

# Summer Reading Suggestions 2008

## Palo Alto Middle Schools

Note: (YA) = Young Adult title for more mature readers

### *Classics*

**London, Jack**

[The Call of the Wild](#)

Buck, who is half St. Bernard and half Scotch shepard, is abducted and taken to the Klondike where he reverts to the wild and becomes a leader of a pack of wolves.

**Milne, A. A.**

[The Complete Tales of Winnie-the-Pooh](#)

Contains the complete and unabridged texts of all the Pooh stories with original illustrations by Ernest H. Shepard.

**Rawlings, Marjorie**

[The Yearling](#)

A young boy living in the Florida backwoods is forced to decide the fate of a fawn he has lovingly raised as a pet.

**Saroyan, William**

[The Human Comedy](#) (YA)

Working as a telegraph messenger in California during World War II, fourteen-year-old Homer Macauley gains an understanding of the world and an acceptance of his brother's death.

**Spyri, Johanna**

[Heidi](#)

A Swiss orphan is heartbroken when she must leave her beloved grandfather and their happy home in the mountains to go to school and to care for an invalid girl in the city.

**Swift, Jonathan**

[Gulliver's Travels](#)

Written in 1726, [Gulliver's Travels](#) still continues to be a popular book because it poses questions about what human beings are all about. Both a satire and a comedy, it describes the land of Lilliput and other exotic places.

**Virgil**

[The Aeneid](#) (YA)

Virgil's epic poem describing the fall of Troy and the legendary origin of Rome in English prose.

**Wiggin, Kate Douglas Smith** [Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm](#)

Talkative, ten-year-old Rebecca goes to live with her spinster aunts, one harsh and demanding, the other soft and sentimental, with whom she spends seven difficult but rewarding years growing up.

### *Contemporary*

**Anderson, Laurie Halse**

[Prom](#) (YA)

Eighteen-year-old Ash wants nothing to do with senior prom, but when disaster strikes and her desperate friend, Nat, needs her help to get it back on track, Ash's involvement transforms her life.

**Cooney, Caroline B.**

[Flight #116 Is Down](#)

Teenager Heidi Landseth helps rescue people from a plane crash on her family's property, and the experience changes her life forever.

**Creech, Sharon**

[Heartbeat](#)

Twelve-year-old Annie ponders the many rhythms of life the year that her mother becomes pregnant, her grandfather begins faltering, and her best friend (and running partner) becomes distant.

**Hautman, Pete**

[Godless](#) (YA)

When sixteen-year-old Jason Bock and his friends create their own religion to worship the town's water tower, what started out as a joke begins to take on a power of its own.

**Koertge, Ronald**

[Strays](#)

Sixteen-year-old Ted, orphaned when his parents are killed in a car crash, identifies more with animals than people -- especially strays whose situation Ted equates with his own, but as he starts to settle in to his new foster home and school, he forms bonds with his two foster brothers and gradually comes back in touch with the human race.

**Korman, Gordon**

[Schooled](#)

Cap lives in isolation with his grandmother, a former hippie; but when she falls from a tree and breaks her hip, Cap is sent to a foster home where he has his first experience in a public school.

**Lord, Cynthia**                      Rules (2008 California Young Reader Medal Nominee)

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.

**O'Connor, Barbara**                How to Steal a Dog

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.

**Resau, Laura**                        Red Glass (YA)

Sixteen-year-old Sophie has been frail and delicate since her premature birth, but she discovers her true strength during a journey through Mexico, where the six-year-old orphan her family hopes to adopt was born, and to Guatemala, where her would-be boyfriend hopes to find his mother and plans to remain.

**Schmidt, Gary D.**                    The Wednesday Wars (2008 Newbery Honor Award)

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.

**Wiles, Debbie**                        Each Little Bird that Sings

Comfort Snowberger is well acquainted with death since her family runs the funeral parlor in their small southern town, but even so the ten-year-old is unprepared for the series of heart-wrenching events that begins on the first day of Easter vacation with the sudden death of her beloved great-uncle Edisto.

**Wolff, Virginia Euwer**              Bat 6

In small-town post-World War II Oregon, twenty-one 6th-grade girls recount the story of an annual softball game, during which one girl's bigotry comes to the surface.

**Woodson, Jacqueline**                Feathers (2008 Newbery Honor Award)

When a new, white student nicknamed "The Jesus Boy" joins her sixth grade class in the winter of 1971, Frannie's growing friendship with him makes her start to see some things in a new light.

### ***Fantasy/Science Fiction***

**Barron, T. A.**                          Tree Girl

Nine-year-old Rowanna is drawn to the forest and a huge tree, despite the warnings of the old man with whom she has always lived at the edge of the sea--especially after she befriends a bear who is much more than he seems.

**Bray, Libba**                          A Great and Terrible Beauty

After the suspicious death of her mother in 1895, sixteen-year-old Gemma returns to England after many years in India to attend a finishing school where she becomes aware of her magical powers and ability to see into the spirit world.

**Colfer, Eoin**                         Airman

In the 1890s on an island off the Irish coast, Conor Broekhart is falsely imprisoned and passes the solitary months by scratching designs of flying machines into the walls, including one for a glider with which he dreams of escape.

**Dickinson, John**                    The Cup of the World (YA)

Phaedra, the willful daughter of a baron, sets off an unforeseeable chain of events and a battle between good and evil when she announces her intention to marry for love.

**Farmer, Nancy**                      The Land of the Silver Apples

After escaping from the Sea of Trolls, the apprentice bard Jack plunges into a new series of adventures, traveling underground to Elfland and uncovering the truth about his little sister Lucy.

**Flanagan, John**                    The Ruins of Gorlan

When fifteen-year-old Will is rejected for Battleschool, he becomes the reluctant apprentice to the mysterious Ranger Halt, and winds up protecting the kingdom from danger.

**Hale, Shannon**                      Book of a Thousand Days

Fifteen-year-old Dashti, sworn to obey her sixteen-year-old mistress, the Lady Saren, shares Saren's years of punishment locked in a tower, then brings her safely to the lands of her true love, where both must hide who they are as they work as kitchen maids.

**Hill, Stuart****The Cry of the Icemark**

Princess Thirrin, a teenager, becomes the queen of Icemark after her father is killed and must take over the country's defense against the Polypontian Empire, relying on help from Oskan, a witch's son, in order to save her people.

**Horowitz, Anthony****Snakehead**

Alex Rider crash lands off the coast of Australia where he is recruited by the Australian Secret Service to infiltrate one of the ruthless gangs operating across Southeast Asia, and in the midst of his dangerous mission, Alex discovers information about his parents' murder. Also by Horowitz: Stormbreaker.

**Jacques, Brian****Redwall**

When the peaceful life of ancient Redwall Abbey is shattered by the arrival of the evil rat Cluny and his villainous hordes, Matthias, a young mouse, determines to find the legendary sword of Martin the Warrior which, he is convinced, will help Redwall's inhabitants destroy the enemy.

**Jinks, Catherine****Evil Genius**

Child prodigy Cadel Piggot, an antisocial computer hacker, discovers his true identity when he enrolls as a first-year student at an advanced crime academy.

**Knox, Elizabeth****Dreamquake (YA) (Printz Honor)**

While investigating the government's involvement in the disappearance of her father, Tziga Hame, and the decline of the art of projecting dreams, dreamhunter Laura learns more about "The Place."

**Leavitt, Martine****Keturah and Lord Death**

When Lord Death comes to claim sixteen-year-old Keturah while she is lost in the King's Forest, she charms him with her story and is granted a twenty-four hour reprieve in which to seek her one true love.

**Oppel, Kenneth****Airborn**

Matt, a young cabin boy aboard an airship, and Kate, a wealthy young girl traveling with her chaperone, team up to search for the existence of mysterious winged creatures reportedly living hundreds of feet above the Earth's surface. Also by Oppel: Darkwing.

**Patterson, James****Maximum Ride: School's Out--Forever**

After a short stay with an FBI agent who gives them a chance to attend school and live a normal life, the six genetically-altered, winged youths head toward Florida and Max's ultimate destiny--to save the world, whether she wants to or not. Also by Patterson: Saving the World and Other Extreme Sports and The Angel Experiment.

**Pfeffer, Susan Beth****Life As We Knew It (2008 California Young Reader Medal Nominee)**

Through journal entries sixteen-year-old Miranda describes her family's struggle to survive after a meteor hits the moon, causing worldwide tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

**Riordan, Rick****The Titan's Curse**

The disappearance of the goddess Artemis while out hunting a rare, ancient monster, prompts a group of her followers to join Percy and his friends in an attempt to find and rescue her before the winter solstice, when her influence is needed to sway the Olympian Council regarding the war with the Titans.

**Turner, Megan Whalen****The Thief**

Gen flaunts his ingenuity as a thief and relishes the adventure which takes him to a remote temple of the gods where he will attempt to steal a precious stone.

**Westerfeld, Scott****Extras**

In an alternative civilization where the social status of each person is monitored and rated and anyone can drop from celebrity to nobody, fifteen-year-old Aya Fuse's popularity ranking is so low her only chance of moving up is to find a good story, so when she meets a group of girls who hide an explosive secret, Aya decides to expose the group and unknowingly puts her own life in danger. Also by Westerfeld: Pretties, Uglies, and Specials.

## *Historical Fiction*

**Chotjewitz, David**                    [Daniel Half Human and the Good Nazi](#) (2008 California Young Reader Medal Nominee)

In 1933, best friends Daniel and Armin admire Hitler, but as anti-Semitism buoys Hitler to power, Daniel learns he is half Jewish, threatening the friendship even as life in their beloved Hamburg, Germany, is becoming nightmarish. Also details Daniel and Armin's reunion in 1945 in interspersed chapters.

**Curtis, Christopher Paul**        [Elijah of Buxton](#) (2008 Newbery Honor Award, 2008 Coretta Scott King Award, 2008 Scott O'Dell Award )

Eleven-year-old Elijah Freeman, the first free-born child in Buxton, Canada, which is a haven for slaves fleeing the American South in 1859, 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.

**Fleischman, Sid**                    [The Giant Rat of Sumatra: or Pirates Galore](#)

A cabin boy on a pirate ship finds himself in San Diego in 1846 as war breaks out between the United States and Mexico. This is the story of his many adventures and close escapes during his long journey home to Boston.

**Haddix, Margaret Peterson**    [Uprising](#)

In 1927, at the urging of twenty-one-year-old Harriet, Mrs. Livingston reluctantly recalls her experiences at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory, including miserable working conditions that led to a strike, then the fire that took the lives of her two best friends, when Harriet, the boss's daughter, was only five years old. Includes historical notes.

**Klages, Ellen**                        [The Green Glass Sea](#) (2007 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction)

While her father works on the Manhattan Project, eleven-year-old gadget lover and outcast Dewey Kerrigan lives in Los Alamos Camp, and becomes friends with Suze, another young girl who is shunned by her peers.

**Larson, Kirby**                        [Hattie Big Sky](#) (2008 California Young Reader Medal Nominee)

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.

**McCaughrean, Geraldine**        [Stop the Train!: A Novel](#)

Despite the opposition of the owner of the Red Rock Runner Railroad in 1893, the new settlers of Florence, Oklahoma, are determined to build a real town.

**Miller, Sarah Elizabeth**         [Miss Spitfire: Reaching Helen Keller](#)

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.

**Moser, Barry**                        [Cowboy Stories](#)

A collection of short stories and novel excerpts that depict the daily lives and challenges of the American cowboy.

**Rinaldi, Ann**                         [Cast Two Shadows: The American Revolution in the South](#)

In South Carolina in 1780, fourteen-year-old Caroline sees the Revolutionary War take a terrible toll among her family and friends and comes to understand the true nature of war.

**Schlitz, Laura Amy**                [Good Masters! Sweet Ladies!: Voices from a Medieval Village](#) (2008 Newbery Winner)

A collection of short one-person plays featuring characters, between ten and fifteen years old, who live in or near a thirteenth-century English manor.

**Selznick, Brian**                    [The Invention of Hugo Cabret: A Novel in Words and Pictures](#) (2008 Caldecott Medal Winner, 2007 National Book Award)

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

**Updale, Eleanor**                    [Montmorency's Revenge](#)

As Queen Victoria lies dying and with her family in danger, a group of friends races to track down the anarchists responsible for George's death, even as Montmorency seeks to teach a new generation to forgive.

## *Humor*

**Codell, Esme Raji**      [Diary of a Fairy Godmother](#)

Hunky Dory is an unconventional witch who would rather grant wishes than cast spells which gets her kicked out of charm school; so Hunky sets out to become the best fairy godmother she can be.

**Coman, Carolyn**      [The Big House](#)

When Ivy and Ray's parents are sent to jail, and left in the custody of their parent's accusers, they decide to look for evidence that will "spring" their parents.

**Curtis, Christopher Paul**      [Bucking the Sarge](#) (YA)

Deeply involved in his cold and manipulative mother's shady business dealings in Flint, Michigan, fourteen-year-old Luther keeps a sense of humor while running the Happy Neighborhood Group Home for Men, all the while dreaming of going to college and becoming a philosopher.

**Ferris, Jean**      [Once upon a Marigold](#)

A young man with a mysterious past and a penchant for inventing things leaves the troll who raised him, meets an unhappy princess he has loved from afar, and discovers a plot against her and her father.

**Jonell, Lynne**      [Emmy and the Incredible Shrinking Rat](#)

When Emmy discovers that she and her formerly loving parents are being drugged by their evil nanny with rodent potions that can change people in frightening ways, she and some new friends must try everything possible to return things to normal.

**Jonsberg, Barry**      [Am I Right Or Am I Right?](#)

Sixteen-year-old Calma Harrison is certain she knows what is behind the strange behavior of everyone in her life, and convinced that she is the only one who can fix things, but soon learns just how wrong she is.

**Kinney, Jeff**      [Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Greg Heffley's Journal](#)

Greg records his sixth grade experiences in a middle school where he and his best friend, Rowley, undersized weaklings amid boys who need to shave twice daily, hope just to survive, but when Rowley grows more popular, Greg must take drastic measures to save their friendship. Also by Kinney: [Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules](#).

**Kogler, Jennifer Anne**      [Ruby Tuesday](#)

The 1988 World Series win by the Los Angeles Dodgers sets off a chain of life-changing events for thirteen-year-old Ruby Tuesday as she travels to Las Vegas and learns some surprising truths about her family members and their careers as gamblers and musicians.

**Peck, Richard**      [The Teacher's Funeral: A Comedy in Three Parts](#)

In rural Indiana in 1904, fifteen-year-old Russell's dreams of quitting school and joining a wheat threshing crew are disrupted when his older sister takes over the teaching at his one-room schoolhouse after mean old Myrt Arbuckle "hauls off and dies."

**Spinelli, Jerry**      [Stargirl](#)

In this story about the perils of popularity, the courage of nonconformity, and the thrill of first love, an eccentric student named Stargirl changes Mica High School forever. Sequel: [Love Stargirl](#).

**Urban, Linda**      [A Crooked Kind of Perfect](#)

Ten-year-old Zoe Elias, who longs to play the piano but must resign herself to learning the organ, instead, finds that her musicianship has a positive impact on her workaholic mother, her jittery father, and her school social life.

## *Multicultural*

**Alexie, Sherman**      [The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian](#) (National Book Award)

Budding cartoonist Junior leaves his troubled school on the Spokane Indian Reservation to attend an all-white farm town school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

**Kadohata, Cynthia**      [Kira-Kira](#)

Chronicles the close friendship between two Japanese-American sisters growing up in rural Georgia during the late 1950s and early 1960s and the despair when one sister becomes terminally ill.

**Mikaelsen, Ben**      [Tree Girl](#) (YA)

When, protected by the branches of one of the trees she loves to climb, Gabriela witnesses the destruction of her Mayan village and the murder of nearly all its inhabitants. Gabriela vows never to climb again until, after she and her traumatized sister find safety in a Mexican refugee camp, she realizes that only by climbing and facing their fears can she and her sister hope to have a future.

**Schmidt, Gary D.**

Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy

In 1911, Turner Buckminster hates his new home of Phippsburg, Maine, but things improve when he meets Lizzie Bright Griffin, a girl from a poor, nearby island community founded by former slaves that the town fathers--and Turner's--want to change into a tourist spot.

**Singh, Vandana**

Younguncle Comes to Town

In a small town in northern India, three siblings await their father's youngest brother, Younguncle, who is said to be somewhat eccentric.

**Wein, Elizabeth**

The Lion Hunter

After losing his arm in a lion attack, Telemakos -- the half-Ethiopian grandson of King Arthur -- takes care of his infant sister and lives with Abreha, a family enemy turned friend who Telemakos was warned to watch carefully.

**Yang, Gene**

American Born Chinese ( Printz Award)

Alternates three interrelated stories about the problems of young Chinese Americans trying to participate in the popular culture. Presented in comic book format.

***Mystery/Suspense/Horror/Adventu***

**Bruchac, Joseph**

Bearwalker

Although he is the littlest student in his class, thirteen-year-old Baron Braun calls upon the strength and wisdom of his Mohawk ancestors to face both man and beast when he tries to get help for his classmates, who are being terrorized during a school field trip in the Adirondacks.

**Dillon, Eilis**

The Lost Island

When a tramp brings what may be a message from his missing father, Michael determines to follow the piecemeal clues and find a boat and crew for the hazardous journey in search of an unknown island located somewhere off the coast of western Ireland.

**Hautman, Pete**

Snatched

Too curious for her own good, Roni, crime reporter for her high school newspaper, teams up with Brian, freshman science geek, to investigate the beating and kidnapping of a classmate.

**Ibbotson, Eva**

The Star of Kazan

Annika, a twelve-year-old foundling in late nineteenth-century Vienna, inherits a trunk of costume jewelry, and soon afterwards a woman claiming to be her aristocratic mother arrives and takes her to live in a strangely decrepit mansion in Germany.

**Meyer, L.A. (Louis A.)**

Curse of the Blue Tattoo: Being an Account of the Misadventures of Jacky Faber, Midshipman and Fine Lady

In 1803, after being exposed as a girl and forced to leave her ship, Jacky Faber finds herself attending school in Boston, where, instead of learning to be a lady, she battles her snobbish classmates, roams the city in search of adventure, and learns to ride a horse.

**Reiche, Dietlof**

Ghost Ship: A Novel

An eighteenth-century figurehead, the journal of a ship's quartermaster, and supernatural occurrences at a seaside resort lead twelve-year-old Vicki and her friend Peter on a quest to lift a curse and set right a horrible deed committed two hundred and thirty years in the past.

**Van Draanen**

Sammy Keyes and the Wild Things

While on her first hiking and camping trip, thirteen-year-old Sammy tries to solve a mystery involving endangered condors while avoiding scorpions, ticks, and embarrassment.

**Yancey, Richard**

Alfred Kropp: The Seal of Solomon

The last descendant of Sir Lancelot, teenage misfit Alfred Kropp is drawn back into the OIPEP to battle a group of demons bent on freeing themselves from the confines of an ancient relic.

## *Nonfiction*

**Caney, Steven**

Steven Caney's Ultimate Building Book

Examines the history and construction of various types of structures, including bridges, skyscrapers, and domes; and provides instructions for related projects.

**Engle, Margarita**

The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano  
(2008 Pura Belpre Award Winner)

A portrait in poems of Juan Francisco Manzano, the poet who was born a slave in Cuba in 1797.

**Gore, Albert**

An Inconvenient Truth: The Crisis of Global Warming

An adaptation of the book in which former Vice President Al Gore examines the climate crisis that is threatening the future of the planet, describes what the world's governments are doing to correct the problem, and explains why the problem should be taken more seriously. Includes photographs, maps, and graphs.

**Hama, Larry**

The Battle of Iwo Jima: Guerilla Warfare in the Pacific

Tells the story of the Battle of Iwo Jima in graphic novel format, also providing introductory information on the important commanders, the island, and the war with Japan up to that point.

**Hauser, Elizabeth Ingrid**

Crafty Bags for Stylish Girls: Uniquely Chic Purses, Pouches & Pocketbooks

Full-color, illustrated instructions for creating forty-five simple handbags, pouches, and accessories using a variety of materials.

**Hoose, Phillip M.**

The Race to Save the Lord God Bird (YA)

Tells the story of the ivory-billed woodpecker's extinction in the United States, describing the encounters between this species and humans, and discussing what these encounters have taught us about preserving endangered creatures.

**Krakauer, Jon**

Into the Wild

The book tells the story of Chris McCandles, a twenty-four-year-old, who walked into the Alaskan wilderness on an idealistic journey and was found dead of starvation four months later. It attempts to discover what led the young man to that point.

**Ralston, Aron**

Between a Rock and a Hard Place (YA)

The author recounts his harrowing experiences of being trapped for six days in Blue John Canyon in Utah and having to amputate his own right arm in order to save his life.

**Schlosser, Eric**

Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food

A behind-the-scenes look at fast food, what's in it, how it's made, and what it does to our bodies.

**Sis, Peter**

The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain (2008 Caldecott Honor Book, 2008 Sibert Medal Winner)

Artist Sis Peter describes what it was like growing up in a Communist country and discusses how Western culture influenced his life.

## *Sports*

**Feinstein, John**

Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery

After winning a basketball reporting contest, eighth graders Stevie and Susan Carol are sent to cover the Final Four tournament, where they discover that a talented player is being blackmailed into throwing the final game.

**Gutman, Dan**

The Million Dollar Putt

Assisted by his neighbor, Birdie, blind thirteen-year-old Ed "Bogie" Bogard will win one million dollars if he can sink a ten-foot putt in Hawaii's fifth annual Angus Killick Memorial Tournament.

**Lupica, Mike**

Heat (2008 California Young Reader Medal Nominee)

Pitching prodigy Michael Arroyo is on the run from social services after being banned from playing Little League baseball because rival coaches doubt he is only twelve years old and he has no parents to offer them proof.

**Swan, Bill**

Corner Kick

Michael Strike learns a lesson on friendship when fellow soccer player Miriah befriends Zahir, an immigrant from the Middle East, whom Michael sees as a rival until he finds out that Zahir is an excellent chess player.

**Trueman, Terry**

7 Days at the Hot Corner (YA)

Varsity baseball player Scott Latimer struggles with his own prejudices and those of others when his best friend reveals that he is gay.