

Genre: Real Life

Bibliography

This kit contains a wide variety of individual titles that fit the genre category of “Real Life.” The titles vary in their interest levels, reading levels, number of pages, themes etc., in order to provide students with “choice” in their reading for pleasure. Note that if more than one interest level (IL) is listed, the first is from the publisher. Publishers tend to rate titles for lower grade levels than reviewers.

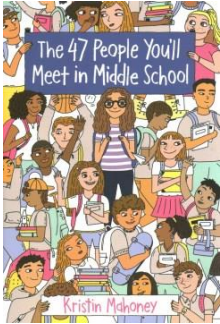
If you would like a second or third copy of a title, or more titles beyond what is in the kit, your Teacher-Librarian or Library Clerk will be able to help you find titles in your school’s collection, or interlibrary loan copies from other schools.

We hope that your students enjoy these titles and expand the genres that they regularly choose to read. A “Passport to Genres” activity, where students read one title from each genre, is one way to encourage this. If you have any questions about any of them, please feel free to contact me.

Joan

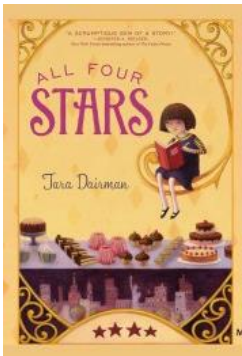
Genre: Real Life

Selected by Joan Pearce



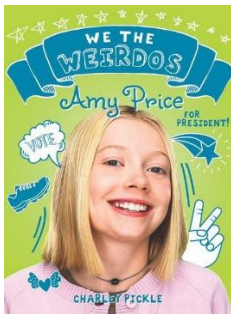
The 47 People You'll Meet in Middle School
by Kristin Mahoney, c2019 (IL: 3-7, 4-7; RL: ?)

“Getting ready to start middle school? Well, you'll need to know what to expect. Get to know every person you'll meet and how they can help (and who to stay away from!). Mahoney authentically captures the universal indignities of middle school, the challenges of self-discovery, and the joy of making true friends.” – *Pub.*



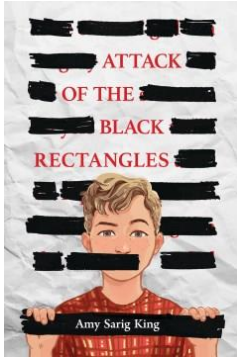
All Four Stars
by Tara Dairman, c2016 IL: 3-7, 4-7; RL: 6.0)

“Eleven-year-old Gladys Gatsby loves food and cooking, so when she lands an assignment to write a restaurant review for a New York City newspaper, she will do anything to make it happen, even risk the wrath of her fast-food loving parents.” – *Pub.*



Amy Price for President! (*West 44 Books Hi Lo*)
by Charley Pickle, c2019 (IL: 5-7; RL: 2-3)

“It's the first day of middle school. Amy Price knows that's the most important day for making an impression on people. With her stutter, Amy has a hard time making friends. She has one dream, to be the class president. If only people could see her as a leader. Amy might be stuck sitting alone at lunch the first day. That is, until she finds the Weirdo Table. They are all very different, but Amy finds a friendship in this unlikely place, and perhaps, the courage to launch her presidential campaign.” – *Pub.*



Attack of the Black Rectangles

by A.S. King, c2022 (IL: 4-7, 5 up: RL: 6.1)

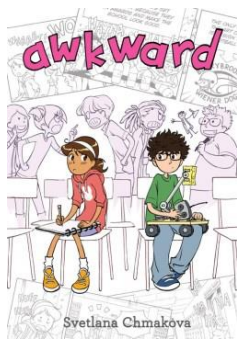
"Everyone in town knows and fears Ms. Laura Samuel Sett. She is the town watchdog, always on the lookout for unsavory words and the unsavory people who use them. She is also Mac's sixth-grade teacher. Mac and his friends are outraged when they discovered that their class copies of Jane Yolen's THE DEVIL'S ARITHMETIC have certain works blacked out. Mac has been raised by his mom and grandad to call out things that are wrong, so he and his friends head to the principal's office to protest the censorship. Her response isn't reassuring -- so the protest grows." – Pub.



Amina's Voice

by Hena Khan, c2017, 2018 (IL: 3-7, 4-6; RL: 4.6)

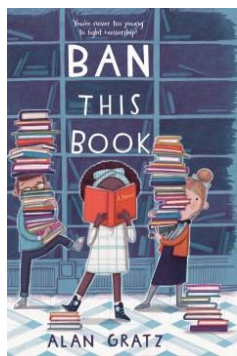
"A Pakistani-American Muslim girl struggles to stay true to her family's vibrant culture while simultaneously blending in at school after tragedy strikes her community in this "compassionate, timely novel" (*Booklist*, starred review) from the award-winning author of *It's Ramadan*, *Curious George* and *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns*." – Pub.



Awkward (Series: *Berrybrook Middle School, Book 1*)

by Svetlana Chmakova, c2015 (IL: 5 up, RL: 2.8)

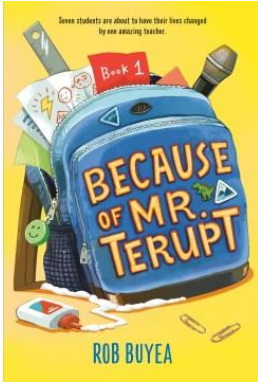
"Berrybrook School's Cardinal Rule #1 for surviving school: Don't get noticed by the mean kids--Cardinal Rule #2: Seek out groups with similar interests & join them, sometimes you have to break the rules to survive middle school!" – Pub.



Ban This Book

by Alan Gratz, c2017 (IL: 3-7, 4-6; RL: 3.9)

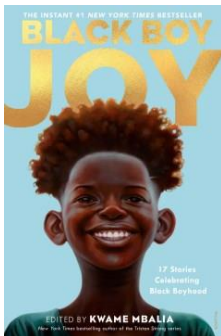
"... Alan Gratz, a fourth grader fights back when 'From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler' by E. L. Konigsburg is challenged by a well-meaning parent and taken off the shelves of her school library. Amy Anne is shy and soft-spoken, but don't mess with her when it comes to her favorite book in the whole world. Amy Anne and her lieutenants wage a battle for the books ... as they start a secret banned books locker library, make up ridiculous reasons to ban every single book in the library to make a point, and take a stand against censorship."--Amazon.



Because of Mr. Terupt

by Rob Buyea, c2010 (IL: 3-7, 4-6; RL: 4.1)

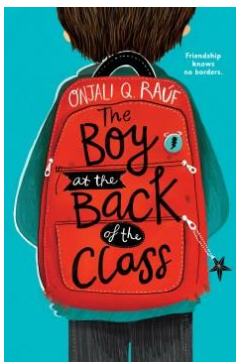
“It's the start of a new year at Snow Hill School, and seven students find themselves thrown together in Mr. Terupt's fifth grade class. There's . . . Jessica, the new girl, smart and perceptive, who's having a hard time fitting in; Alexia, a bully, your friend one second, your enemy the next; Peter, class prankster and troublemaker; Luke, the brain; Danielle, who never stands up for herself; shy Anna, whose home situation makes her an outcast; and Jeffrey, who hates school. They don't have much in common, and they've never gotten along. Not until a certain new teacher arrives and helps them to find strength inside themselves--and in each other. But when Mr. Terupt suffers a terrible accident, will his students be able to remember the lessons he taught them? Or will their lives go back to the way they were before--before fifth grade and before Mr. Terupt?” – *Pub.*



Black Boy Joy

edited by Kwame Mbalia, c2021 (IL: 4-7; RL: 4.6)

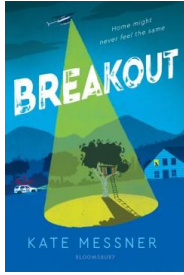
“Featuring contributions from such critically acclaimed Black authors as Jason Reynolds, Jerry Craft and Kwame Mbalia, this celebration of Black boyhood is told through a brilliant collection of stories, comics and poems.” – *Pub.*



The Boy at the Back of the Class

by Onjali Q. Rauf, c2019 (IL: 3-7, 4-6; RL: 5.4)

“There used to be an empty chair at the back of Mrs. Khan's classroom, but on the third Tuesday of the school year a new kid fills it: nine-year-old Ahmet, a Syrian refugee. The whole class is curious about this new boy--he doesn't seem to smile, and he doesn't talk much. But after learning that Ahmet fled a Very Real War and was separated from his family along the way, a determined group of his classmates band together to concoct the Greatest Idea in the World--a magnificent plan to reunite Ahmet with his loved ones. Balancing humor and heart, this relatable story about the refugee crisis from the perspective of kids highlights the community-changing potential of standing as an ally and reminds readers that everyone deserves a place to call home.” – *Pub.*

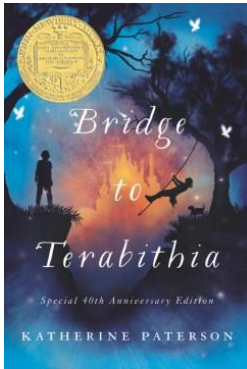


Breakout

by Kate Messner c2018 (IL: 4-7, 5-8; RL: 5.4)

“Told in letters, poems, text messages, news stories, and comics--a series of documents Nora collects for the Wolf Creek Community Time Capsule Project--*Breakout* is a thrilling story that will leave readers thinking about who's really welcome in the places we call home.

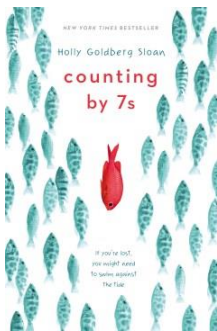
Nora Tucker is looking forward to summer vacation in Wolf Creek--two months of swimming, popsicles, and brushing up on her journalism skills for the school paper. But when two inmates break out of the town's maximum security prison, everything changes. Doors are locked, helicopters fly over the woods, and police patrol the school grounds. Worst of all, everyone is on edge, and fear brings out the worst in some people Nora has known her whole life. Even if the inmates are caught, she worries that home might never feel the same.” – *Pub.*



Bridge to Terabithia

by Katherine Paterson, c1977, 2002 (IL: 3-7, RL: 4.6)

“The life of a ten-year-old boy in rural Virginia expands when he becomes friends with a newcomer who subsequently meets an untimely death trying to reach their hideaway, Terabithia, during a storm.” – Follett
*Newberry Medal winner



Counting by 7s

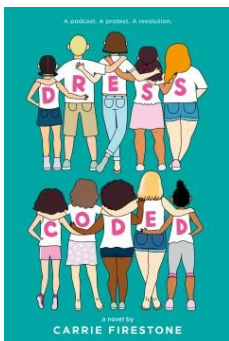
by Holly Goldberg Sloan, c2013 (IL: 5-9, 7-10; RL: 5.3)

“In the tradition of *Out of My Mind*, *Wonder*, and *Mockingbird*, this is an intensely moving middle grade novel about being an outsider, coping with loss, and discovering the true meaning of family.

Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, but that hasn't kept her from leading a quietly happy life . . . until now.

Suddenly Willow's world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world. The triumph of this book is that it is *not* a tragedy. This extraordinarily odd, but extraordinarily endearing, girl manages to push through her grief. Her

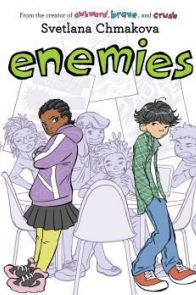
journey to find a fascinatingly diverse and fully believable surrogate family is a joy and a revelation to read.” – *Pub.*



Dress Coded

by Carrie Firestone, c2020 (IL: 5-8, 6-8; RL: 4.8)

“Molly Frost is FED UP...
Because Olivia was yelled at for wearing a tank top.
Because Liza got dress coded and Molly didn't, even though they were wearing the exact same outfit.
Because when Jessica was pulled over by the principal and missed a math quiz, her teacher gave her an F.
Because it's impossible to find shorts that are longer than her fingertips.
Because girls' bodies are not a distraction.
Because middle school is hard enough.
And so Molly starts a podcast where girls can tell their stories, and before long, her small rebellion swells into a revolution. Because now the girls are standing up for what's right, and they're not backing down.” – *Pub.*



Enemies (Series: *Berrybrook Middle School Book 5*)

by Svetlana Chmakova, c2022 (IL: 5 up, 4-8; RL: 2.9)

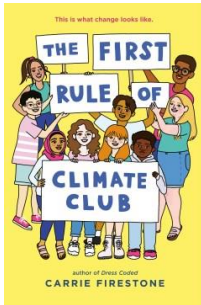
“Felicity's sure she's going to do something big. Exactly what is still a mystery, but she'll figure it out. Her sister, Letty, teases Felicity that she never finishes stuff, but that's just because Letty is so perfect. Still, life is good with plenty of friends--drawing with the art club and playing games with her buddies keep her busy. But when she decides to join a contest to show Letty that she CAN get things done, Felicity begins to wonder if friends becoming enemies is easier than she thought.” – *Pub.*



Everything I Know About You

by Barbara Dee, c2018 (IL: 4-8, 5-8; RL: 4.5)

“Misfit Tally is forced to room with queen bee Ava on the seventh grade's extended field trip to Washington, D.C., and discovers several surprising things about her roommate, including the possibility of an eating disorder.” – *Pub.*



The First Rule of Climate Club

by Carrie Firestone, c2022 (IL: 5-8; RL: 5.6)

“In this companion to *Dress Coded*, an eighth grader starts a podcast on climate activism and rallies her friends to create lasting change in their local community and beyond.

When Mary Kate Murphy joins a special science pilot program focused on climate change, the class opens her eyes to lots of things she never noticed before about her small suburban town.” – *Pub.*

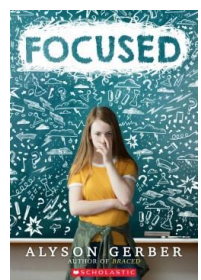
*Can be read as a stand alone.



Fish in a Tree

by Lynda Mullaly Hunt, c2018 (IL: 5-7; RL: 4.2)

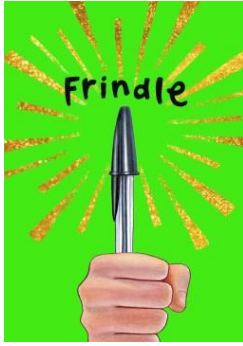
“Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the trouble maker. With his help, Ally learns not to be so hard on herself and that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. As her confidence grows, Ally feels free to be herself and the world starts opening up with possibilities. She discovers that there's a lot more to her-and to everyone-than a label, and that great minds don't always think alike.” – *Pub.*



Focused

by Alyson Gerber, 2019 (IL: 4-7, RL: 4.6)

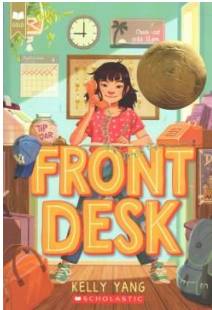
“Twelve-year-old Clea wants to do her homework, follow instructions, pay attention in school, and play chess on the school team, but somehow she cannot focus on whatever is in front of her, and the other kids at school are starting to notice and make fun of her; when her worried parents take her to be tested she finds out that she has ADHD (only without the hyperactivity)--and with help from the psychiatrist who seems to really understand her she is determined to learn how to focus.” – *Pub.*



Frindle

by Andrew Clements, c1996, 2021 (IL: 3-7, RL: 4.8)

“Is Nick Allen a troublemaker? He really just likes to liven things up at school--and he's always had plenty of great ideas. When Nick learns some interesting information about how words are created, suddenly he's got the inspiration for his best plan ever...the frindle. Who says a pen has to be called a pen? Why not call it a frindle? Things begin innocently enough as Nick gets his friends to use the new word. Then other people in town start saying frindle. Soon the school is in an uproar, and Nick has become a local hero. His teacher wants Nick to put an end to all this nonsense, but the funny thing is frindle doesn't belong to Nick anymore. The new word is spreading across the country, and there's nothing Nick can do to stop it.” – *Pub.*



Front Desk (Series: *Front Desk*, Book 1)

by Kelly Yang, c2018, 2021 (IL: 3-7, 4-7: RL: 4.5)

“Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?” – *Pub.*



Going Viral (*Red Rhino Hi Lo Books*)

by Jeff Gottesfeld, c2021 (IL: 4-7, RL: 1.0-1.5)

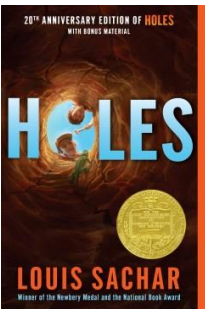
“Annie and Erin are best friends who love KidVid star Cory Mall. His videos get tons of views. When the girls’ parents agree to let them make a video of their own, they hope to become famous. But when Annie and Erin suddenly go viral, they find that fame isn’t all it’s cracked up to be.” – *Pub.*



Haven Jacobs Saves the Planet

by Barbara Dee, c2022 (IL: 4-8, RL: 5.8)

“Twelve-year-old Haven Jacobs can't stop thinking about the climate crisis. In fact, her anxiety about the state of the planet is starting to interfere with her schoolwork, her friendships, even her sleep. She can't stop wondering why grownups aren't even trying to solve the earth's problem--and if there's anything meaningful that she, as a seventh grader, can contribute. When Haven's social studies teacher urges her to find a specific, manageable way to make a difference to the planet, Haven focuses on the annual science class project at the local Belmont River, where her class will take samples of the water to analyze. Students have been doing the project for years, and her older brother tells her that his favorite part was studying and catching frogs. But when Haven and her classmates get to the river...” – *Pub.*



Holes

by Louis Sachar, c1998, 2000 (IL: 5-7, 6-9; RL: 4.6)

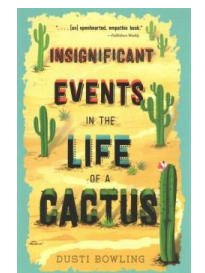
“As further evidence of his family's bad fortune which they attribute to a curse on a distant relative, Stanley Yelnats is sent to a hellish correctional camp in the Texas desert where he finds his first real friend, a treasure, and a new sense of himself.” – *Pub.*



How to Steal a Dog

by Barbara O'Connor, c2007, 2009 (IL: 3-7, RL 4.0)

“Living in the family car in their small North Carolina town after their father leaves them virtually penniless, Georgina, desperate to improve their situation and unwilling to accept her overworked mother's calls for patience, persuades her younger brother to help her in an elaborate scheme to get money by stealing a dog and then claiming the reward that the owners are bound to offer.” – *Follett*

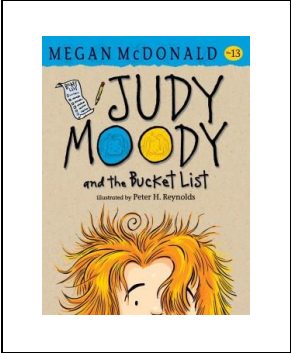


Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus

by Dusti Bowling, c2020 (IL: 4-7, RL: 4.6)

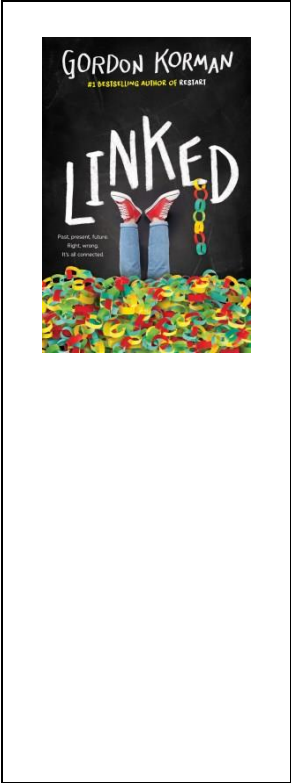
“Aven Green loves to tell people that she lost her arms in an alligator wrestling match, or a wildfire in Tanzania, but the truth is she was born without them. And when her parents take a job running Stagecoach Pass, a rundown western theme park in Arizona, Aven moves with them across

the country knowing that she'll have to answer the question over and over again. Her new life takes an unexpected turn when she bonds with Connor, a classmate who also feels isolated because of his own disability, and they discover a room at Stagecoach Pass that holds bigger secrets than Aven ever could have imagined. It's hard to solve a mystery, help a friend, and face your worst fears. But Aven's about to discover she can do it all . . . even without arms." – *Pub.*



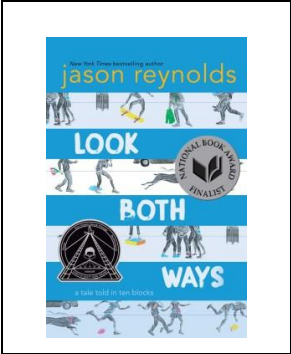
Judy Moody and the Bucket List
 by Megan McDonald, c2016 (IL: 2-4, RL: 3.5)

"Discovering Grandma Lou's mysterious 'bucket list' of things that she wants to do in her lifetime, Judy Moody is inspired to create a list of her own goals, from learning to do a cartwheel to visiting Antarctica." - *OCLC.*



Linked
 by Gordon Korman, c2021 (IL: 4-7, 5-8: RL: 5.0)

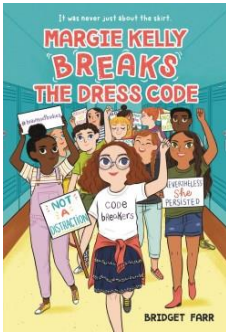
"Link, Michael, and Dana live in a quiet town. But it's woken up very quickly when someone sneaks into school and vandalizes it with a swastika. Nobody can believe it. How could such a symbol of hate end up in the middle of their school? Who would do such a thing? Because Michael was the first person to see it, he's the first suspect. Because Link is one of the most popular guys in school, everyone's looking to him to figure it out. And because Dana's the only Jewish girl in the whole town, everyone's treating her more like an outsider than ever. The mystery deepens as more swastikas begin to appear. Some students decide to fight back and start a project to bring people together instead of dividing them further. The closer Link, Michael, and Dana get to the truth, the more there is to face-not just the crimes of the present, but the crimes of the past. With *Linked*, Gordon Korman, the author of the acclaimed novel *Restart*, poses a mystery for all readers where the who did it? isn't nearly as important as the why?" – *Pub.*



Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks
 by Jason Reynolds, c2019 (IL: 5-9, 5-8: RL: 4.8)

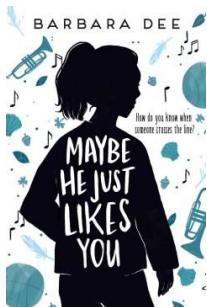
"Entertainment Weekly - From National Book Award finalist and #1 New York Times bestselling author Jason Reynolds comes a novel told in ten blocks, showing all the different directions kids' walks home can take. This story was going to begin like all the best stories. With a school bus falling from the sky. But no one saw it happen. They were all too busy" Talking

about boogers. Stealing pocket change. Skateboarding. Wiping out. Braving up. Executing complicated handshakes. Planning an escape. Making jokes. Lotioning up. Finding comfort. But mostly, too busy walking home. Jason Reynolds conjures ten tales (one per block) about what happens after the dismissal bell rings, and brilliantly weaves them into one wickedly funny, piercingly poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life.” – *Pub*.



Margie Kelly Breaks the Dress Code
by Bridget Farr, c2021 (IL: 4-7, RL: 4.2)

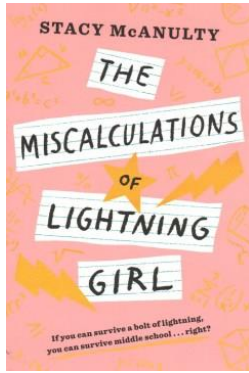
“Margie Kelly's perfect skirt was dress-coded on her very first day of middle school. Upset and embarrassed, Margie spends the whole day in oversized gym shorts, setting the tone for the whole day. Everything that could go wrong, certainly does! But when Margie realizes that the dress code is only applied to the girls and not the boys, she gets mad. Really mad. The dress code is keeping girls from learning. The boys act like they rule the school. And the teachers turn a blind eye. Something has to change! And then Margie comes up with the best idea. She'll plan a school-wide protest. As Margie moves forward with her plans, she comes to realize that her own privilege is part of the problem, and not everyone's voices are being heard. Will Margie make meaningful change for all students?” – *Pub*.



Maybe He Just Likes You
by Barbara Dee, 2019 (IL: 4-8, 5-8; RL: 4.2)

“For seventh-grader Mila, it starts with some boys giving her an unwanted hug on the school blacktop. A few days later, at recess, one of the boys (and fellow trumpet player) Callum tells Mila it's his birthday, and asks her for a "birthday hug." He's just being friendly, isn't he? And how can she say no? But Callum's hug lasts a few seconds too long, and feels...weird. According to her friend, Zara, Mila is being immature and overreacting. Doesn't she know what flirting looks like? But the boys don't leave Mila alone. On the bus. In the halls. During band practice--the one place Mila could always escape.

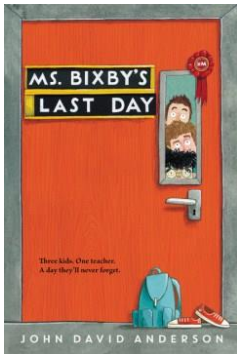
It doesn't feel like flirting--so what is it? Thanks to a chance meeting, Mila begins to find solace in a new place: karate class. Slowly, with the help of a fellow classmate, Mila learns how to stand her ground and how to respect others--and herself. With her newfound confidence, Mila begins to stand up to the boys, which doesn't go over so well. And when Callum finally pushes her too far, Mila realizes this is not something she can battle on her own--and finds help in some unexpected places.” - *Pub*.



The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl

by Barbara Dee, c2018 (IL: 4-7; RL: 3.7)

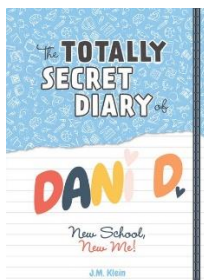
“A lightning strike gave her a super power...but even a super genius can't solve the problem of middle school. This smart and funny novel is perfect for fans of *The Fourteenth Goldfish*, *Rain Reign*, and *Counting by Sevens*. Lucy Callahan's life was changed forever when she was struck by lightning. She doesn't remember it, but the zap gave her genius-level math skills, and she's been homeschooled ever since. Now, at 12 years old, she's technically ready for college. She just has to pass 1 more test--middle school! Lucy's grandma insists: Go to middle school for 1 year. Make 1 friend. Join 1 activity. And read 1 book (that's not a math textbook!). Lucy's not sure what a girl who does calculus homework for fun can possibly learn in 7th grade...” - *Pub.*



Ms. Bixby's Last Day

by John David Anderson, c2016 (IL: 4-7, 5-7; RL: 5.2)

“Everyone knows there are different kinds of teachers. The boring ones, the mean ones, the ones who try too hard, the ones who stopped trying long ago. The ones you'll never remember, and the ones you want to forget. Ms. Bixby is none of these. She's the sort of teacher who makes you feel like school is somehow worthwhile. Who recognizes something in you that sometimes you don't even see in yourself. Who you never want to disappoint. What Ms. Bixby is, is one-of-a-kind. Topher, Brand, and Steve know this better than anyone. And so when Ms. Bixby unexpectedly announces that she won't be able to finish the school year, they come up with a risky plan, more of a quest, really, to give Ms. Bixby the last day she deserves. Through the three very different stories they tell, we begin to understand what Ms. Bixby means to each of them, and what the three of them mean to each other.” - *Pub.*



New School, New Me! (*West 44 Books Hi Lo*)

by J.M. Klein, c2019 (IL: 5-7; RL: 2-3)

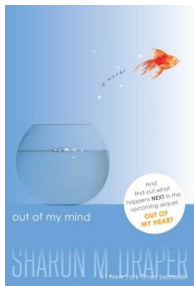
“Dani's parents have just separated, and she moved with her mom to a new town. Not only does she live with her grumpy grandparents now, she also has to start at a new school. Dani pretends that she was a popular drama club star at her old school and starts to attract new, cool friends. Can she keep up her lies forever, or will she totally blow her cover?” - *Pub.*



No Fixed Address

by Susin Nielsen-Fernlund, c2018 (IL: 5-8, RL: ?)

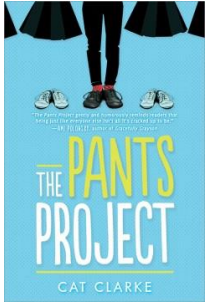
“A touching and funny middle-grade story about family, friendship, and growing up when you're one step away from homelessness. Twelve-and-three-quarter-year-old Felix Knutsson has a knack for trivia. His favorite game show is Who What Where When; he even named his gerbil after the host. Felix's mom, Astrid, is loving but can't seem to hold on to a job. So when they get evicted from their latest shabby apartment, they have to move into a van. Astrid swears him to secrecy; he can't tell anyone about their living arrangement, not even Dylan and Winnie, his best friends at his new school. If he does, she warns him, he'll be taken away from her and put in foster care. As their circumstances go from bad to worse, Felix gets a chance to audition for a junior edition of Who What Where When, and he's determined to earn a spot on the show. Winning the cash prize could make everything okay again. But things don't turn out the way he expects. . . . Susin Nielsen deftly combines humor, heartbreak, and hope in this moving story about people who slip through the cracks in society, and about the power of friendship and community to make all the difference.” – *Pub.*



Out of My Mind

by Sharon M. Draper, 2010 (IL: 5-8, 4-7: RL: 4.3)

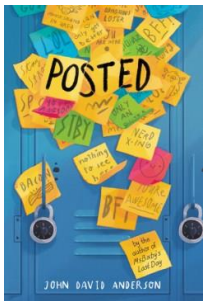
“From award-winning author Sharon Draper comes a story that will forever change how we all look at anyone with a disability, perfect for fans of RJ Palacio’s Wonder. Eleven-year-old Melody is not like most people. She can’t walk. She can’t talk. She can’t write. All because she has cerebral palsy. But she also has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She’s the smartest kid in her whole school, but NO ONE knows it. Most people; her teachers, her doctors, her classmates dismiss her as mentally challenged because she can’t tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by her disability. And she’s determined to let everyone know it somehow.” – *Pub.*



The Pants Project

by Cat Clarke, c2017 (IL: 4-9, 4-7: RL: ?)

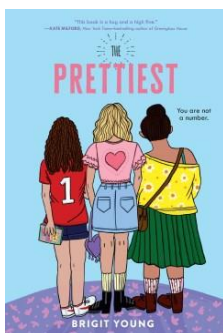
“A touching, humorous story of strong-willed eleven-year-old Liv, who is determined to challenge his school's terrible dress code and change his life. Inspire empathy and compassion (and a few laughs!) in young readers with this stunning middle-grade novel. "My name is Liv (Not Olivia)... I'm not technically a girl. I'm transgender. Which is a bit like being a Transformer. Only not quite as cool because I probably won't get to save the world one day." Liv knows he was always meant to be a boy, but with his new school's terrible dress code, he can't even wear pants. Only skirts. Operation: Pants Project begins! The only way for Liv to get what he wants is to go after it himself.” – *Pub.*



Posted

by John David Anderson, c2017 (IL: 5-8; RL: 5.1)

“In middle school, words aren’t just words. They can be weapons. They can be gifts. The right words can win you friends or make you enemies. They can come back to haunt you. Sometimes they can change things forever. When cell phones are banned at Branton Middle School, Frost and his friends Deedee, Wolf, and Bench come up with a new way to communicate: leaving sticky notes for each other all around the school. It catches on, and soon all the kids in school are leaving notes, though for every kind and friendly one, there is a cutting and cruel one as well. In the middle of this, a new girl named Rose arrives at school and sits at Frost’s lunch table. Rose is not like anyone else at Branton Middle School, and it’s clear that the close circle of friends Frost has made for himself won’t easily hold another. As the sticky-note war escalates, and the pressure to choose sides mounts...” – *Pub.*



The Prettiest

by Brigit Young, c2020 (IL: 4-7, 5-8; RL: 5.1)

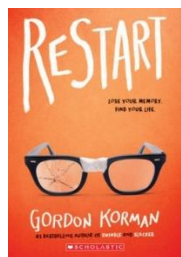
“A list appears online, ranking the top fifty prettiest girls in the eighth grade. Eve Hoffman is disgusted by the grating, anonymous text messages she's been receiving ever since she was ranked number one. Sophie Kane is sick of the bullying she's endured after being knocked down a peg by the list. And Nessa Flores-Brady is tired of the outside world trying to define who she is. Reeling from the rampant sexism and objectification in their school, the three girls attempt to track down the list's creator. But are they prepared for what they might find?” – *Pub.*



The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise

by Dan Gemeinhart, c2019 (IL: 4-7, 5-8; RL: 4.7)

“Five years. That's how long twelve-year-old Coyote and her dad, River, have lived on the road in an old school bus, criss-crossing the nation. It's also how long ago Coyote lost her mom and two sisters. Coyote hasn't been home in all that time, but when she learns that the park in her old neighborhood is being demolished--the very same park where she, her mom, and her sisters buried a treasured memory box--she devises an elaborate plan to get her dad to drive 3,600 miles back to Washington state . . . without him realizing it. On the way, they'll pick up an eclectic group of folks. Lester has a lady love to meet. Salvador and his mom are looking to start over. Val needs a safe place to be herself. Coyote will learn that going home can sometimes be the hardest journey of all, but that with friends, she just might be able to turn her 'once upon a time' into a 'happily ever after.’” – *Pub.* (A sequel came out in 2024.)



Restart

by Gordon Korman, 2017 (IL: 4-7; RL: 5.1)

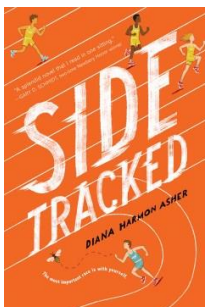
"Chase does not remember falling off the roof, in fact he does not remember anything about himself, and when he gets back to middle school he begins to learn who he was through the reactions of the other kids--trouble is, he really is not sure he likes the Chase that is being revealed, but can he take the opportunity amnesia has provided and restart his life?" – *Pub.*



The Season of Styx Malone

by Kekla Magoon, c2018 (IL: 4-7, RL: 3.8)

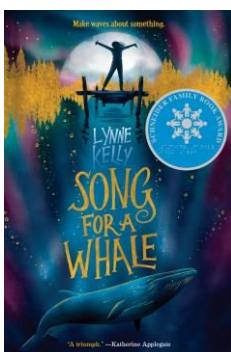
“Meet Caleb and Bobby Gene, two brothers embarking on a madcap, heartwarming, one-thing-leads-to-another adventure in which friendships are forged, loyalties are tested . . . and miracles just might happen. Caleb Franklin and his big brother Bobby Gene are excited to have adventures in the woods behind their house. But Caleb dreams of venturing beyond their ordinary small town. Then Caleb and Bobby Gene meet new neighbor Styx Malone. Styx is sixteen and oozes cool. Styx promises the brothers that together, the three of them can pull off the Great Escalator Trade--exchanging one small thing for something better until they achieve their wildest dream. But as the trades get bigger, the brothers soon find themselves in over their heads. Styx has secrets--secrets so big they could ruin everything. Five best of the year lists! NPR, Horn Book, Kirkus Reviews, SLJ, Shelf Awareness Five starred reviews!” – *Pub.*



Sidetracked

by Diana Harmon Asher, c2017 (IL: 4-7, RL: 4.4)

"Seventh-grader Joseph Friedman is friendless and puny, with ADD to boot. He spends most of his time avoiding the class bully and hiding out in the Resource Room. But the Resource Room teacher encourages (i.e., practically forces) him to join the school cross country team, and he meets Heather, a new student who's tough and athletic and refuses to be pushed around by anybody." – *Pub.*



Song for a Whale

by Lynne Kelly, 2019 (IL: 4-7, RL: 5.3)

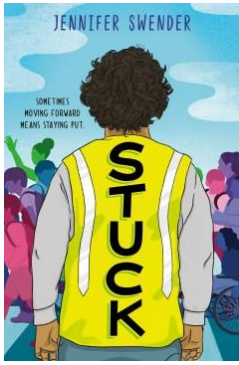
"...the story of a deaf girl's connection to a whale whose song can't be heard by his species, and the journey she takes to help him. From fixing the class computer to repairing old radios, twelve-year-old Iris is a tech genius. But she's the only deaf person in her school, so people often treat her like she's not very smart. If you've ever felt like no one was listening to you, then you know how hard that can be. When she learns about Blue 55, a real whale who is unable to speak to other whales, Iris understands how he must feel. Then she has an idea: she should invent a way to "sing" to him! But he's three thousand miles away. How will she play her song for him? Full of heart and poignancy, this affecting story by sign language interpreter Lynne Kelly shows how a little determination can make big waves." – *Pub.*



Stand Up Yumi Chung!

by Jessica Kim, c2020 (IL: 4-7; RL: 5.6)

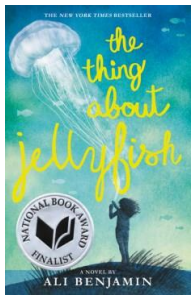
"One lie snowballs into a full-blown double life in this irresistible story about an aspiring stand-up comedian. On the outside, Yumi Chung suffers from #shygirlproblems, a perm-gone-wrong, and kids calling her "Yu-MEAT" because she smells like her family's Korean barbecue restaurant. On the inside, Yumi is ready for her Netflix stand-up special. Her notebook is filled with mortifying memories that she's reworked into comedy gold. All she needs is a stage and courage. Instead of spending the summer studying her favorite YouTube comedians, Yumi is enrolled in test-prep tutoring to qualify for a private school scholarship, which will help in a time of hardship at the restaurant. One day after class, Yumi stumbles on an opportunity that will change her life: a comedy camp for kids taught by one of her favorite YouTube stars. The only problem is that the instructor and all the students think she's a girl named Kay Nakamura--and Yumi doesn't correct them. As this case of mistaken identity unravels..." – *Pub.*



Stuck

by Jennifer Swender, c2021 (IL: 4-7, RL: 3.7)

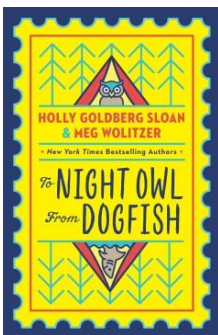
“If Austin picked a color to describe his life, it would be *tumbleweed brown*. Austin doesn't like standing out. He's always the new kid, and there's no hiding his size. Plus, Austin has a secret: he struggles to read. Then Austin meets Bertie, who is *razzmatazz*. Everything about Bertie is bursting! But the best part of his newest school is the Safety Squad, with their *laser lemon* vests. Their easy confidence and leadership stand out in the coolest way. Even when things are not so vibrant and life at home makes Austin feel *pacific blue*, for the first time, he wants to leave a mark. And the more Austin speaks up, the more he finds he may not be that different after all.” – *Pub*.



The Thing About Jellyfish

by Ali Benjamin, c2015 (IL: 5 up, 4-7: RL: 4.6)

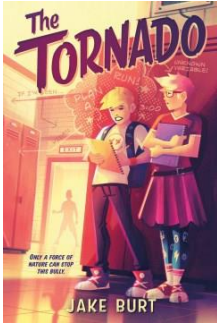
“Everyone says that it was an accident... that sometimes things "just happen". But Suzy won't believe it. Ever. After her best friend dies in a drowning accident, Suzy is convinced that the true cause of the tragedy was a rare jellyfish sting. Retreating into a silent world of imagination, she crafts a plan to prove her theory--even if it means traveling the globe, alone. Suzy's achingly heartfelt journey explores life, death, the astonishing wonder of the universe...and the potential for love and hope right next door.” – *Pub*.



To Night Owl from Dogfish

by Holly Goldberg Sloan, c2019 (IL: 5-7, 5-8; RL: 5.6)

“From two extraordinary authors comes a moving, exuberant, laugh-out-loud novel about friendship and family, told entirely in emails and letters. Avery Bloom, who's bookish, intense, and afraid of many things, particularly deep water, lives in New York City. Bett Devlin, who's fearless, outgoing, and loves all animals as well as the ocean, lives in California. What they have in common is that they are both twelve years old, and are both being raised by single, gay dads. When their dads fall in love, Bett and Avery are sent, against their will, to the same sleepaway camp. Their dads hope that they will find common ground and become friends--and possibly, one day, even sisters. But things soon go off the rails for the girls (and for their dads too), and they find themselves on a summer adventure that neither of them could have predicted. Now that they can't imagine life without each other, will Bett and Avery (who sometimes call themselves Night Owl and Dogfish) figure out a way to be a family.” – *Pub*.



The Tornado

by Jake Burt, c2019 (IL: 4-7, RL: 5.9)

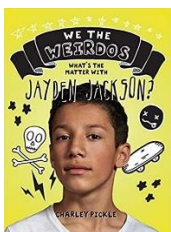
“Bell Kirby is an expert at systems, whether he's designing the world's most elaborate habitat for his pet chinchilla, re-creating Leonardo da Vinci's greatest inventions in his garage, or avoiding Parker Hellickson, the most diabolical bully Village Green Elementary has ever seen. Since third grade, Parker has tormented Bell, who's spent two long years devising a finely tuned system that keeps him out of Parker's way. Sure, it means that Bell can't get a drink when he wants to, can't play with his best friend on the playground, and can't tell his parents about his day, but at least he's safe. Until Daelynn Gower touches down in his classroom like a tornado. Bell's not sure why the new girl, with her rainbow hair, wild clothes, and strange habits, is drawn to him, but he knows one thing--she means trouble. It's bad enough that she disrupts Bell's secret system, but when Daelynn becomes the bully's new target, Bell is forced to make an impossible decision: Finally stand up to Parker. . . Or join him...” – *Pub.*



The Vote (*Red Rhino Hi Lo Books*)

by Jeff Gottesfeld, c? (IL: 4-7, RL: 1.0-1.5)

“Rae Mars and Kia Ladd are best friends starting sixth grade at a new school. But when they both decide to run for student council, things get complicated. Will this mean the end of their friendship?” – *Pub.*



What's the Matter with Jayden Jackson (*West 44 Books Hi Lo*)

by Charley Pickle, c2019 (IL: 5-7; RL: 2-3)

“Jayden Jackson is always in trouble. He has a quick temper and gets detention on the regular. When Jayden meets rule-following Eli, they find common ground in the music they love. But Jayden can't tell Eli the truth behind his anger: that his dad is in jail. Jayden has fun hanging out with Eli, but can he really let another person in and show them who he really is?” – *Pub.*



Wonder

by R. J. Palacio, c2012 (IL: 4-7, 5-8; RL: 4.8)

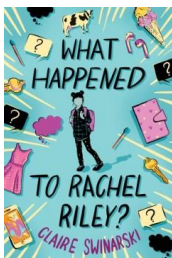
“Ten-year-old Auggie Pullman, who was born with extreme facial abnormalities and was not expected to survive, goes from being home-schooled to entering fifth grade at a private middle school in Manhattan, which entails enduring the taunts and fear of his classmates as he struggles to be seen as just another student.” - *Follett*



Every Missing Piece

by Melanie Conklin, c2020 (IL: 5-7, RL: 4.7)

“Maddy Gaines sees danger everywhere she looks: at the bus stop, around the roller rink, in the woods, and (especially) by the ocean. When Maddy meets a mysterious boy setting booby traps in the North Carolina woods, she suspects is Billy Holcomb--the boy who went missing in the fall. As Maddy tries to uncover the truth about Billy Holcomb, ghosts from her own past surface, her best friend starts to slip away, and Maddy's world tilts once again. Can she put the pieces of her life back together, even if some of them are lost forever?” – *Pub. *Graphic novel*



What Happened to Rachel Riley?

by Claire Swinarski, c2024 (IL: Gr. 5+, RL: ?)

“Anna Hunt may be the new girl at East Middle School, but she can already tell there's something off about her eighth-grade class. Rachel Riley, who just last year was one of the most popular girls in school, has become a social outcast. But no one, including Rachel Riley herself, will tell Anna why.

As a die-hard podcast enthusiast, Anna knows there's always more to a story than meets the eye. So she decides to put her fact-seeking skills to the test and create her own podcast around the question that won't stop running through her head: What happened to Rachel Riley?

With the entire eighth grade working against her, Anna dives headfirst into the evidence. Clue after clue, the mystery widens, painting an even more complex story than Anna could have anticipated. But there's one thing she's certain of: If you're going to ask a complicated question, you better be prepared for the fallout that may come with the answer.” – *Pub.*