

Great Books for Middle School Reluctant Readers

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These are books that inspire reading. They catch the reader from the beginning and the storyline and characters keep the reader turning pages. 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 lower reading levels, but most are still at a middle school level. Although these texts are on a list for reluctant readers, they will be enjoyed by avid readers as well.

Title: **Among the Hidden** (1st book in a series)

Author: Margaret Peterson Haddix

HB Rating: 3

Awards: A YALSA Best Book for Young Adults, A YALSA Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults, A YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers, A YALSA Top 10 Quick Pick for Young Adults, Great Stone Face Award (New Hampshire), Iowa Teen Award Nominee, Georgia Children's Book Award, Pacific Northwest Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee, California Young Reader's Medal, Nevada Young Readers' Award, Maud Hart Lovelace Award, Volunteer State Young Adult Book Award Master List, Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award, Nutmeg Children's Book Award, Buckeye Children's Book Award nominee, Sunshine State Young Readers Award, Young Hoosier Book Award, Rebecca Caudhill Young Readers Book Award Nominee, Colorado Blue Spruce Young Adult Book Award Nominee, A YALSA Popular Paperback for Young Adults, Readers' Choice Award for Teen Books Finalist, Iowa Children's Choice Award Master List, A YALSA 100 Best of the Best for the 21st Century,

Genre: Science Fiction

Themes: Population, Government, Friendship, Laws

Desc: When a country makes a law that only 2 children are allowed per family, what happens when a third is born? Luke Garner is one of those third children, who must remain hidden in his own home. But soon he discovers another Third, who is not so willing to be hidden away.

Sources:

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

<http://www.simonsays.com/content/book.cfm?tab=22&pid=408346&agid=21>

http://www.edb.utexas.edu/resources/booksR4teens/book_reviews/book_reviews.php?book_id=4

<http://www.discoveryjourney.com/ContentSummary.asp?ContentID=354&List=1>

Title: Boys Will Be

Author: Bruce Brooks

HB Rating: 2

Genre: Non-fiction, collection of Essays

Themes: Adolescents, Sports, Reading, Fathers, Sons, Friends

Desc: A collection of essays, some directed at preadolescent boys, some maybe more for parents. This book taps into the minds of boys, dealing with a multitude of issues including sports, body odor, and reading, just to name a few.

Sources:

<http://www.teenreads.com/features/fe-brooks-bruce.asp>

<http://www.harperchildrens.com/hch/author/features/brooks.asp>

<http://bama.ua.edu/~jstallwo/Articles/Antidote%20for%20Testosterone%20Poisoning.pdf>

<http://unger.myplainview.com/reviews/Boys%20Will%20Be.htm>

Title: The City of Ember (1st in a 3 book series)

Author: Jeanne DuPrau

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Kirkus Starred Review, VOYA Starred Review

Awards: ALA Notable Children's Book, Florida Sunshine State Book Award, Texas Lone Star Reading List, West Virginia Children's Book Master List Nominee, Arkansas Charlie May Simon Award Nominee, Colorado Blue Spruce Young Adult Book Award Nominee, Illinois Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Award Nominee, Iowa Teen Book Award Nominee, Kansas William White Award, Kentucky Bluegrass Master List, California Young Reader Medal, New Jersey Garden State Children's Book Award, New Hampshire Great Stone Face Children's Book Award, Connecticut Nutmeg Children's Book Award, ALA Notable Children's Book 2004, Best Children's Books of the year 2004 Bank Street College of Education, Capitol Choices, 2004, IRA Children's Literature Choice List

Genre: Science Fiction

Themes: Future, Society, Career, Friendship, Government

Desc: Doon and Lina live in an underground world where the lights continually go out, leaving them in darkness. They are determined to save the city.

Sources:

http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers_guides/9780375822742.pdf

<http://suzyred.com/2006cityofember.html>

http://www.highsmith.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Production/LSP/pages/2005_pdfs/lsp_nov05_keepecity.pdf

<http://www.state.lib.la.us/empowerlibrary/2006%206-8%20City%20of%20ember.pdf>

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

http://www.edhelper.com/books/The_City_of_EMBER.htm

<http://www.jeanneduprau.com/index.shtml>

Title: Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie

Author: Jordan Sonnenblick

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Booklist Starred Review, Book Links Starred Review

Awards: Rebecca Caudill Young Reader's Book Award (Illinois), Teen's Top Ten Awards, *Book Sense*

Children's Pick Fall 2004, 2007 Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: Family, Siblings, Cancer, Middle School, Friendship

Desc: Eighth grader Stephen Alper's world is turned upside down when his five year old brother is diagnosed with cancer. He throws himself into his drumming to help himself cope, but also relies on a good friend to help him use his talents to bring about hope in what seems like a very morose affair.

Sources:

http://www.jordansonnenblick.com/DRUMS_curriculum_unit.pdf

<http://www.warrenet.org/oxford/starw/Drumsgirls%26dangerouspiwebquest.htm>

http://www.mylion.org/kit/create_a_quilt.shtml

Title: Flipped

Author: by Wendelin Van Draanan

HB Rating: 3

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

Awards: California Young Reader Medal, Virginia Young Readers Program Award, South Carolina Children's Book Award, Nevada Young Readers Award, Illinois Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award

Nomination

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: Cliques, Nature, Friendship, Middle school, Self-perception, Family, First Love., Mental Disability

Desc: Told in alternating points of view, this story explores the affections of two neighbors Juli and Bryce.

Ever since she was in 2nd grade, Juli has had a crush on Bryce, despite his disinterest in her. However, in middle school, Bryce begins to see Juli in a different light, and he finds himself attracted to her uniqueness and peculiar passions (like refusing to come down from an old tree to be demolished). But his interest in her, might be too late, as she begins to wonder if there is anything more past his blue eyes of attraction.

Sources:

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

<http://www.asu.edu/clas/english/englished/yalit/flipped/>

<http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/vandraanen/>

<http://www.writerswrite.com/journal/dec01/vandraanen.htm>

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

Title: Freak the Mighty

Author: Rodman Philbrick

HB Rating: 2

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

Awards: Judy Lopez Memorial Award Honor Book 1993, A YALSA Best Book for Young Adults, 1994, Quick Pick for Young Adults, 1995, California Young Reader's Medal, 1995-96, Arizona Young Readers Award, 1996, Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Book Award Nominee 1996-1997, Nebraska Golden Sower Award 1997, Rebecca Caudhill Young Readers Book Award Nominee 1997, Iowa Teen Award Nominee 1997-1998, Maryland Children's Book Award 1998, Charlotte Award 1998, Wyoming Soaring Eagle Book Award 1998, Maud Hart Lovelace Book Award Nominee 1999, Colorado Blue Spruce Young Adult Book Award Nominee 1999, New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age 2000, YALSA Popular Paperback for Young Adults 2002, Coventry Inspiration Book Award Nominee England 2007, A Booked Up Selection England 2007-2008

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: friendship, disabilities, family, death, King Arthur

Desc: Two middle school boys, one very large with learning difficulties, and one who's very small but incredibly bright, combine their brain and brawn to become Freak the Mighty. Together they go on adventures in their town and escape some nail biting situations, before Freak falls ill.

Sources:

<http://www.rodmanphilbrick.com/teaching.html#freak>

http://content.scholastic.com/browse/collateral.jsp?id=939_type=Book_typeId=2964

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=41

<http://hti.math.uh.edu/curriculum/units/2005/07/07/05.07.07.php>

<http://www.simplyscience.com/mslit.html>

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

http://www.resourceroom.net/comprehension/literature/ftm_toc.asp

Title: The Greatest: Muhammad Ali

Author: Walter Dean Myers

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings:

Awards: CCBC Recommended Book, Booklist Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers, YALSA Best Books for Young Adults

Genre: Non-fiction

Themes: Boxing, Muhammad Ali, Vietnam, African Americans, Muslim, Perseverance,

Desc: More than just a timeline of his life, this biography details the cultural, political and religious involvement of Muhammad Ali. Includes black and white photos.

Sources:

http://www.bookpage.com/0102bp/walter_dean_myers.html

http://www.pluggedintoreading.com/plugged_in/pitnf_flyer.pdf

<http://store.indiedocs.com/dvd1727.html>

www.alicenter.org/edresources/Documents/sg_champions_hs.pdf

http://www.pbs.org/unforgivableblackness/teachers/lesson_johnsonlouisali.html

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

Title: Guts: The True Stories Behind Hatchet and the Brian Books

Author: Gary Paulsen

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Bulletin Starred Review

Awards: Abraham Lincoln Illinois High School Book Award Nominee 2007

Genre: Non Fiction, Autobiography

Themes: Survival, Self-discovery, Courage, Hunting, Wilderness, Iditarod

Desc: Gary Paulsen details the real-life adventures behind some of his fictional stories, inspiring the events in the Hatchet and the Brian series.

Sources:

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/guides/pdf/guts.pdf>

http://www.hclib.org/pub/bookspace/BookClubKid_discussionquestions.cfm?ISBN=440407125&Title=Guts

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

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

<http://www.franklincollege.edu/pwp/twilliams/Unit.pdf>

http://litplans.com/authors/Gary_Paulsen.html

<http://www.davis.k12.ut.us/curric/languagearts/grade8.html#eg>

Title: Hoot

Author: Carl Hiassan

HB Rating: 2

Awards: Newbery Honor, ALA Notable Children's Book, ALA Best Book for Young Adults

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: Endangered Species, Environment, Friendship, Protest, Humor, Moving, Bullies

Desc: Roy Eberhardt is the new kid at a middle school in Florida, but he quickly makes a name for himself as he and two other friends rage a protest against one companies attempt to destroy an endangered species' habitat.

Sources:

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

<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/unitplan.jsp?id=226>

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/flashlightreaders/tguide/hoot/discussion.htm>

<http://www.mariinc.com/teacherguide.html>

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780375821813&view=tg>

<http://members.aol.com/mrscarola/hoot.html>

<http://www.lfpl.org/pdf/discussion%20guide%20-%20hoot.pub.pdf>

<http://www.edhelper.com/books/Hoot.htm>

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

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

Title: If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period

Author: Gennifer Choldenko

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Booklist Starred Review (audio version)

Awards: ALA Notable Recording!; 2008 Notable Children's Recordings, Amazon's Best of the Year 2007: Top 10 Editors' Picks: Middle Readers!, *Washington Post*: Best Books for Young People (2007), *Columbus Dispatch*: Recommended Books for 2007, *Richie's Picks*: The Best of 2007

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: Family, Siblings, Middle School, Race relations, Friendship, Eating Issues, Socio-economics, Parental Expectations.

Desc: Two students become unlikely friends at a private middle school as they deal with the issues of cliques, family and fitting in. They soon learn that their connection goes beyond friendship, when they discover that they are actually related. Told through alternating points of view, this story explores the authentic feelings of middle school students and the issues they face.

Sources:

www.harcourtbooks.com/bookcatalogs/bookpage.asp?isbn=0152057536&option=teacher

<http://www.choldenko.com/books/treefall/tguide1.html>

Title: The Invention of Hugo Cabret

Author: Brian Selznick

HB Rating: 1

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

Awards: Caldecott Award, 2007 National Book Award Finalist, Junior Library Guild Selection, NY Times 10 Best Illustrated Books of the year, Quill Award in Children's Chapter/Middle Grade category

Genre: Historical Fiction

Themes: Inventions, Robots, Motion Pictures, Orphans

Desc: After his father's death, 12 year old Hugo finds himself living within the walls of a Paris train station. He's determined to continue with his father's work of restoring an old robot-like structure, in hopes to discover a hidden message. In doing so, he befriends a young girl and an old filmmaker, who also has a connection to the automaton (robot).

Sources:

www.theinventionofhugocabret.com/index.htm

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7114977>

<http://www.secondaryenglish.com/inventionofhugocabret.html>

http://eduscapes.com/library/i/invention_of_hugo_cabret.htm

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/flashlightreaders/main.asp?pageid=1&bookpass=9>

Title: Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key

Author: Jack Gantos

HB Rating: 1

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

Awards: Finalist, 1998 National Book Award for Children's Literature, Notable Children's Books of 1999, School Library Journal Best Books of the Year (1998), New York Public Library 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing (1998), Riverbank Review Children's Books of Distinction (1999), Bank Street College List of Best Children's Books of the Year, ALA Best Books for Young Adults Nominee (2000), Judy Lopez Memorial Award Honor Book, Notable 1999 Children's Trade Book in Social Studies (NCSS/CBC), Golden Kite Award Honor Book for Fiction, Dorothy Canfield Fisher Award Master List, Great Stone Face Children's Book Award Master List, Maine Student Book Award Reading List, Land of Enchantment Book Award Children's Master List

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: ADHD, Families, School, Broken families, Grandparents,

Desc: Comically written, this novel is told through the point of view of Joey, as he faces the every day school and family challenges of someone struggling with ADHD.

Sources:

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

<http://www.scu.edu/character/upload/Joey.pdf>

<http://www.harperchildrens.com/hch/parents/teachingguides/JOEY%20PIGZASwallowedTG.pdf>

<http://www.lfpl.org/pdf/discussion%20guide%20-%20joey%20pigza.pub.pdf>

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

<http://www.cherylsigmon.com/pdf/Joey-Pigza-2.pdf>

<http://www.lesn.appstate.edu/fryeem/katiediversity/section1.html>

Title: Love That Dog

Author: Sharon Creech

HB Rating: 4

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

Awards: Christopher Award, Mitten Award (Michigan), Claudia Lewis Poetry Award

Genre: Poetry, Verse Novel

Themes: School, Writing, Poetry, Dogs, Walter Dean Myers

Desc: Written in poetic verse, this novel is told through the writing of young Jack, who at first expresses an extreme dislike of poetry. Throughout the school year, with the guidance of his teacher and with the inspiration of model poems, Jack develops his poetry and uses it to memorialize his pet dog.

Sources:

<http://www.bgcs.k12.oh.us/kramp/poetry.htm>

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

<http://www.sharoncreech.com/novels/01.asp>

<http://courses.dsu.edu/libm205/dog.htm>

http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collateral.jsp?id=10838_type=Book_typeId=3118

<http://www.emints.org/ethemes/resources/S00001893.shtml>

Title: The Misfits

Author: James Howe

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Booklist Starred Review

Awards: Arizona Young Readers' Award 2005 Nominee, Georgia Children's Book Award 2007-2008 Nominee, Great Lakes Great Books Award 2003-2004 Nominee, Maryland Children's Book Award, 2004 Nominee, Rhode Island Teen Book Award, 2004 ; Nominee, Volunteer State Book Award 2004 Nominee

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: Bullying, Friendship, Elections, Middle School, Homosexuality, Individuality, Tolerance

Desc: A group of middle school students who are fed up with the name-calling and teasing they've experienced throughout the years decide to run for student council on the premise of tolerance. This book was the catalyst for No-Name Calling Week, now a nationwide initiative to promote acceptance in schools.

Sources:

<http://www.simonsays.com/content/book.cfm?sid=813&pid=412408&agid=21>

http://www.teachingbooks.net/content/Howe_qu.pdf

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/magazine/features.jsp?cid=641>

http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN_ATTACHMENTS/file/445-4.pdf

<http://www.hrmvideo.com/resources/docs/18.pdf>

Title: Nothing But the Truth

Author: Avi

HB Rating: 1

Other Ratings: Booklist Starred Review

Awards: Newbery Honor, William Allen White Children's Book Award, California Young Reader's Medal, Garden State Teen Book Award, Arizona Young Reader's Award, ALA Notable Children's Book, ALA Best Book for Young Adults, ALA Best of the Best Books for Young Adults, ALA Booklist Editor's Choice, Bulletin Blue Ribbon, Horn Book Fanfare, Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies, Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, School Library Journal Best Book,

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction, Multi-genre format

Themes: high school, teachers, nationalism, truth,

Desc: In order to irritate his English teacher, 9th grader Phillip Malloy hums the national anthem. This small incident spins out of control as multiple people become involved. Told through various documents, conversations and points of view, the reader is required to extract the truth and form his/her own opinion of the incident..

Sources:<http://www.classzone.com/novelguides/litcons/nothing/guide.cfm>

<http://www.auburn.edu/~murraba/truth.html>

<http://www.leastern.com/Truth/truth.htm#Nothing>

<http://eolit.hrw.com/hlla/novelguides/ms/Mini-Guide.Avi.pdf>

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=394

<http://www.nancypolette.com/LitGuidesText/nothingbutthetruth.htm>

http://webmail.ops.org/socialstudies_web/Novel_Guide/Novel_Guide_Lesson_Plan_Grade_8/Microsoft/nothingButTruth.doc

<http://www.maslibraries.org/infolit/samplers/nothing.html>

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/LACompareAndContrastNovelsAboutTruth9.htm>

http://www.edb.utexas.edu/resources/booksR4teens/book_reviews/book_reviews.php?book_id=82

<http://www.classzone.com/novelguides/litcons/nothing/guide.cfm>

<http://english.byu.edu/Novelinks/Novel%20Pages/Nothing%20But%20the%20Truth.htm>

<http://www.avi-writer.com/>

Title: Phineas Gage

Author: John Fleischman

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Kirkus Starred Review,

Awards: Best Books for Young Adults, 2003, Great Middle School Reads, 2004, ALSC American Library Association Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K-12, 2003, William Allen White Children's Book Award

Genre: Non-fiction

Themes: Brain Science, Injury, Medicine, Mental Disabilities, Personality

Desc: Details the story of Phineas Gage, a man in the mid 1800s who had an iron bar shot through his skull. Through his story, the science of the brain is revealed.

Sources:

<http://suzyred.com/2004phineasgage.html>

http://www.state.lib.la.us/la_dyn_templ.cfm?doc_id=419

<http://www.emporia.edu/libsv/wawbookaward/curriculumguides/cg04-05.htm#phineas>

<http://brainweek.dana.org/pdf/brainweek/childrenbrainbooks.pdf>

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/hmnbs/psychology/gagepage/index.htm>

Title: Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants (first in a series of 4 books)

Author: Ann Brashares

HB Rating: 2

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

Awards: ALA Best Books for Young Adults, Indiana Young Hoosier Award, Iowa Teen Book Award, Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Award, New Jersey Garden State Teen Book Award, Rhode Island Children's Book Award, Tennessee Volunteer State Book Award, Texas TAYSHAS High School Reading List, Washington Evergreen Young Adult Book Award, Pacific Northwest Young Readers Choice Award, Missouri Gateway Readers Award, Book Sense Book of the Year

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: Friendship, Families, Divorce, Weight, Death, Travel

Desc: Four friends since birth go their separate ways one summer, but stay connected through a "magic" pair of jeans. Through their own separate journeys, the teenage girls explore issues of divorce and remarriage, family feuds and first love, emotional abandonment and accomplishments, and finding the extraordinary in the mundane.

Sources:

http://www.edb.utexas.edu/resources/booksR4teens/book_reviews/book_reviews.php?book_id=100

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

http://www.muchmusic.com/mediaed/guidepage_scanning.asp?studyID=154

http://www.nyu.edu/residential.education/pdfs/film_sisterhood.pdf

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teens/sisterhoodcentral/author.html>

<http://www.blind.state.ia.us/Library/DiscussionGuides/bookDiscussSisterhood.htm>

http://www.yourlibrary.ws/ya_webpage/ritba/ritba02/sisterhood.htm

<http://english.byu.edu/Novelinks/Novel%20Pages/Sisterhood%20of%20the%20Traveling%20Pants.htm>

Title: Stargirl

Author: Jerry Spinelli

HB Rating: 4

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

Awards: An American Library Association Top Ten Best Books for Young Adults, A Publishers Weekly Best Book of 2000, A Parent's Guide to Children's Media Honor Book, Winner of the Parents' Choice 2000 Fiction Gold Award, Winner of the NAIBA Book Award for Children's Literature, A Bank Street College of Education Best Book of the Year, A Book Sense Book of the Year Finalist, An ABC Children's Bookseller's Choice, A New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age, A New York Times Bestseller

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: tolerance, homeschool, popularity, high school, Arizona

Desc: When Stargirl, a previously homeschooled high schooler, enters Mica High, the students aren't sure how to respond to her eccentric behavior. Told through the point of view of Leo, the boy who has captured Stargirl's heart.

Sources:

<https://www.teachersnetwork.org/powertolearn/web/stargirlwebquest/hf5.htm>

http://www.randomhouse.com/features/jerryspinelli/stargirl_rg.html

<http://www.teenreads.com/guides/stargirl1.asp>

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

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

<http://www.edhelper.com/books/Stargirl.htm>

<http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-stargirl/>

<http://www.emints.org/ethemes/resources/S00001445.shtml>

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

http://www.edb.utexas.edu/resources/booksR4teens/book_reviews/book_reviews.php?book_id=106

<http://english.byu.edu/Novelinks/Literary%20Units/Acceptance/Website/index.html>

Title: Tangerine

Author: Edward Bloor

HB Rating: 2

Other Ratings: Kirkus Starred Review

Awards: Best Books for Young Adults, 1998 Top Ten, Best First Novels for Youth, Best of the Best Revisited, 2001, VOYA Books in the Middle: Outstanding Books, 1997, Bulletin Blue Ribbons, Capitol Choices, The Children's Literature Choice List, Fanfare Honor List, Los Angeles' 100 Best Books, IRA Young Adults' Choices

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Themes: Bullying, Soccer, Florida, Blindness, Siblings, Diversity

Desc: Legally blind, 7th grader Paul Fisher doesn't allow his physical disability impair his mental perception. Finding friendship on the soccer team of the working class school in town, Paul must confront his parents with the fearful truth of his football hero older brother.

Sources:

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

http://content.scholastic.com/browse/collateral.jsp?id=972_type=Book_typeId=3222

<http://www.edwardbloor.net/iteachers.htm>

http://www.create.cett.msstate.edu/create/classroom/lplan_view.asp?articleID=223

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

http://www.chlive.org/kkaplan/tangerine_topics.htm

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

Title: The Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1963

Author: Christopher Paul Curtis

HB Rating: 1

Other Ratings: Publisher's Weekly Starred Boxed Review, School Library Journal Starred Review, Horn Book Starred Review

Awards: Newbery Honor, A Coretta Scott King Honor Book, ALA Top Ten Best Book/Quick Pick, ALA Best Book for Young Adults, ALA Notable Book for Children, Booklist Top 25 Black History Picks for Youth, IRA Young Adult Choice, NCSS—CBC Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies, Bank Street Child Study Association Children's Book Award, New York Times Book Review Best Book, Publishers Weekly Best Book, Horn Book Fanfare, Bulletin Blue Ribbon, Golden Kite Award for Fiction, Publishers Weekly Flying Start Author, Notable Book for a Global Society, Plus on 24 State awards list

Genre: Historical Fiction

Themes: Family, Racism, Humor, School, Alabama, Friendship, Siblings, Michigan

Desc: Curtis tells a comical tale of a young boy, Kenny, and his interactions with his family in Flint, Michigan. When his parents decide to send his mischievous brother to relatives down South, the entire family takes a road trip to Birmingham. While there, the humor turns to tragedy, as the family experiences the deadly church bombing of 1963.

Sources: <http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780385321754&view=tg>

<http://www.childrenstheatre.org/2007/watsons.html>

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

<http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-watsons-birmingham-1963/>

http://www.plazams.vbschools.com/misc_pages/watsons.htm

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

<http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780440228004&view=tg>

<http://faculty.salisbury.edu/~elbond/watsons.htm>

<http://english.byu.edu/Novelinks/Novel%20Pages/Watsons%20go%20to%20Birmingham.htm>

http://www.edb.utexas.edu/resources/booksR4teens/book_reviews/book_reviews.php?book_id=120

Title: When Zachary Beaver Came to Town

Author: Kimberly Willis Holt

HB Rating: 1

Other Ratings: Booklist Starred Review, Publisher's Weekly Starred Review

Awards: Winner of the National Book Award, An ALA Notable Book for Children, An ALA Top Ten Books for Young Adults, A *School Library Journal* Best Book, A *Horn Book* Fanfare

Genre: Historical Fiction

Themes: Friendship, Small town, Obesity, Baptism, Abandonment, Vietnam

Desc: This coming-of-age story focuses on Toby Wilson and his friend Cal as they learn lessons of friendship when they try to help out a 600+ pound boy. The setting is 1971, but the story feels modern-day.

Sources:

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

<http://www.zacharybeaver.com/ZBTeachersGuide.pdf>

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780440238416&view=tg>

<http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-when-zachary-beaver/>

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