

# Hastings Summer Reading Suggestions

Once you have read your required book, we would like you to read at least one other book this summer. Please keep track of your reading by filling out a reading log and rating each book you read.

Check out these titles for some good reading suggestions. All of these books are available in the Hastings Media Center. Most are also available at our local public libraries and bookstores.

(The majority of these book annotations were taken from the Library of Congress website ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov).) The remaining ones are brief quotes or summaries borrowed from the various bookjackets)

## It's Sooooo Today! (Realistic Fiction)

*Swindle* Korman

After unscrupulous collector S. Wendell Palamino cons him out of a valuable baseball card, sixth-grader Griffin Bing puts together a band of misfits to break into Palomino's heavily guarded store and steal the card back, planning to use the money to finance his father's failing invention, the SmartPick fruit picker.

*Paint the Wind* Ryan

After her overprotective grandmother has a stroke, Maya, an orphan, leaves her extremely restricted life in California to stay with her mother's family on a remote Wyoming ranch, where she discovers a love of horses and encounters a wild mare that her mother once rode.

*Middle School is Worse than Meatloaf : A Year Told through Stuff* Holm

The first year of middle school can be exciting, or scary, just ask Ginny.

*Lawn Boy* Paulsen

Things get out of hand for a twelve-year-old boy when a neighbor convinces him to expand his summer lawn mowing business.

*Shark Girl* Bingham

After a shark attack causes the amputation of her right arm, fifteen-year-old Jane, an aspiring artist, struggles to come to terms with her loss and the changes it imposes on her day-to-day life and her plans for the future.

*Dairy Queen* Murdock

After spending her summer running the family farm and training the quarterback for her school's rival football team, sixteen-year-old D.J. decides to go out for the sport herself, not anticipating the reactions of those around her.

*Ask Me No Questions* Budhos

Fourteen-year-old Nadira, her sister, and their parents leave Bangladesh for New York City, but the expiration of their visas and the events of September 11, 2001, bring frustration, sorrow, and terror for the whole family.

*Rules* Lord

Frustrated at life with an autistic brother, twelve-year-old Catherine longs for a normal existence but her world is further complicated by a friendship with a young paraplegic.

*All of the Above* Pearsall

Five urban middle school students, their teacher, and other community members relate how a school project to build the world's largest tetrahedron affects the lives of everyone involved.

*Stanford Wong Flunks Big-Time* Yee

After flunking sixth-grade English, basketball prodigy Stanford Wong must struggle to pass his summer-school class, keep his failure a secret from his friends, and satisfy his academically demanding father.

*Small Steps* Sacher

Three years after being released from Camp Green Lake, Armpit is trying hard to keep his life on track, but when his old pal X-Ray shows up with a tempting plan to make some easy money scalping concert tickets, Armpit reluctantly goes along.

*Keeper* Peet

In an interview with a young journalist, World Cup hero, El Gato, describes his youth in the Brazilian rain forest and the events, experiences, and people that helped make him a great goalkeeper and renowned soccer star.

### **Dragons & Monsters & Aliens, OH MY! (Science Fiction & Fantasy)**

*15 Minutes* Young

Seventh-grader Casey Little is always late until he discovers a magic watch that takes him back in time, a trick he uses both on and off the football field.

*STORM: The Infinity Code* Young.

In London, the teenaged geniuses of STORM, a secret organization dedicated to eliminating the world's misery through science and technology, uncover plans for a deadly weapon and race to find and dismantle it, then confront the corrupt scientist behind the scheme.

*The Castle Corona* Creech

Two orphaned peasant children discover a mysterious pouch, the contents of which lead them to the majestic Castle Corona, where their lives may be transformed forever.

*Into the Woods* Gardner

Pursued by the sinister Dr. DeWilde and his ravenous wolves, three sisters--Storm, the inheritor of a special musical pipe, the elder Aurora, and the baby Any--flee into the woods and begin a treacherous journey filled with many dangers as they try to find a way to defeat their pursuer and keep him from taking the pipe and control of the entire land.

*Warriors* (series) Hunter

As prophesized, a young house cat becomes an apprentice warrior in a clan of wild cats, where he faces many dangers and treachery both within and outside of his new clan.

*Fairest* Levine

In a land where beauty and singing are valued above all else, Aza eventually comes to reconcile her unconventional appearance and her magical voice, and learns to accept herself for who she truly is.

*Gossamer* Lowry

While learning to bestow dreams, a young dream giver tries to save an eight-year-old boy from the effects of both his abusive past and the nightmares inflicted on him by the frightening Sinisteds.

*Endymion Spring* Skelton

Having reluctantly accompanied his academic mother and pesky younger sister to Oxford, twelve-year-old Blake Winters is at loose ends until he stumbles across an ancient and magical book.

*City of Ember* DuPrau

In the year 241, twelve-year-old Lina trades jobs on Assignment Day to be a Messenger to run to new places in her decaying but beloved city, perhaps even to glimpse Unknown Regions

### **Be Adventurous! (Adventure)**

*Island, Everest, Dive, On the Run, Kidnapped* series Korman

We were very fortunate to have Gordon Korman for an author visit to Hastings last school year. See how many of these short, action-packed series titles you can read.

*Peak* Smith

A fourteen-year-old boy attempts to be the youngest person to reach the top of Mount Everest.

*Kensuke's Kingdom* Morpurgo

When Michael is swept off his family's yacht, he washes up on a desert island, where he struggles to survive--until he finds he is not alone.

*Night of the Howling Dogs* Salisbury

In 1975, eleven Boy Scouts, their leaders, and some new friends camping at Halape, Hawaii, find their survival skills put to the test when a massive earthquake strikes, followed by a tsunami.

*Alex Rider* series

After the death of the uncle who had been his guardian, fourteen-year-old Alex Rider is coerced to continue his uncle's dangerous work for Britain's intelligence agency, MI6.

*Invention of Hugo Cabret: A Novel in Words and Pictures* Selznick

When twelve-year-old Hugo, an orphan living and repairing clocks within the walls of a Paris train station in 1931, meets a mysterious toymaker and his goddaughter, his undercover life and his biggest secret are jeopardized.

*Code Orange* Cooney

While conducting research for a school paper on smallpox, Mitty finds an envelope containing 100-year-old smallpox scabs and fears that he has infected himself and all of New York City.

### **You're History! (Historical Fiction)**

*Blood on the River* Carbone

Traveling to the New World in 1606 as the page to Captain John Smith, twelve-year-old orphan Samuel Collier settles in the new colony of James Town, where he must quickly learn to distinguish between friend and foe.

*Red Moon at Sharpsburg : A Novel* Wells.

As the Civil War breaks out, India, a young Southern girl, summons her sharp intelligence and the courage she didn't know she had to survive the war that threatens to destroy her family, her Virginia home, and the only life she has ever known.

*The Seer of Shadows* Avi

In New York City in 1872, fourteen-year-old Horace, a photographer's apprentice, becomes entangled in a plot to create fraudulent spirit photographs, but when Horace accidentally frees the real ghost of a dead girl bent on revenge, his life takes a frightening turn.

*Keeping Score* Park

In Brooklyn in 1951, a die-hard Giants fan teaches nine-year-old Maggie, who is a "Bums" (Dodgers) fan, how to use a technique to keep score of a baseball game which creates a special friendship between them.

*The Wednesday Wars* Schmidt

During the 1967 school year, on Wednesday afternoons when all his classmates go to either Catechism or Hebrew school, seventh-grader Holling Hoodhood stays in Mrs. Baker's classroom where they read the plays of William Shakespeare and Holling learns much of value about the world he lives in.

*Elijah of Buxton* Curtis

In 1859, eleven-year-old Elijah Freeman, the first free-born child in Buxton, Canada, which is a haven for slaves fleeing the American South, uses his wits and skills to try to bring to justice the lying preacher who has stolen money that was to be used to buy a family's freedom.

*The Green Glass Sea* Klages.

It is 1943, and 11-year-old Dewey Kerrigan is traveling west on a train to live with her scientist father--but no one will tell her exactly where he is. When she reaches Los Alamos, New Mexico, she learns why: he's working on a top secret government program.

*Miss Spitfire : Reaching Helen Keller* Miller.

At age twenty-one, partially-blind, lonely but spirited Annie Sullivan travels from Massachusetts to Alabama to try and teach six-year-old Helen Keller, deaf and blind since age two, self-discipline and communication skills. Includes historical notes and timeline.

*Hattie Big Sky* Larson

After inheriting her uncle's homesteading claim in Montana, sixteen-year-old orphan Hattie Brooks travels from Iowa in 1917 to make a home for herself and encounters some unexpected problems related to the war being fought in Europe.

*Cracker! : The Best Dog in Vietnam* Kadohata

A young soldier in Vietnam bonds with his bomb-sniffing dog.

*Crooked River* Pearsall

When twelve-year old Rebecca Carter's father brings a Native American accused of murder into their 1812 Ohio settlement town, Rebecca, witnessing the town's reaction to the Indian, struggles with the idea that an innocent man may be convicted and sentenced to death.

*Boy in Striped Pajamas* Boyne

Bored and lonely after his family moves from Berlin to a place called "Out-With" in 1942, Bruno, the son of a Nazi officer, befriends a boy in striped pajamas who lives behind a wire fence.

**This is Your Life! (Biography/ Autobiography)**

*The Adventures of Marco Polo* Freedman

A look at the life of Marco Polo. Did Marco Polo really travel to China and see the many extraordinary things he claimed or were these adventures only in his mind?

*Unsolved : What Really Happened to Amelia Earhart?* Micklos

Discusses the various theories surrounding the disappearance of Amelia Earhart and what is being done today as the search continues to discover what became of this famous female pilot.

*The Real Benedict Arnold* Murphy.

Drawing on Arnold's surviving writings and on the letters, memoirs, and political documents of his contemporaries ... a fascinating portrait of a brilliant man, consistently undervalued by his peers, who made a choice that continues to reverberate through American history.

*Something Out of Nothing : Marie Curie and Radium* McClafferty.

Meet Manya Sklodowska, better known today as Marie Curie, the co-discoverer of radium, and who became the first woman awarded the Nobel prize for her work on the discovery. Learn what life was like for Marie, and the effect her discovery had on the world.

*Snow Falling in Spring : Coming of age in China during the Cultural Revolution* Li.

This inspiring memoir follows Moying Li from age twelve to twenty-two, illuminating a complex, dark time in China's history as it tells the compelling story of one girl's difficult but determined coming-of-age during the Cultural Revolution.

*Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon* Schyffert

A biography of the astronaut, Michael Collins, who circled the moon in the Apollo 12 space capsule while his colleagues Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed the lunar module and walked on the moon.

*Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini* Fleischman

A biography of the magician, ghost chaser, aviator, and king of escape artists whose amazing feats are remembered long after his death in 1926.

*To Dance : A Memoir* Siegel (graphic novel format)

The author describes how she first decided she wanted to be a ballerina at the age of six, and how that dream carried her from her home in Puerto Rico to dance class in Boston to performing with the New York City Ballet.

## **Who dun it? (Mystery)**

*Room One: A Mystery or Two* Clements

Ted Hammond, the only sixth grader in his small Nebraska town's one-room schoolhouse, searches for clues to the disappearance of a homeless family.

*Abduction!* Kehret.

Thirteen-year-old Bonnie has a feeling of foreboding on the very day that her six-year-old brother Matt and their dog Pookie are abducted, and she becomes involved in a major search effort as well as a frightening adventure.

*Down the Rabbit Hole : An Echo Falls Mystery* Abrahams.

Like her idol Sherlock Holmes, eighth-grader Ingrid Levin-Hill uses her intellect to solve a murder case in her hometown of Echo Falls.

*The One Left Behind* Roberts

Home alone for a weekend and still mourning her twin sister's accidental death a year ago, eleven-year-old Mandy finds herself hiding two fugitive children and foiling a kidnapping.

*The House on the Gulf* Haddix

A sixteen-year-old boy arranges a housesitting job for the summer, but he starts acting strangely after his family moves in, and his sister begins to suspect they are not supposed to be there.

*The Mailbox* Shafer

When twelve-year-old Gabe tries to hide his uncle's death from the local authorities, he is not prepared for what happens when this secret is discovered.

*Danger in the Dark : A Houdini & Nate Mystery* Lalicki

Thirteen-year-old Nathaniel, aided by the famous magician Harry Houdini, plots to unmask a phony spirit advisor attempting to relieve the boy's great-aunt of her fortune.

*The Missing Manatee* DeFelice

While coping with his parents' separation, eleven-year-old Skeet spends most of Spring Break in his skiff on a Florida river, where he finds a manatee shot to death and begins looking for the killer.

### **For Real! (Non-fiction)**

*Secrets, Lies, Gizmos, and Spies: A History of Spies and Espionage* Coleman

A look into the secret history of spies and espionage throughout the years.

*Children of Alcatraz : Growing up on the Rock* Murphy

Imagine playing hide-and-seek in the prison morgue, having a convict as your babysitter, or having Al Capone as your neighbor. This compelling photo-essay profiles generations of children who had the unique opportunity of growing up on this isolated island in San Francisco's shadow.

*Animals in the House : A History of Pets and People* Keenan

Tells the story of pets through the ages and the people who kept them, including famous pets and pet owners.

*Go Figure! Ball.*

A collection of math activities that include brainteasers, magic tricks, and mind-reading games.

*Chew on This : Everything You Don't Want to Know about Fast Food* Schlosser

A behind-the-scenes look at the fast food industry.

*Inside Delta Force* Haney

A behind-the-scenes account of the selection and training process of Delta Force, America's supersecret counterterrorist unit.

*Long Ball: The Legend and Lore of the Home Run* Stewart

Explore the stories behind home run stats and look at baseball's "greatest hit" from the game's beginnings through today.

*Up Before Daybreak* Hopkinson

Read about the importance of cotton in America's history and learn about the lives of people who picked it and worked with it.

*Transformed: How Everyday Things Are Made* Slavin

Discover how nature is transformed into more than sixty things we eat, drink, play with, wear or use every day.

## **Rhyming Optional (Poetry )**

*This is Just to Say : Poems of Apology and Forgiveness* Sidman

When Mrs. Merz asks her sixth grade class to write poems of apology, they end up liking their poems so much that they decide to put them together into a book. Not only that, but they get the people to whom they apologized to write poems back.

*My Dog may be a Genius* Prelutsky

Have you ever encountered an underwater marching band, a pig in a bathing suit, a pet orangutan, or a witch in a hardware store? Have you ever sat with a skunk in a courtroom, shopped for a dinosaur, or conversed with a Bupple, a Wosstrus, a Violinnet, or a Celloon? You will have, once you've read collection of poems.