

UPPER GRADES



The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian

(Sherman Alexie. Illus. by Ellen Fornay)

2007. Little, Brown. ISBN: 9780316013680. Gr. 7–10.

This semi-autobiographical novel follows 14-year-old Junior from the Spokane Indian reservation, where he's grown up, to a private school where he hopes to get a better education.

The Arrival

(Shaun Tan)

2007. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine. ISBN: 9780439895293. Gr. 6–12.

In this remarkable, nearly wordless illustrated book for older readers, Tan tells the story of an immigrant's flight from a war-torn land to a safer country, where he begins to adjust to a completely new, sometimes fantastical culture.

The Book Thief

(Markus Zusak)

2006. Knopf. ISBN: 9780375931000. Gr. 10–12.

A young girl in Nazi Germany finds escapism and solace in books and as well as an unlikely group of new friends in this multi-award-winning novel.

Counting by 7s.

(Holly Goldberg Sloan)

2013. Dial. ISBN: 9780803738553. Gr. 7–10.

After her parents' death, Willow finds a family of supportive friends who are quirky and idiosyncratic as she is in this novel about resilience, community, and kids (and adults) who don't fit neatly into categories.

Does My Head Look Big in This?

(Randa Abdel-Fattah)

2007. Scholastic. ISBN: 9780439922333. Gr. 7–10.

Funny and moving, this novel focuses on an Australian-born contemporary muslim teen who faces cultural prejudice and discrimination, as well as her traditional parents' views.

The Fault in Our Stars

(John Green)

2012. Dutton. ISBN: 9780525478812. Gr. 9–12.

Two teen cancer survivors meet and fall in love in this bestselling, deeply affecting novel that touches on the largest questions of meaning, human connection, and the wonders of life.

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The First Part Last (Angela Johnson)

2003. Simon & Schuster. ISBN: 9780689849220. Gr. 7–12.

A 16-year-old boy becomes a loving single father in this beautifully written, multi-award-winning novel.

I'll Give You the Sun (Jandy Nelson)

2014. Dial. ISBN: 9780803734968. Gr. 10–12.

Artistic twins cope with family tragedy as they try to forge their own identities in this award-winning novel for older teens.

Kira-Kira (Cynthia Kadohata)

2004. Atheneum. ISBN: 9780689856396. Gr. 6–12.

In the 1950s, a Japanese American girl in a small Georgia town tries to live out the lessons she's learned from her beloved sister, who is terminally ill.

The Land (Mildred Taylor)

2001. Puffin. ISBN: 9781101997567. Gr. 7–12.

This companion to the classic novel Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry shows the brutal historical realities of the Reconstruction era in a nuanced family story about strength, hope, and unexpected human kindness.

A Long Walk to Water (Linda Sue Park)

2010. Clarion. ISBN: 9780547251271. Gr. 6–9.

Based on true events, this dramatic survival story tells of a Sudanese boy's escape from brutal rebel warfare to his eventual reunion with his family in America and then, finally, a return to Sudan, where he builds a much-needed well. A young Sudanese girl's viewpoint adds more insight.

Marcelo in the Real World (Francisco X. Stork)

2009. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine. ISBN: 9780545054744. Gr. 9–12.

A boy who falls on the high-functioning end of the autism spectrum faces an ethical challenge when he stumbles across revealing evidence at his summer job at a law firm.

Paperboy (Vince Vawter)

2013. Delacorte. ISBN: 9780385742443. Gr. 6–9.

During a hot summer in 1959 Memphis, a boy with a stutter faces his fear of meeting new people when he takes over a friend's paper route and finds his world greatly expanded.

Sorta Like a Rock Star (Matthew Quick)

2010. Little, Brown. ISBN: 9780316043533. Gr. 9–12.

Despite a tough life of uncertain housing with her alcoholic mom, 17-year-old Amber remains a self-proclaimed "princess of hope" as she cares for her rescue dog and grows deeply involved with her community.

The Wednesday Wars Gary Schmidt

Clarion. 2007. ISBN: 9780618724833. Gr. 6–9.

During Wednesday afternoons, a seventh-grader in the 1960s discovers both the timeless wisdom of Shakespeare and unexpected help from a teacher in this coming-of-age story about overcoming interior and exterior obstacles.