Food, Palestinians, War, Peace

Desc: After Sept 11<sup>th</sup>, Nye was inspired to develop this collection of poems about the Middle East and the Arab

Sources: <http://www.ncte.org/pubs/journals/cnp/highlights/126524.htm>

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<http://www.accd.edu/sac/english/mcquien/htmlfils/nnye.htm>

<http://www.barclayagency.com/nye.html>

**Title: American Born Chinese**

Author: Gene Luen Yang

HB Rating: Not Listed

Other Ratings: School Library Journal Starred Review

Awards: Michael L. Printz Award, National Book Award Finalist, Amazon.com Best Graphic Novel—Comic of the Year, American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults, ALA Top Ten List, Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year, Booklist Editor's Choice Book, Booklist Top Ten Graphic Novel for Youth, NPR Holiday Pick, NYPL Book for the Teen Age, Publisher's Weekly Best Book of the Year, Publisher's Weekly Comics Week Best Comic of the Year, San Francisco Chronicle Best Book of the Year, School Library Journal Best Book of the Year, YALSA Great Graphic Novel for Teens, Top Ten List, Library Media Editor's Choice for 2007, The Reuben Award for Best Comic Book , The Chinese American Librarians Association 2006/2007 Best Book Award , Eisner Awards 2007 Best New Graphic Album, Eisner Awards 2007 Nominee Best Coloring to Lark Pien, Harvey Awards 2007 Best Colorist to Lark Pien

Genre: Graphic Novel

Themes: High school, Immigrants, Chinese Culture, Identity, Racial Stereotypes, Acceptance

Desc: Yang tells a complicated story of a Chinese boy's struggle for acceptance in an American society. At first glance, the novel appears to be split up into 3 independent storylines: 1. A Chinese folklore story of The Monkey King; 2. A young boy named Jin Wang and his initial struggles to make friends at his predominantly white elementary school, where the other kids toss out jeers of Chinese stereotypes; and 3. A TV sitcom of an "over the top" stereotypical Asian funnyman who appears to "ruin" a white character's life. Although different storylines, all of these narratives deal with the same issue, trying to fit in where you're perceived as being different, and the price you will pay, whether it be betraying a friend, a family member, your own culture, or even yourself, in order to achieve complete acceptance. In the end, these stories meld together, as the characters reveal their true identities and join together in the final scene, recognizing their faults, but accepting who they were made to be.

Sources:

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[http://www.queenslibrary.org/index.aspx?page\\_nm=Highlight&pid=343](http://www.queenslibrary.org/index.aspx?page_nm=Highlight&pid=343)

[http://www.northern.edu/hastingw/american\\_born\\_chinese.htm](http://www.northern.edu/hastingw/american_born_chinese.htm)

<http://www.the-trades.com/article.php?id=5053>

<http://www.humblecomics.com/>

<http://youngwritersproject.org/node/3982>

**Title: The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume One: The Pox Party**

Author: M. T. Anderson

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Booklist Starred Review

Awards: National Book Award for Young People's Literature, Best Book for Young Adults, Michael L. Printz Honor Award

Genre: Historical Fiction

Themes: Slavery, American Revolution, Ethics, Science Experiments, Freedom, Philosophy, Education, Small Pox, Identity, Torture

Desc: Octavian's mother was a young princess stolen from Africa and brought to America, where she gave birth to Octavian. At the College of Lucidity, Octavian received an excellent classical education, but eventually he learns that he is really in bondage and his entire life is actually one giant science experiment. A very challenging read.

Sources: [http://www.candlewick.com/book\\_files/0763624020.mis.1.pdf](http://www.candlewick.com/book_files/0763624020.mis.1.pdf)

[http://www.nationalbook.org/nba2006\\_ypl\\_anderson.html](http://www.nationalbook.org/nba2006_ypl_anderson.html)

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6525913>

<http://community.livejournal.com/notyourmothers/34738.html#cutid1>

**Title: Black Hands White Sails**

Author: Patricia McKissack & Frederick McKissack

HB Rating: 2

Awards: Carter G. Woodson Honor book: Secondary, Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book

Genre: Non-fiction

Themes: Whaling, Slavery, Underground Railroad, History

Desc: Details African American contributions to the whaling industry in the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Sources:

[http://mercury.educ.kent.edu/database/eureka/detail\\_book.cfm?BooksID=562](http://mercury.educ.kent.edu/database/eureka/detail_book.cfm?BooksID=562)

<http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/catalog/author.pperl?authorid=20049>

<http://www.indiana.edu/~reading/ieo/bibs/mckiss.html>

<http://www.bookrags.com/shortguide-black-hands-white-sails/>

<http://www.readingrockets.org/books/interviews/mckissack>

**Title: The Book Thief**

Author: Markus Zusak

HB Rating: 1

Other Ratings: Publishers' Weekly Starred Review, Kirkus Starred Review, School Library Journal Starred Review

Awards: Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book Nominee (South East Asia & South Pacific), ALA Best Books for Young Adults, Michael L. Printz Honor Book, Book Sense Book of the Year, Horn Book Fanfare, Kirkus Reviews Editor Choice Award, School Library Journal Best Book of the Year, Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book of the Year, Booklist Children's Editors' Choice, Bulletin Blue Ribbon Book

Genre: Historical Fiction

Themes: Books, Nazi, Germany, Storytelling, Death, Friendship, Survival, Foster Families

Desc: Narrated by Death, this is the story of young Liesel Meminger who encounters the dangers of Nazi Germany during WWII. She begins stealing just for fun, until she discovers the ultimate prize, books. After learning to read, she shares her stolen books with everyone around her, including the Jewish man her foster family is hiding in their basement.

Sources: <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/libdev/OBOK/2008/discussionquestionsBookThief.pdf>

[http://www.hbook.com/magazine/articles/2007/mar07\\_hunt.asp](http://www.hbook.com/magazine/articles/2007/mar07_hunt.asp)

[http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers\\_guides/9780375831003.pdf](http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers_guides/9780375831003.pdf)

[http://litlovers.com/guide\\_bookthief.html](http://litlovers.com/guide_bookthief.html)

<http://www.randomhouse.com/features/markuszusak/>

<http://www.savannah.chatham.k12.ga.us/NR/rdonlyres/27D014DC-910D-4DFD-BA8E-8E5587203418/16116/HolocaustUnit.pdf>

<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6320417.html>

<http://www.metrotheatercompany.org/PDF/HANA%20GUIDE%20-%20emailable.pdf>

<http://www.booksatransworld.co.uk/thebookthief/>

<http://english.byu.edu/Novelinks/Novel%20Pages/The%20Book%20Thief.htm>

**Title: Copper Sun**

Author: Sharon Draper

HB Rating: 4

Other Ratings: SLJ Starred Review, Booklist Starred Review

Awards: ALA Best Books for Young Adults Nominee, CBC/NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Book, Coretta Scott King Award (ALA), Florida Teens Read Master List, Georgia Peach Book Award Master List, Heartland Award for Excellence in YA Literature (KS), IRA Notable Books for a Global Society, Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award Nominee, School Library Journal Best Books of the Year, Thumbs Up! Award Master List (MI), Virginia Readers' Choice Award Master List, Volunteer State Book Award Master List (TN)

Genre: Historical Fiction

Themes: Africa, Slave trade, Indentured Servants, Freedom, Friendship,

Desc: In *Copper Sun*, we learn about the story of Amari, a vibrant young girl living in a village in Africa who is suddenly and violently taken from all that she loves. We follow her journey on a slave ship where she is systematically raped, to her new American "home" where she is purchased as a "gift" for a 16 year old boy. While on the slave plantation, and enduring the worst of humanity, Amari eventually befriends a white indentured servant. With their lives at stake, they are forced to leave the plantation and seek freedom.

Sources:

<http://www.simonsays.com/content/book.cfm?tab=1&pid=513364&agid=10>

<http://sharondraper.com/copper-resources.asp>

[http://teenlink.nypl.org/draper\\_transcript.html](http://teenlink.nypl.org/draper_transcript.html)

<http://ftrbrevard.org/blog/2007/06/07/copper-sun-by-sharon-draper/>

[http://www.learningthroughlistening.org/Classroom-Teaching-Tools/Lesson-Plans/View-Lesson-Plans/402/lessonId\\_190/](http://www.learningthroughlistening.org/Classroom-Teaching-Tools/Lesson-Plans/View-Lesson-Plans/402/lessonId_190/)

**Title: Criss Cross**

Author: Lynn Rae Perkins

HB Rating: 1

Other Ratings: School Library Journal Starred Review, Booklist Starred Review

Awards: Newbery Award, School Library Journal Best Book. ALA Notable Children's Book, ALA Best of the Best Books for Young Adults

Genre: Historical Fiction or Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: Friendship, Family, Love, Music, Search for Self, Small town

Desc: The author explores the lives of a group of friends as they begin to cross over from childhood into adolescence and young adulthood. As the school year ends and summer takes over, the young teenage characters are on separate searches for something "interesting." The novel begins with Debbie fiddling with a necklace that she eventually loses, and the reader follows the necklace's journey as it exchanges hands and pockets until it eventually makes it way back to its original owner. As we follow the journey of the necklace, we also follow the journeys of Hector and Debbie, as they struggle to find the extraordinary in what they deem to be merely ordinary. In between their regular gatherings each week to listen to a radio talk show entitled Criss Cross, the characters' ordinary lives interweave as they struggle with acceptance, love, who they are, and who they want to become. Through friendships, family, and music, they discover that their search for love and belonging is not in some far off place, but right before their very eyes.

Sources:

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<http://www.multcolib.org/talk/guides-crisscross.html>

<http://www.lynnraeperkins.com/>

<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6330769.html>

<http://www.teachingplanet.com/litunguforus17.html>

**Title: The Crying Rocks**

Author: Janet Taylor Lisle

HB Rating: 2

Awards: New York Public Library 'Books for the Teen Age 2006, Nominated Best Books for Young Adults, 2004, A 2004 VOYA Perfect Ten

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction and Historical Fiction

Themes: Native American, Ancestors, Adoption, Identity, Friendship

Desc: Adopted when she was five, thirteen year old Joelle has always longed for the truth of her past. She and fellow classmate Carlos begin researching the Narragansett Indians when he suggests that Joelle looks like she could be a descendent. Joelle begins to experience a spiritual connection with the tribe, as she and Carlos go on a hike in search of the tribe's infamous "crying rocks."

Sources:

<http://www.simonsays.com/content/book.cfm?tab=23&pid=506837&agid=10>

<http://www.janettaylorlisle.com/>

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/lisle.htm>

**Title: The Golden Compass**

Author: Phillip Pullman

HB Rating: 1

Other Ratings: Publishers' Weekly Starred Review

Awards: ALA Notable, ALA Top Ten Best Book for Young Adults, *Horn Book* Fanfare Honor, *BCCB* Blue Ribbon, *Publisher's Weekly* Best Book of the Year, *Booklist* Editor's Choice, Carnegie Medal (England), Carnegie of Carnegies (best children's book of all time in England), Guardian Prize for Fiction (England), Texas Lonestar Reading List, Maine Student Book Award, American Booksellers Book of the Year (ABBY) Award Nominee, Massachusetts Children's Book Award Finalist

Genre: Fantasy

Themes: Adventure, Destiny, Kidnapping, Science, Identity, Religious Leaders, Good v. Evil, Betrayal, Trust, Courage, Fear

Desc: Twelve year old Lyra Belacqua must travel to the Far North to save her best friend and other children who are being kidnapped for evil science experiments.

Sources:

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<http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-golden-compass/>

<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/unitplan.jsp?id=284>

<http://cuip.uchicago.edu/schools/gearup/chicago/archive/yal/20072008/compass.htm>

[http://litplans.com/authors/Philip\\_Pullman.html](http://litplans.com/authors/Philip_Pullman.html)

**Title: Harlem Summer**

Author: Walter Dean Myers

HB Rating: 2

Awards: IRA Notable Book for a Global Society

Genre: Historical Fiction

Themes: Harlem Renaissance, Mobsters

Desc: Walter Dean Myer's latest novel, *Harlem Summer*, brings us into the heart of New York City during the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance, when black people openly began to create new identities for themselves beyond what the white public imposed on them. Teenager Mark Purvis, who loves to play the saxophone, spends his summer trying to define who he is and who he wants to become while also considering the ideas of his parents, colleagues and friends. Many well-known artists of the Harlem Renaissance make "cameo" appearances in this novel, and a glossary in back provides bios.

Sources:

<http://www.walterdeanmyers.net/>

<http://www.tip.sas.upenn.edu/curriculum/units/2006/04/06.04.04.pdf>

**Title: The House of the Scorpion**

Author: Nancy Farmer

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Kirkus Starred Review, Booklist Starred Review

Awards: ABC Children's Bookseller's Choices, ALA Michael L. Printz Award Honor Book , ALA Newbery Honor Book, ALA Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults, Arizona Young Reader Book Award , Blue Spruce YA Book Award Nominee (CO), Booklist Editors' Choice, California Collections, Florida Teens Read Master List, Garden State Teen Book Award Nominee (NJ), Iowa Teen Award Master List, IRA Young Adults' Choices, Maud Hart Lovelace Award Master List (MN), Mythopoeic Fantasy Award Finalist, National Book Award Winner, Nevada Young Readers' Award, Pacific Northwest Young Reader's Choice Award, Rosie Award Nominee (IN), Sequoyah YA Book Award (OK), Soaring Eagle Book Award Master List (WY), South Carolina Book Award Nominee, Young Hoosier Book Award Master List (IN)

Genre: Science Fiction

Themes: Cloning, Drug Trade, Friendship, Survival, Freedom, Mind Alteration, Right to Life

Desc: After six years of being raised in isolation by a loving guardian, young Matt discovers that he is a clone of drug lord El Patron. He soon learns that this distinction will lead him to sub-human treatment, as he is being raised merely for the eventual harvesting of his organs. His only way to a fulfilling life is to escape the very guarded estate.

Sources:

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<http://www.powells.com/biblio/17-9780689852237-0>

<http://www.simonsays.com/content/book.cfm?sid=183&pid=487387&agid=10>

<http://www.multcolib.org/talk/guides-scorpion.html>

[http://thinkfinity.org/PartnerSearch.aspx?Search=True&orgn\\_id=9&subject=all&partner=all&resource\\_type=all&q=House%20of%20the%20Scorpion&grade=all](http://thinkfinity.org/PartnerSearch.aspx?Search=True&orgn_id=9&subject=all&partner=all&resource_type=all&q=House%20of%20the%20Scorpion&grade=all)

<http://www.ilfonline.org/AIME/YHBA/middlegradesactivity.pdf>

<http://english.byu.edu/Novelinks/Novel%20Pages/House%20of%20the%20Scorpion.htm>

**Title: Kit's Wilderness**

Author: David Almond

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Publishers' Weekly Starred Review, Booklist Starred Review, Kirkus Starred Review, School Library Journal Starred Review

Awards: 2001 Michael L. Printz Award Winner , 1999 Silver Award Winner of London's Nestle Smarties Prize, A Publishers Weekly Best Book , A Booklist Books for Youth Editors' Choice , A School Library Journal Best Book, An ALA Notable Children's Book, ALA Best Books for Young Adults, New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age, Kentucky Bluegrass Master List, Maine Student Book Master List

Genre: Contemporary Realistic fiction mixed with Magical Realism

Themes: Mining, Ghosts, Ancestors, Art, Writing, Friendship

Desc: When teenager Kit returns to the coal mining town of his ancestors, he joins a group of outcasts, led by dangerous John Askew, in a bone chilling game called Death. Through this game, players are to connect with the ghosts of the children who died in a mining accident decades ago.

Sources:

<http://www.multcolib.org/talk/guides-kit.html>

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<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780440416050&view=rg>

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/almond.html>

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/almond.htm>

**Title: Sleeping Freshman Never Lie**

Author: David Lubar

HB Rating: 3

Other Ratings: Bulletin Starred Review, School Library Journal Starred Review

Awards: Michigan's Thumbs Up! Award, Evergreen Young Adult Book Award (Colorado), Florida Teen Reads Nominee

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: Self-confidence, high school, homework, brothers, newspaper, bullying, outcasts, teachers

Desc: We follow Scott's journey through his first year in high school including the constant bullying he tries to avoid, the pretty girl who renders him speechless, the homework he's buried under, the dances he never actually dances at, and the relationships that fade and develop. Throughout the book this avid reader and writer wittingly reflects on his experiences with words of wisdom as he journals to his unexpected, unborn brother. Like many typical teenagers, Scott is overly concerned with his acceptance by the *right* people, but in the end, it's those he tried so hard to avoid, the giant bully, the girl with the face piercings and the non-stop talker who he eventually befriends.

Sources:

<http://yalitlovers.wordpress.com/2006/09/10/sleeping-freshman-guide/>

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<http://cynthialeitichsmith.blogspot.com/2005/08/author-interview-david-lubar-on.html>

<http://www.davidlubar.com/>

[http://www.yourlibrary.ws/ya\\_webpage/ritba/ritba08/sleepingfreshmen.htm](http://www.yourlibrary.ws/ya_webpage/ritba/ritba08/sleepingfreshmen.htm)

**Title: Soul Moon Soup**

Author: Lindsay Lee Johnson

HB Rating: 2

Awards: International Reading Association's 2004 Lee Bennett Hopkins Promising Poet Award

Genre: Poetic Verse

Themes: Homelessness, Depression, Friendship, Grandparents, Art, Inner-city, Country

Desc: Eleven year old Phoebe Rose lives in shelters with her mother, keeping her dreams and her hope alive through her art. But when their only possession, a suitcase, is stolen, Phoebe's mom sends her away to live with her grandmother in the country. There, through the support of her grandmother and a new friend, she must readjust her life and rediscover her hope through her drawings.

Sources:

<http://www.tracievaughnzimmer.com/Soul%20Moon%20Soup.htm>

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**Title: A Step from Heaven**

Author: An Na

HB Rating: 1

Other Ratings: Publishers' Weekly Starred, Publishers' Weekly Boxed Review, Booklist Starred Review, Awards: 2002 Michael L. Printz Award, 2001 National Book Award Finalist, 2002 Children's Book Award in YA Fiction – International Reading Association, 2005 California Collections Selection, 2005 Asian American Booklist, Grades 9 and Up, 2001 - 2003 Asian Pacific American Award for Literature, 2003 - 2004 Gateway Readers Award Nominee, Missouri Association of School Libraries, 2003 - 2004 William Allen White Children's Book Award master list , 2002 Notable Books for a Global Society, 2002 Notable Children's Book – American Library Association, 2002 ALA Best Book for Young Adults, 2002 Children's Books of Distinction Award – Riverbank Review, 2002 Fanfare Book – The Horn Book Honor List, 2002 Bay Area Book Reviewers Association Award, 2002 CCBC Choices, 2002 Children's Literature Choice List, 2002 Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children's Book Award Master List, 2002 Amelia Bloomer Project List, 2002 White Ravens – International Youth Library of Munich, 2002 Notable Books for the Language Arts – NCTE, , 2001 Editor's Choice – Booklist, 2001 New York Times Book Review Notable Book, 2001 Best Books – School Library Journal, 2001 Kiriyama Prize Notable Book Shortlist, 2001 Best Children's Books – Publishers Weekly, 2001 Best Book – teenreads.com, 2001 Book Links Lasting Connections, 2001 Capitol Choices: Noteworthy Books for Children, 2001 Top 10 Youth First Novels – Booklist

Genre: Historical Fiction

Themes: Immigration, Assimilation, Korea, Abuse, English Language Learners, Family, Friendship

Desc: Follows Young Ju's life as she leaves her homeland of Korea and settles into a difficult life in America. In addition to learning a new language and a new way of life, Young Ju and her mother deal with the abuse of her father.

Sources:

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[http://www.anwriting.com/astep\\_onwriting.html](http://www.anwriting.com/astep_onwriting.html)

<http://www.aifl.org/teach/teacherguide2007.pdf>

**Title: The Uglies** (first book in a series)

Author: Scott Westerfeld

HB Rating: None given (other books in the series given a 2 rating)

Other Ratings: School Library Journal Starred Review, Booklist Starred Review, Kirkus Starred Review

Awards: Chicago Public Library's Best of the Best for Teens *Kirkus* Editor's Choice, New York Public Library's "Books for the Teen Age", *School Library Journal* Best Books of the Year, Texas Lone Star Reading List, VOYA's Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers, YALSA Best Books For Young Adults, YALSA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults, YALSA Quick Picks Nominee,

Genre: Science Fiction

Themes: Personal Appearance, Future, Acceptance, Brainwashing, Conformity, Plastic Surgery, Utopia/Dystopia

Desc: In this futuristic world, Tally Youngblood cannot wait for the operation that will make her Pretty, and she can rejoin all her 16 year old friends in Prettyville. But a new friend Shay has her second guessing her operation. Shay and Tally eventually join a secret colony of others who have escaped the surgery and who do not judge each other by their outside beauty. But when Tally accidentally alerts the authorities to their whereabouts, all that the colony has worked for and built is destroyed.

Sources:

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<http://www.islma.org/pdf/UgliesDiscussionKit.pdf>

<http://english.byu.edu/Novelinks/Novel%20Pages/Uglies.htm>

**Title: Warriors Don't Cry**

Author: Melba Pattillo Beals

HB Rating: None Given

Awards: YALSA Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults, Robert F. Kennedy Book Award, ALA Nonfiction Book of the Year, American Bookseller's Association Notable Book of the Year.

Genre: Memoir (nonfiction)

Themes: Integration, Racism, Civil Rights, Courage, Friendship, Government

Desc: Melba Pattillo Beal's detailed first person account of the integration of Central High School in Little Rock Arkansas. Includes actual entries from a diary that she kept when she was a part of the "Little Rock Nine."

Sources:

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<http://teaching.arts.usyd.edu.au/history/hsty3080/3rdYr3080/ClementHSTY3080/Home.html>

**Title: The Wednesday Wars**

Author: Gary D. Schmidt

HB Rating: 1

Other Ratings: Kirkus Starred Review, Publishers' Weekly Starred Review, Booklist Starred Review

Awards: 2008 Newbery Honor Book, 2008 ALA Notable Book for Children, 2008 ALA Best Book for Young Adults, 2007 Booklist Editors' Choice, 2007 National Parenting Publications Book Award, 2007 New York Public Library 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing, 2007 Book Sense Award Finalist

Genre: Historical Fiction

Themes: Family and Social Structures, Middle School, Vietnam War, Teacher Relationships, Shakespeare

Desc: On Wednesday afternoons, half of Holling Hoodhood's seventh grade class attends Catechism class, and the other half attends Hebrew class. Holling is the only Protestant amongst his friends, left behind to face a teacher he believes is out to make his life miserable. Through the year their relationship develops as they find a common bond through the Shakespeare that Mrs. Baker assigns Holling to read.

Sources:

<http://www.tracievaughnzimmer.com/wednesday%20wars.htm>

**Title: Whirligig**

Author: Paul Fleischman

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Publishers' Weekly Boxed Review, School Library Journal Starred Review, Booklist Starred Review

Awards: New York Times Notable Book of the Year, ALA Best Book for Young Adults, School Library Journal Best Book of the Year, Booklist Books for Youth Editors' Choice, Publishers Weekly Best Book, ABC Children's Booksellers Choices Award Winner 1999 Young Adult Readers, The Golden Kite Award Honor Book 1998 Fiction, Society of School Librarians International Book Awards Honor, Arizona Young Readers' Award Nominee, Black-Eyed Susan Book Award Nominee, California Young Reader Medal Nominee, Colorado Blue Spruce Young Adult Book Award Nominee, 2001 Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children's Book Award Nominee, Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School Book Award Nominee, Evergreen Young Adult Book Award Nominee, Lone Star Reading List, Maine Student Book Award Nominee, Maud Hart Lovelace Book Award Nominee, Nevada Young Readers' Award Nominee, Tayshas High School Reading List, Young Hoosier Book Award Nominee, 2000-2001

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: Belonging, guilt, forgiveness, drunk driving,

Desc: Humiliated at a high school party, drunk 17 year old Brent tries to crash his car to kill himself, but instead ends up killing another teenager. As part of his restitution, Brent is required to build and set up whirligigs in the four corners of the United States in honor of the victim. This novel follows his journey and also the journey of some of those who come in contact with the whirligigs.

Sources:

<http://www.paulfleischman.net/>

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780440228356&view=tg>

<http://www.maslibraries.org/infolit/samplers/whirligig.html>

<http://www.teacherweb.com/GA/WWCHS/MrsMickens/photo2.stm>

<http://www.bookrags.com/Whirligig>

<http://www.scu.edu/character/upload/curric-Whirligig-WriteAHEAD-edited.pdf>

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/pfleischman.htm>

<http://www.scu.edu/character/upload/Whirligig-Lesson-Plans.pdf>

<http://pan.intrasun.tcnj.edu/501-S03/Fallon/lesson.htm>

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/pfleischman.html>

These books are a great start to a middle school library full of strong female role models! Cook Quinoa With Recipes. My daughter is an avid reader (like mama!) and I love feeding her books filled with empowering young girl characters! Here's what you'll find in her 'girl-power' library - tons of books for middle school girls that you'll love to read with your daughter! Article from seemomclick.com. Girl-Power Books for Middle School Girls - See Mom Click. Here's what you'll find in my daughter's 'girl-power' library - tons of books for middle school Great chapter books for older children to read themselves, or for parents to read aloud to younger children. Classic children's books include The Secret Garden, Little Women, Tom Sawyer, Black Beauty, Tarzan of the Apes, Alice in Wonderland, The Call of the Wild, Gulliver's Travels, Treasure Island, The Wizard of Oz, Around the World in 80 Days, Oliver Twist, White Fang, Robinson Crusoe, Tom Swift, biographies of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and many more. Middle school is age where readers either get more motivated, taking their comprehension new levels; or they feel reading becomes a job. Use the worksheets below to start to invigorate your learners. Reading should be not only a skill, but one that you enjoy using to learn more about everything. There are five sheets for each separate reading passage, so be sure to print them all (we have numbered them to help out). Answer keys have also been provided for instructors. Nationally, over two-thirds of middle school students are reading below their grade level. A healthy dose of these worksheets,