

Suggested Titles Charging into Seventh: For students entering Grade 7
Titles are coded for readability: C=challenging A=average E=easy

Realistic Fiction:

Emako Blue by Brenda Woods (128 pages - E) From the moment she stands up in chorus auditions and her heavenly voice fills the room, Emako Blue profoundly affects anyone who meets her. But even as Emako draws together new friends and catches the attention of an important record producer, the streets of South Central Los Angeles are never far away, where everything changes in one horrific instant.

Heat by Mike Lupica (240 pages – E) Growing up in the Bronx and playing Little League baseball in the shadow of Yankee Stadium, 12-year-old Michael Arroyo loves baseball, especially the New York Yankees, even though he can't afford to watch them play. Michael seems destined to lead his all-star team to the championship game, with a trip to the Little League World Series on the line. But all that changes when a rival coach challenges whether Michael is as young as he claims.

Local News: Stories by Gary Soto (156 pages – A) The author creates a vibrant tapestry of Chicano American neighborhoods in this collection of stories highlighting small yet significant moments in the lives of 13 young teens. Soto's ear for contemporary lingo and keen insights into teenagers' minds bring life to such characters as Philip Quintana, self-proclaimed mechanic; quarreling brothers Angel and Weasel; and lovesick Jose.

Make Lemonade by Virginia Euwer Wolff (200 pages - A) Living in the projects but determined to be the first person in her family to go to college, LaVaughn takes a job babysitting for Jolly, the teenage mother of two-year-old Jeremy and baby Jilly, whose life is the epitome of disorganization.

Old Yeller by Fred Gipson (192 pages - A) The story of a boy and his dog in the Texas hill country of the 1860s. Yeller accompanies Travis everywhere, and as Travis grows up he learns something about love and responsibility, as well as the pain of life.

Stanford Wong Flunks Big-time by Lisa Yee (304 pages - A) After flunking sixth-grade 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.

Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson (256 pages - A) After his anger erupts into violence, Cole, in order to avoid going to prison, agrees to participate in a sentencing alternative based on the Native American Circle Justice, and he is sent to a remote Alaskan Island where an encounter with a huge Spirit Bear changes his life.

The View from Saturday by E.L. Konigsburg (163 pages - A) Four hilariously different students develop a special friendship and attract the attention of their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent their sixth grade class in the Academic Bowl competition.

Adventure:

Escape From Fire Mountain by Gary Paulsen (80 pages– E) The characters face danger at every turn in the great outdoors and learn to face their fears head on. From a forest fire to a raging river to a scary bull named Diablo, the action doesn't stop.

Millions by Frank Boyce Cottrell (272 pages - A) After their mother dies, two brothers find a huge amount of money which they must spend quickly before England switches to the new European currency, but they disagree on what to do with it.

Science Fiction/Fantasy:

The Comet's Curse, by Dom Testa (236 – A) Desperate to save the human race after a comet's deadly particles devastate the adult population, scientists create a ship that will carry a crew of 251 teenagers to a home in a distant solar system.

City of Ember by Jeanne duPrau (270 p.) Ember, built as a last refuge for the human race, is running out of power two hundred years later, but twelve-year-old Lina thinks there may yet be hope when she finds part of an ancient message that may hold a key to getting out of the city.

Mystery:

Chasing Vermeer by Blue Balliett (272 pages - A) When seemingly unrelated and strange events start to happen and a precious Vermeer painting disappears, eleven-year-olds Petra and Calder combine their talents to solve an international art scandal.

Historical Fiction:

The True Adventures of Charley Darwin, by Carolyn Meyer (321 p.-C) In nineteenth-century England, young Charles Darwin rejects the more traditional careers of physician and clergyman, choosing instead to embark on a dangerous five-year journey by ship to explore the natural world.

Woods Runner, by Gary Paulsen (164 p. – E) From his 1776 Pennsylvania homestead, thirteen-year-old Samuel sets out toward New York City to rescue his parents from the band of British soldiers and Native Americans who kidnapped them after slaughtering most of their community.

Non-Fiction:

Cars on Mars: Roving the Red Planet, Alexandra Siy (57 p. –A) Examines the rovers, little cars which roam over the planet Mars to search for clues that might indicate that life once existed on Mars.

Gorilla Doctors: Saving Endangered Great Apes (Scientists in the Field series), by Pamela S. Turner (64 p. – A) Chronicles the work of the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project. Follows the scientists as they study how human exposure has affected gorillas' health, administer emergency care to injured animals, and become foster parents to an orphaned baby gorilla named Fearless. Photographs and text document the gorillas' daily lives.

Hammerin' Hank Greenberg: Baseball Pioneer, by Shelley Sommer (135 p. – A) Photographs and text chronicle the life and career of professional baseball player Hank Greenberg, discussing his Jewish American heritage, and describing his childhood, military service during World War II, & his role as a baseball executive.

Knucklehead: Tall Tales and Almost True Stories of Growing Up by Jon Scieszka (106 pages – E) The author of *The Stinky Cheese Man* tells us what it was like growing up with five brothers who were always playing pranks and getting into trouble. He includes lots of family snapshots as well as illustrations from the comic books he read as a kid. These are stories that will make you laugh out loud!

Liberty or Death: the Surprising Story of Runaway Slaves by Margaret Whitman Blair (64 p. – A) Recounts the experiences of the slaves who answered Lord Dunmore's 1775 promise that any slave who left his master and fought for the British would have their freedom.

Maritcha: a 19th century American Girl by Tonya Bolden (48 p. – E) Describes life from the viewpoint of Maritcha Lyons, born a free black in 1848 Manhattan, a predominantly white society.

Phineas Gage: A Gruesome But True Story About Brain Science by John Fleischman (86 pages - A) The fascinating story of the construction foreman who survived for 10 years after a 13-pound iron rod shot through his brain.