

Recommended Book Titles

Title	Author	Description
<i>Catch Rider</i>	Jennifer Lyne	<i>Catch Rider</i> is the fast-paced story of 14-year-old Sidney, whose goal is to be able to ride any horse. She has a hard life: Her father died recently, and her mother has taken up with an abusive, controlling boyfriend who doesn't like Sid. Her Uncle Wayne helps her with her horse training, but he's an alcoholic and isn't always reliable. Sidney lives in a depressed mill town in Virginia where there aren't many opportunities for young people who don't have money. People at school make fun of her for being poor, although she doesn't care what they think. And she won't quit until she exhausts every hope.
<i>Riding Chance</i>	Christine Kendall	<i>Riding Chance</i> is the story of Troy, a 13-year-old city boy, who gets caught for a petty crime but avoids Juvenile Hall by being assigned work duty at the city stables. As he learns to care for the horses, ride one named Chance, and play polo, he learns about himself and copes with grief. The novel deals with the loss of a parent and an instance of stop and frisk. It also has some instances of bullying behavior and mild name calling ("stupid"). Parents should be ready to talk about these things, as well as the importance of making good choices in friends and how to cope during stressful situations.
<i>Efrén Divided</i>	Ernesto Cisneros	While his father works two jobs, seventh-grader Efrén Nava must take care of his twin siblings, kindergartners Max and Mia, after their mother is deported to Mexico. Includes a glossary of Spanish words.
<i>Race to the Sun</i>	Rebecca Roanhorse	Lately, seventh grader Nizhoni Begay has been able to detect monsters, like that man in the fancy suit who was in the bleachers at her basketball game. Turns out he's Mr. Charles, her dad's new boss at the oil and gas company, and he's alarmingly interested in Nizhoni and her brother, Mac, their Navajo heritage, and the legend of the Hero Twins. Nizhoni knows he's a threat, but her father won't believe her. When Dad disappears the next day, leaving behind a message that says "Run!", the siblings and Nizhoni's best friend, Davery, are thrust into a rescue mission that can only be accomplished with the help of Diné Holy People, all disguised as quirky characters. Their aid will come at a price: the kids must pass a series of trials in which it seems like nature itself is out to kill them. If Nizhoni, Mac, and Davery can reach the House of the Sun, they will be outfitted with what they need to defeat the ancient monsters Mr. Charles has unleashed. But it will take more than weapons for Nizhoni to become the hero she was destined to be . . .
<i>Chirp</i>	Kate Messner	When Mia moves to Vermont the summer after seventh grade, she's recovering from the broken arm she got falling off a balance beam. And packed away in the moving boxes under her clothes and gymnastics trophies is a secret she'd rather forget. Mia's change in scenery brings day camp, new friends, and time with her beloved grandmother. But Gram is convinced someone is trying to destroy her cricket farm. Is it sabotage or is Gram's thinking impaired from the stroke she suffered months ago? Mia and her friends set out to investigate, but can they uncover the truth in time to save Gram's farm? And will that discovery empower Mia to confront the secret she's been hiding--and find the courage she never knew she had? In a compelling story rich with friendship, science, and summer fun, a girl finds her voice while navigating the joys and challenges of growing up.
<i>Stand Up, Yumi Chung!</i>	Jessica Kim	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

		<p>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.</p> <p>As this case of mistaken identity unravels, Yumi must decide to stand up and reveal the truth or risk losing her dreams and disappointing everyone she cares about.</p>
<i>That's What Friends Do</i>	Cathleen Barnhart	<p>A heartfelt and powerful debut novel for fans of Erin Entrada Kelly and John David Anderson, <i>That's What Friends Do</i> is a book for anyone learning how to have the hard conversations about feelings, boundaries, and what it means to be a true friend.</p> <p>Samantha Goldstein and David Fisher have been friends ever since they met on their town's Little League baseball team. But when a new kid named Luke starts hanging out with them, what was a comfortable pair becomes an awkward trio.</p> <p>Luke's comments make Sammie feel uncomfortable—but all David sees is how easily Luke flirts with Sammie, and so David decides to finally make a move on the friend he's always had a crush on.</p> <p>Soon things go all wrong and too far, and Sammie and David are both left feeling hurt, confused, and unsure of themselves, without anyone to talk to about what happened.</p> <p>As rumors start flying around the school, David must try to make things right (if he can) and Sammie must learn to speak up about what's been done to her.</p>
<i>The Water Bears</i>	Kim Baker	<p>A story about a boy recovering from a bear attack with the help of his friends and maybe, some magic.</p> <p>All Newt Gomez wants for his thirteenth birthday is a bike. After surviving a bear attack last year, he thinks this isn't an unreasonable request. Instead, his hardworking parents give him a former taco truck to help him get around the wacky island where they live in the Pacific Northwest. And then Newt and his best friend Ethan find a life-sized wooden bear washed up on the shore. Ethan is convinced the bear grants wishes; Newt doesn't know what to think.</p> <p>Newt also has a big decision ahead: go to middle school on the island, or to the mainland where his warm extended family lives? There, he won't be the only Latinx kid; he doesn't have bad dreams about the attack, and not everyone knows what happened to him. Newt secretly plots to move to his abuela's house, but his truck is stolen with the maybe-magic bear inside. He must confront his fears and adapt to the reality of a world that's often uncertain, but always full of salvageable wonders.</p>
<i>The Land of the Cranes</i>	Aida Salazar	<p>From the prolific author of <i>The Moon Within</i> comes the heart-wrenchingly beautiful story in verse of a young Latinx girl who learns to hold on to hope and love even in the darkest of places: a family detention center for migrants and refugees.</p> <p>Nine-year-old Betita knows she is a crane. Papi has told her the story, even before her family fled to Los Angeles to seek refuge from cartel wars in Mexico. The Aztecs came from a place called Aztlan, what is now the Southwest US, called the land of the cranes. They left Aztlan to establish their great city in the center of the universe-Tenochtitlan, modern-day Mexico City. It was prophesied that their people would one day return to live among the cranes in their promised land. Papi tells Betita that they are cranes that have come home.</p> <p>Then one day, Betita's beloved father is arrested by Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) and deported to Mexico. Betita and her pregnant mother are left behind on their own, but soon they too are detained and must learn to survive in a family detention camp outside of Los Angeles. Even in cruel and inhumane conditions, Betita finds heart in her own poetry and in the community she and her mother find in the camp. The voices of her fellow asylum seekers fly above the hatred keeping them caged, but each day threatens to tear them down lower than they ever thought they could be. Will Betita and her family ever be whole again?</p>

<i>Things You Can't Say</i>	Jenn Bishop	<p>Perfect for fans of <i>See You in the Cosmos</i> and <i>The Science of Breakable Things</i>, author Jenn Bishop tells the moving story of a boy determined to uncover the truth.</p> <p>Nothing is going right this summer for Drew. And after losing his dad unexpectedly three years ago, Drew knows a lot about things not going right. First, it's the new girl Audrey taking over everything at the library, Drew's sacred space. Then it's his best friend, Filipe, pulling away from him. But most upsetting has to be the mysterious man who is suddenly staying with Drew's family. An old friend of Mom's? Drew isn't buying that.</p> <p>With an unlikely ally in Audrey, he's determined to get to the bottom of who this man really is. The thing is, there are some fears—like what if the person you thought was your dad actually <i>wasn't</i>—that you can't speak out loud, not to anyone. At least that's what Drew thinks.</p> <p>But then again, first impressions can be deceiving.</p>
<i>Front Desk</i>	Kelly Yang	This big-hearted novel follows Mia, a young immigrant who lives at a motel where her parents are employed. Mia works at the front desk and uses her new-found writing voice to stand up for herself, her family, and the other immigrants and guests at the motel.
<i>Amal Unbound</i>	Aisha Saeed	When the Pakistani girl has an accidental run-in with the son of her village's corrupt landlord, Amal is forced into indentured servitude to pay off her family's debts. Amal stands up to the powerful estate in order to change her future and the community she lives in.
<i>Me and Marvin Gardens</i>	Amy Sarig King	After Obe Devlin's family farm is taken over by developers, he meets a plastic-eating animal named Marvin Gardens. Obe must make some hard decisions to save his new friendship in this novel that asks important questions about how we treat our planet.
<i>A Good Kind of Trouble</i>	Lisa Moore Ramée	Trouble-averse Shayla finds herself at a powerful Black Lives Matter protest and decides to wear an armband in support of the movement, a decision that turns controversial at school. This story of a young girl's social justice awakening demonstrates how small acts can make a big difference.
<i>Maybe He Just Likes You</i>	Barbara Dee	In this #MeToo story for young readers, middle schooler, Mila, gets an unwanted hug on the school blacktop, and starts to question the harassment and attention from her classmates. Watching her find the confidence to speak out and fight back is empowering and important for readers of all genders.
<i>The Breadwinner Trilogy</i>	Deborah Ellis	This series follows 11-year-old Parvana, who lives under Taliban rule in Afghanistan. When her father is arrested and her family is left without someone who can work or even shop for food, Parvana, forbidden to earn money as a girl, disguises herself as a boy to help her family survive. <i>The Breadwinner</i> is an empowering tale with a sharp and brave heroine.
<i>Stella by Starlight</i>	Sharon M. Draper	Stella lives in the segregated south in 1932. Out, late one night, wandering around, Stella and her brother witness a Klu Klux Klan activity, starting an unwelcome chain of events in her otherwise sleepy town. With a compelling and courageous voice, Stella tells the story of how she and her community ban together against racism and injustice.
<i>One Crazy Summer</i>	Rita Williams Garcia	Set against the backdrop of the Black Panther movement, Delphine and her sisters visit their estranged mother in California, attend a Black Panther day camp, and discover their mother's dedication to social justice issues. A moving, funny novel with a captivating voice, the sisters learn about their family and their country during one truly crazy summer.

<i>Sylvia & Aki</i>	Winifred Conkling	Sylvia and Aki never expected to know one another, until their lives intersect on a Southern California farm and change the country forever. Based on true events, this book reveals the remarkable story of Mendez vs. Westminster School District, the California court case that desegregated schools for Latino children.
<i>Operation Redwood</i>	S. Terrell French	When Julian is sent to stay with his disinterested aunt and uncle for four months, he discovers that his Uncle's corporation plans to cut down a group of redwood trees at Big Tree Grove and decides to take a stand to save the trees. Perfect for the young environmentalists in your life, <i>Operation Redwood</i> is an adventurous and gripping tale as Julian and his friends hatch scheme after scheme to save these giants of nature.
<i>I Am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced</i>	<i>Nujood Ali with Dephine Mainoui</i>	<i>For more mature readers, this unforgettable autobiography tells the true story of Nujood Ali, a ten-year-old Yemeni girl married off at a young age, who decides to resist her abusive husband and get a divorce. A moving tale of tragedy, triumph, and courage, Nujood's brave defiance has inspired generations of women and young girls.</i>
<i>Tight</i>	Torrey Maldonado	A sixth grader named Bryan from the projects gets all wound up when he's constantly told he needs to be "hard" when he'd rather go with the flow and stay chill. Bryan's mom has always encouraged his quiet, thoughtful nature, but his dad thinks it's time for his tween son to toughen up.