



CLICK THE PHOTOS FOR THE BEST BOOKS FOR SUMMER RELAXATION.



If You Come Softly by J. Woodson

Woodson's interracial love story is still relevant more than 20 years later. Jeremiah is proud to be Black but nervous about his new, mostly white high school. White, Jewish Ellie is also getting used to the transition from public school to the same private school. When Ellie and Jeremiah meet, it is love at first sight. Unfortunately for them, family and societal pressures become obstacles to their happy ending. Beautiful and heartrending, this modern-day Romeo and Juliet story will have readers rooting for the pair and wondering if love is powerful enough to overcome prejudice. This features star crossed lovers, so give to readers who can handle tragic endings.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie

This semi-autobiographical novel portrays the life of Arnold Spirit Jr., a Native American boy who must balance his life on the reservation and his new life at an all-white school off the reservation. Alongside his journey of self-discovery, Arnold navigates friendships and first love, making it a relatable and engaging read for boys. The book also touches upon themes of identity, racism, and social inequality, providing young readers with a thought-provoking and eye-opening perspective.

Flipped by Wendelin Van Draanen

The first time she saw him, she flipped. The first time he saw her, he ran. That was the second grade, but not much has changed by the seventh. She says: "My Bryce. Still walking around with my first kiss." He says: "It's been six years of strategic avoidance and social discomfort." But in the eighth grade everything gets turned upside down. And just as he's thinking there's more to her than meets the eye, she's thinking that he's not quite all he seemed.

Relationships

Drama by Raina Telgemeier

The ultimate juvenile romance book out there is this graphic novel from the author of *Smile* and *Sisters*. Middle school plays, friendship, and of course, crushes and relationships abound in the brightly illustrated pages.

Keep it Together, Keiko Carter by Debbi Michiko Florence

When the book begins, Kieko is excited to take on 7th grade with her best friends Jenna and Audrey at her side. But when Audrey announces all three of them must find boyfriends before the Fall dance things start to fall apart. Jenna is fed up with Audrey's bossiness and suddenly Kieko is in the middle of her best friends fighting. Meanwhile, Kieko's crush is not someone Audrey approves of. But should she go for it anyway? This book is a lot about friendship, but there are also a lot of crushes, flirting, and middle school romance central to the plot. And if you want more middle school romance books, you can read the sequel *Just Be Cool*, Jenna Sakai about Keiko's best friend Jenna.

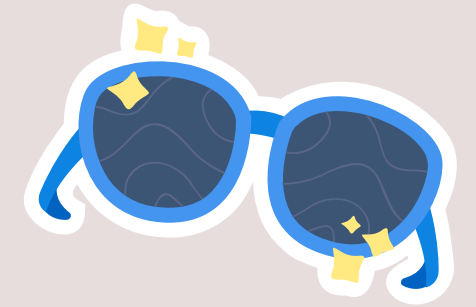
Both Can Be True by Jules Machias

Daniel and Ash are brought together by a shared mission: to save a dog that's about to be euthanized at a local shelter. This secret mission brings them together. And each of them find the acceptance and friendship they've been longing for at school. Daniel is an emotional boy who's constantly being told he's too sensitive. Ash, who cycles through genders, struggles with daily decisions like how to present themselves and which bathroom to use at school. Their friendship and joint commitment to keeping Chewbarka alive leads to crushes and mutual attraction. This tween romance is ultimately hopeful, but the story also includes heavy subject like transphobia, misgendering, and bullying.

The Summer I Turned Pretty by Jenny Han

Belly measures her life in summers. Everything good, everything magical happens between the months of June and August. Winters are simply a time to count the weeks until the next summer, a place away from the beach house, away from Susannah, and most importantly, away from Jeremiah and Conrad. They are the boys that Belly has known since her very first summer—they have been her brother figures, her crushes, and everything in between. But one summer, one wonderful and terrible summer, the more everything changes, the more it all ends up just the way it should have been all along.

Favorites of SAUGERTIES JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS



Track Series by Jason Reynolds

This collection of four books follows four protagonists – Ghost, Patina, Sunny, and Lu (which the books are also named) – as they compete on an elite track team, while also dealing with drama and life.

Smile by Raina Telgemeier

Raina just wants to be a normal sixth grader. But one night after Girl Scouts she trips and falls, severely injuring her two front teeth. What follows is a long and frustrating journey with on-again, off-again braces, surgery, embarrassing headgear, and even a retainer with fake teeth attached. And on top of all that, there's still more to deal with: a major earthquake, boy confusion, and friends who turn out to be not so friendly.

Orbiting Jupiter by Gary D. Schmidt

Gary D. Schmidt brings the saying “Don’t judge a book by its cover” to life through 14-year-old Joseph, fresh from a stint in a detention center. The community, including main character Jack, is quick to judge him because of his history, but all Joseph wants is to find the daughter he’s fathered and never met. Primary themes of interest to middle school students: love, family, inclusion and exclusion, acceptance, judgment.

The War That Saved My Life by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

In this story, set during World War II, Kimberly Brubaker Bradley’s main character, Ada, a young girl with a physical disability, has been confined to her family’s apartment for years because of her mother’s shame.

As parents send their children from London to the countryside for safety, Ada sees an opportunity to escape and start living the life she’s been deprived of—against her mother’s wishes. Primary themes of interest to middle school students: disability and difference, loneliness, persistence and hope, freedom.

New Kid by Jerry Craft

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?

The Wimpy Kid series by Jeff Kinney

Filled with laugh-out-loud hilarious text and cartoons, the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series follows Greg Heffley as he records the daily trials and triumphs of friendship, family life and middle school where undersized weaklings have to share the hallways with kids who are taller, meaner and already shaving! On top of all that, Greg must be careful to avoid the dreaded CHEESE TOUCH!

One of Us Is Lying by Karen McManus

When the creator of a high school gossip app mysteriously dies in front of four high-profile students all four become suspects. It's up to them to solve the case

Pax by Sara Pennypacker

After being forced to give up his pet fox Pax, a young boy named Peter decides to leave home and get his best friend back

Favorite Authors

For the Junior High Student

JERRY CRAFT

Jerry Craft's **New Kid** graphic novel trilogy expertly captures the unique and often overwhelming experience of navigating middle school, especially when you're the new kid. The graphic novel format of his books captures the readers' attention and keeps them engaged throughout the trilogy. His books, which include a diverse cast of characters that reflect the authentic complexity of middle school kids, not only are entertaining but also tackle important issues that impact students in our world today.

BARBARA DEE

Each of Barbara Dee's books engages readers by developing characters and plots and embodying the honest and authentic middle school feelings and experiences. If students read one of her books, they almost always read multiple, and the most common reason is that they identify with the characters. All her books are fantastic, but a consistent favorite is **Maybe He Just Likes You**. This book empowers readers to speak up, gives them language to describe sexual harassment, and shows why it's important to talk to a trusted adult.

JASON REYNOLDS

Jason Reynolds's range of books allows students to grow up with his writing, from books perfect for late elementary school to traditional middle grades and then more complex young adult novels. Students enjoy the complexity and authenticity of his books. He also offers a range of styles: graphic novels, verse, fiction, nonfiction, and more. The **Ghost** series is one of the best.

KELLY YANG

Many students get hooked on Kelly Yang's **Front Desk** series and continue to read many of her other middle-grade books. As they advance to high school, there are her young adult books for students to continue reading. Yang uses her own experiences to shape stories that resonate with students by showing vulnerability, addressing complex issues, and providing hope. Her new book, *Finally Seen*, has become a fast favorite with students, and they continue to love all of the *Front Desk* series.

NEAL SHUSTERMAN

Shusterman writes dark tales that thrust realistic, likable teens into a surreal situation and raises deep philosophic questions. Stories like **Scythe** are thoughtful and thrilling stories of life, death, and meaning.

RICK RIORDAN

A favorite author that mixes action, fantasy and mythology into great stories.

ALAN GRATZ

Students who enjoy historical fiction, and even many who don't usually like it, love Alan Gratz's books. He takes actual historical events and accounts and builds fictional stories that capture the human impact of these events on adolescent children. Students enjoy reading about these events through the eyes of someone their age, and the books often motivate students to research and learn about that historical event and time. Two consistent favorites are **Ground Zero** and **Refugee**. He also recently published a graphic novel, *Captain America: The Ghost Army*, which students love.

RAINA TELGEMEIER

Junior High students can't get enough of Raina Telgemeier's graphic novels. Many students have read all her books multiple times and grow up with them. These are books that students want to own so that they can reread them over and over. Readers are drawn in by the colorful graphics and continue reading because the stories are funny and entertaining and feel real to them, and they see themselves in her books. I have heard Telgemeier's books referred to as girl books; however, please don't categorize them this way. Boys also love her books, particularly **Ghosts, Guts**, and her graphic novel versions of some of Ann M. Martin's **Baby-Sitters Club** books.

JEWELL PARKER RHODES

Jewell Parker Rhodes's books are timeless and powerful, and they teach readers about the world while also engaging them in captivating stories that encourage them to explore and empathize with different perspectives. Rhodes creates historical fiction, contemporary, and magical realism narratives that transport readers into worlds filled with adventure, emotion, real-world issues, and sometimes a little bit of fantasy. Her writing style is accessible for all ages of middle-grade students, while being intellectually stimulating for upper middle grades. **Ghost Boys** and *Towers Falling* are consistent student favorites.

STUART GIBBS

Many students start reading some of Stuart Gibbs's books in elementary school and grow with them into middle school. He creates stories with mystery, humor, and thrilling adventures that capture the imagination of young readers and keep them coming back for more of his books. His main characters are very relatable and feel like someone that students would want to be friends with, adding to their connection and interest in the stories. He also has a wide range of tales, many of which are in a series and range in topic from solving crimes at a spy school to saving animals. He recently published graphic novel versions of some books from his popular **Spy School** series. If students enjoy his books, they have many choices to read before they run out.

NICOLE MELLEBY

Nicole Melleby's books address a multitude of challenges that young readers face in middle school with honesty, nuance, and authenticity. Her novels include topics such as identity, mental health, friendship, and complex family dynamics. Melleby's books invite readers to see themselves in the characters, reflect on their own emotions, and have empathy for others through story lines that capture their attention. Student favorites include **The Science of Being Angry** and **How to Become a Planet**, both of which capture something essential about adolescents' mental health.

Starred Reviews

Dear Martin

Author Nic Stone drops readers deep into the life of her 17-year-old main character, Justyce, who suddenly finds himself on the wrong side of an unprovoked, racially charged encounter with a police officer. Primary themes of interest to middle school students: privilege, friendship, race and racial injustice, discrimination, the criminal justice system.

Starfish

Lisa Fipps's debut novel-in-verse finds protagonist Ellie on a journey of self-acceptance and discovery. When she's in her swimming pool, Ellie feels weightless and free of the fat-shaming she experienced since her fifth birthday. But with the help of her support system—her therapist, a new friend, and her father—she develops the confidence to claim her space in the world. Primary themes of interest to middle school students: body positivity, bullying and fatphobia, identity, mental health.

The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives

In this journalistic piece of nonfiction, author Dashka Slater reveals the complexities of what transpired between two teenagers—Sasha and Richard—on a bus in Oakland, California, and the aftermath that ultimately transformed two families. Primary themes of interest to middle school students: gender and sexuality, race, discrimination, the criminal justice system.

When Stars Are Scattered

This heartbreaking yet hopeful graphic novel by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed tells the story of Mohamed's youth—primarily spent at a Kenyan refugee camp after fleeing war-torn Somalia. After being separated from his mother, Omar navigates a series of difficult choices to decide what is best for him and his younger, nonverbal brother. Primary themes of interest to middle school students: family, hope and faith, love, fear.

Wonder

Through the perspective of multiple narrators, R. J. Palacio shares the story of Auggie Pullman—a 10-year-old boy born with a genetic condition that causes facial differences—transitioning from a life of secluded homeschooling to the jarring experience of attending a mainstream elementary school for the first time. Primary themes of interest to middle school students: disability and difference, identity, bullying, coming of age, isolation and in

The Canyon's Edge

Life can change in an instant, a fact that Nora knows all too well. It's a year since the tragedy that stole her mother, and, like clockwork, another accident strikes, this time while hiking in a remote Sonoran Desert canyon with her father. A flash storm sends a deluge of water down the canyon's dry riverbed, carrying away Nora's father in its strong current. As Nora fights waves of panic, her harrowing tale of survival unfolds through a mix of free-verse and concrete poetry. Flashbacks and nightmares fill in details about her mother's death and the PTSD it imprinted on the lives of Nora and her father. Nora is an experienced outdoorswoman, but the storm washed away her pack of supplies, leaving her with only her ingenuity. Determined to find her father, she begins to walk and rock climb in the direction that he disappeared. Her physical struggles—hunger and thirst, sunburned and scraped skin—are intercut with internal ones, blending her journey through grief with her current plight in the canyon. Bowling's (Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus, 2017) spare writing packs a powerful wallop, and the tense blurring of reality and nightmare effectively conveys Nora's semi-hallucinatory state. Yet Nora finds ways to overcome the frightening obstacles before her, resulting in a triumphant story of healing and bravery.

What About Will

Trace and Will are inseparable brothers— that is, until the incident at the football game. Soon after the incident, Will stops playing the sports he once loved and begins to go down a harmful path while pushing away the ones closest to him. Twelve-year-old Trace must now juggle school, baseball, and his parents' separation, all while covering for Will. But with every lie Trace must tell for his brother, the more worried he becomes for him. Trace realizes that to save his brother, he must confide in someone and ask for help, even if it means further hurting his family with the truth. Writing in her recognizable free-verse style, Ellen Hopkins conveys the raw and realistic emotions of a broken family. The book covers multiple tough subjects, such as divorce and addiction, in a manner that is digestible for a younger audience. What about Will is a story about family, love, loss, hope, and understanding that you don't have to go through hardships alone.

Saugerties Public Library

Summer reading registration for kids and teenagers starts on June 20!

hello



CO-READERS: READ WITH SOMEONE AND EARN PRIZES!

INDEPENDENT READERS: READ FOR RAFFLE TICKETS TO WIN A LEGO KIT OR SQUISHMALLOW!

TEENS: FOLLOW A TREASURE MAP FOR PIZZA, VINYL STICKERS, AND LIGHTSABER DUELS!

AND DON'T FORGET ADULTS! STARTING JULY 1, THEY CAN PICK UP A BINGO CARD AND READ FOR RAFFLE TICKETS FOR GIFT CARDS!