

VCS Summer Reading for 6th-8th Graders

Students should read three books total: two books from this list and the Common Text.

Opening Note: This list is a combination of DCF (Dorothy Canfield Fisher) 2016-17 titles for 6th grade and up, a few of the ALA (American Library Association) 2015 Award winners, and some of our older favorites! New books are starred. The idea is to promote new and acclaimed titles for summer reading, as well as to keep a few great books circulating.

Little Women, by Louisa May Alcott

Lovely Meg, talented Jo, frail Beth, and spoiled Amy, realize the hard lessons of poverty and of growing up in New England during the Civil War. Based on Louisa May Alcott's childhood, this lively portrait of nineteenth-century family life possesses a lasting vitality that has endeared it to generations of readers.

Drowned City, by Don Brown*

This is a journalistic look at the disastrous hurricane that leveled New Orleans in August 2005, brought to grim life through graphic novel style illustrations. A dramatic tale with text that ranges from simple, factual sentences to quotations from an extensive collection of books and media.

Ender's Game, by Orson Scott Card

Once again, the Earth is under attack. Alien "buggers" are poised for a final assault. The survival of the human species depends on a military genius who can defeat the buggers. But who? Ender Wiggin. Brilliant. Ruthless. Cunning. A tactical and strategic master. And a child. Recruited for military training by the world government, Ender's childhood ends the moment he enters his new home: Battleschool. Among the elite recruits Ender proves himself to be a genius among geniuses. In simulated war games he excels. But is the pressure and loneliness taking its toll on Ender?

Looking for Alaska, by John Green

Miles "Pudge" Halter is done with his safe life at home. His whole life has been one big non-event, and his obsession with famous last words has only made him crave "the Great Perhaps" even more (Francois Rabelais, poet). He heads off to the sometimes crazy and anything-but-boring world of Culver Creek Boarding School, and his life becomes the opposite of safe. Because down the hall is Alaska Young. She is an event unto herself and totally steals Miles' heart. This is John Green's earliest novel, and it's terrific.

House of the Scorpion, by Nancy Farmer

This is a science fiction novel that features Matteo Alacrán, a young clone raised by a drug lord of the same name, usually called "El Patrón." It is a story about the struggle to survive as a free individual.

Mr. Midshipman Hornblower by C.S. Forester (Hornblower Saga #1)

Horatio Hornblower is a 17-year-old British Naval officer fighting against Napoleon and his tyranny of Europe as an inexperienced midshipman in January 1794. Along the way, he fights galleys, feeds cattle, stays out of the way of the guillotine, and makes friends with a Duchess. Here Hornblower becomes a man and develops the strength of character which will make him a hero to his men, and to all England.

The Boy Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pederson and the Churchill Club, by Phillip Hoose*

At the outset of World War II, Denmark did not resist German occupation. Fifteen-year-old Knud Pedersen resolved with a handful of schoolmates to take action against the Nazis if the adults would not and committed countless acts of sabotage. They eventually were arrested, but their exploits helped spark a full-blown Danish resistance. Captivating nonfiction.

The Wizard of Earthsea, by Ursula LeGuin

Ged, the greatest sorcerer in all Earthsea, was called Sparrowhawk in his reckless youth. Hungry for power and knowledge, Sparrowhawk tampered with long-held secrets and loosed a terrible shadow upon the world. This is the tale of his testing, how he mastered the mighty words of power, tamed an ancient dragon, and crossed death's threshold to restore the balance.

Cinder, by Marissa Meyer

Humans and androids crowd the raucous streets of New Beijing. A deadly plague ravages the population. From space, a ruthless lunar people watch, waiting to make their move. No one knows that Earth's fate hinges on one girl. Cinder, a gifted mechanic, isn't any girl, though -- she's also happens to be a cyborg.

I Am Princess X, by Cherie Priest*

Two girls become inseparable friends as they bond over art and storytelling. Together they create Princess X. After a tragic accident, one girl mourns and eventually discovers that Princess X may not have died with her friend.

Where the Red Fern Grows, by Wilson Rawls

A loving threesome, Old Dan and Little Ann (both hunting dogs), and Billy (their owner) ranged the dark hills and river bottoms of Cherokee country as the finest hunting team in the area. Glory and victory were coming to them, but sadness waited too.

The Boy in the Black Suit, by Jason Reynolds*

Just when seventeen-year-old Matt thinks he can't handle one more piece of terrible news, he meets a girl who's dealt with a lot more—and who just might be able to clue him in on how to rise up when life keeps knocking him down.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith

The story of young, sensitive, and idealistic Francie Nolan and her bittersweet teenage years growing up in the slums of New York City in the early 1900s.

Goodbye, Stranger, by Rebecca Stead*

Back in 5th grade, Bridge, Tabitha, and Emily made a pact. Never to fight, ever. Now, two years later, they're still best friends, but other things are changing. Bridge meets Sherm, and is soon excited and confused by her new, strange feelings. And when Emily starts texting pictures of herself to Patrick, Bridge and Tab find themselves complicit in a naive plan that quickly spirals out of control.

Nimona, by Noelle Stevenson*

In this captivating graphic novel, Nimona is an impulsive young shapeshifter with a knack for villainy. Lord Ballister Blackheart is a villain with a vendetta. As sidekick and supervillain, Nimona and Lord Blackheart are about to wreak some serious havoc.

The Hobbit, by J.R.R. Tolkien

Now recognized as a timeless classic, this introduction to the hobbit Bilbo Baggins, the wizard Gandalf, Gollum, and the spectacular world of Middle-earth recounts of the adventures of a reluctant hero, a powerful and dangerous ring, and the cruel dragon Smaug the Magnificent.

Like a River, by Kathy Cannon Wiechman*

Leander and Polly are two teenage Union soldiers who carry deep, dangerous secrets and survive incredible odds. Leander is underage when he enlists, and Polly follows her father into war disguised as

his son. As the lives of these young, brave soldiers intersect, readers will be transported to the homes, waterways, camps, hospitals, and prisons of the Civil-War era.

End Note: If you are interested in reading a book that is not on this list, please send Jory (jhearst@vermontcommons.org) a brief email to check-in. :)