

Ichabod Crane Middle School Ms. Two-Axe's 2009 Suggested Summer Reading List



Schooled – Korman

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Homeschooled on an isolated "alternate farm commune" that has dwindled since the 1960s to 2 members, 13-year-old Cap has always lived with his grandmother, Rain. When she is hospitalized, Cap is taken in by a social worker and sent—like a lamb to slaughter—to middle school. Smart and capable, innocent and inexperienced (he learned to drive on the farm, but he has never watched television), long-haired Cap soon becomes the butt of pranks. He reacts in unexpected ways and, in the end, elevates those around him to higher ground. From chapter to chapter, the first-person narrative shifts among certain characters: Cap, a social worker (who takes him into her home), her daughter (who resents his presence there), an A-list bully, a Z-list victim, a popular girl, the school principal, and a football player (who unintentionally decks Cap twice in one day). Korman capably manages the shifting points of view of characters who begin by scorning or resenting Cap and end up on his side. From the eye-catching jacket art to the scene in which Cap says good-bye to his 1,100 fellow students, individually and by name, this rewarding novel features an engaging main character and some memorable moments of comedy, tenderness, and reflection. Pair this with Jerry Spinelli's 2000 *Stargirl* (the sequel is reviewed in this issue) for a discussion of the stifling effects of conformity within school culture or just read it for the fun of it. Phelan, Carolyn

Found – Haddix

Thirteen-year-old Jonah has always known that he was adopted, and he's never thought it was any big deal. Then he and a new friend, Chip, who's also adopted, begin receiving mysterious letters. The first one says, "You are one of the missing." The second one says, "Beware! They're coming back to get you."

Jonah, Chip, and Jonah's sister, Katherine, are plunged into a mystery that involves the FBI, a vast smuggling operation, an airplane that appeared out of nowhere -- and people who seem to appear and disappear at will. The kids discover they are caught in a battle between two opposing forces that want very different things for Jonah and Chip's lives.

Do Jonah and Chip have any choice in the matter? And what should they choose when both alternatives are horrifying?

The Chronicles of Vladimir Tod Book 1 – Eighth Grade Bites – Brewer

Vlad has to keep his vampire urges under control while dealing with the pressures of middle school.

Thirteen-year-old Vladimir Tod really hates junior high. Bullies harass him, the principal is dogging him, and the girl he likes prefers his best friend. Oh, and Vlad has a secret: His mother was human, but his father was a vampire. With no idea of the extent of his powers, Vlad struggles daily with his blood cravings and his enlarged fangs. When a substitute teacher begins to question him a little too closely, Vlad worries that his cover is about to be blown. But then he faces a much bigger problem: He's being hunted by a vampire killer. Book 2 *Ninth Grade Slays* and Book 3 *Tenth Grade Bleeds*

*** The Hunger Games – Collins * My favorite this year!***

Katniss is a 16-year-old girl living with her mother and younger sister in the poorest district of Panem, the remains of what used be the United States. Long ago the districts waged war on the Capitol and were defeated. As part of the surrender terms, each district agreed to send one boy and one girl to appear in an annual televised event called, "The Hunger Games." The terrain, rules, and level of audience participation may change but one thing is constant: kill or be killed. When Kat's sister is chosen by lottery, Kat steps up to go in her place.

Runaway – Van Draanen

This novel chronicles the daily struggle for food, shelter, safety, and cleanliness that becomes the focus of life once a home and income are stripped away. Twelve-year-old Holly knows a lot about living on the streets, since she lived that life with her drug-addicted mother before the woman's death from an overdose. She determines that it is preferable to continuing in her abusive foster home. A journal provided by a compassionate teacher is where she records her lonely and difficult struggle for survival.

The Graveyard Book – Gaiman

Nobody Owens, known to his friends as Bod, is a normal boy. He would be completely normal if he didn't live in a sprawling graveyard, being raised and educated by ghosts, with a solitary guardian who belongs to neither the world of the living nor of the dead. There are dangers and adventures in the graveyard for a boy—an ancient Indigo Man beneath the hill, a gateway to a desert leading to an abandoned city of ghouls, the strange and terrible menace of the Sleer. But if Bod leaves the graveyard, then he will come under attack from the man Jack—who has already killed Bod's family. . . .

The Lightning Thief – Book 1 (Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series) - Riordan

Percy Jackson is a good kid, but he can't seem to focus on his schoolwork or control his temper. And lately, being away at boarding school is only getting worse—Percy could have sworn his pre-algebra teacher turned into a monster and tried to kill him. When Percy's mom finds out, she knows it's time that he knew the truth about where he came from, and that he go to the one place he'll be safe. She sends Percy to Camp Half-Blood, a summer camp for demigods (on Long Island), where he learns that the father he never knew is Poseidon, God of the Sea. Soon a mystery unfolds and together with his friends—one a satyr and the other the demigod daughter of Athena—Percy sets out on a quest across the United States to reach the gates of the Underworld (located in a recording studio in Hollywood) and prevent a catastrophic war between the gods. This is a 5 book series!

Listening for Lions - Gloria Whelan

Orphaned by the influenza epidemic in British East Africa in 1919, 13-year-old Rachel is sent by conniving neighbors to visit an elderly man in England, passing as their daughter—his granddaughter—to pave the way for their return and the inheritance of his estate. The daughter of a missionary doctor and his wife, Rachel has grown up connected to the African countryside and people. Terrified that to reveal her secret would hasten Grandfather Pritchard's death, and fearing life in an orphanage, she goes along with her new identity as Valerie Pritchard. But she cannot help but get involved with his love for the birds on his land, and she entertains him with stories about what is happening outside his sickroom and what kinds of things her friend Rachel saw in their African world.

The Girl Who Could Fly – Victoria Forester

Starred Review* In this terrific debut novel, readers meet Piper McCloud, the late-in-life daughter of farmers. Her parents revel in conformity, so it's disconcerting at best when Piper shows a talent for flying. Homeschooled and kept away from outsiders, Piper is lonely. Finally, her parents let her go to a community picnic, where she thinks she'll meet new friends. Instead, she terrifies the neighbors by flying up to catch a ball during a kids' game. In no time, the McCloud farm is besieged. Then, out of a helicopter comes the empathetic Dr. Letitia Hellion, who whisks Piper off to a secret school for kids with special talents.

Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Journey to Change the World... One Child at a Time - Sarah Thomson (adapter), Greg Mortenson (author)

In 1993, while climbing one of the world's most difficult peaks, Mortenson became lost and ill, and eventually found aid in the tiny Pakistani village of Korphe. He vowed to repay his generous hosts by building a school; his efforts have grown into the Central Asia Institute, which has since provided education for 25,000 children. Retold for middle readers, the story remains inspirational and compelling. Solid pacing and the authors' skill at giving very personal identities to people of a different country, religion and culture help Mortenson deliver his message without sounding preachy; he encourages readers to put aside prejudice and politics, and to remember that the majority of people are good. An interview with Mortenson's 12-year-old daughter, who has traveled with her father to Pakistan, offers another accessible window onto this far-away and underlines Mortenson's sacrifice and courage. Illustrated throughout with b&w photos, it also contains two eight-page insets of color photos.