Our intention with this list is to provide a guide to some of the best and most enduring literature written for teens, as well as highlight adult and classic titles with special teen appeal. Plus we couldn’t resist sneaking in a few of our own personal favorites just for fun! This is by no means a complete list and will be updated on an annual basis. In fact, we encourage you to share with us favorite titles you feel would improve the list (see back page).

While the materials on this list have been selected for ages 12–18, the books span a broad range of reading and maturity levels. We have tried to give a general indication of the appropriateness of each title for different age levels, but these are entirely subjective labels and may vary from individual to individual.

—Tracy Weikel, Committee Organizer

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie (2007)
Arnold “Junior” Spirit is used to being picked on. His hydrocephaly and cheap coke-bottle glasses make him an easy target, but at least he has his best friend Rowdy, a short-tempered rabble-rouser who is always on Arnold’s side. Sick of the hopelessness that permeates life on the rez, Arnold transfers from the reservation school to the white high school in Reardon. His choice makes him an outcast on the rez—even Rowdy deserts him—and the kids at the new school view him as a definite oddity. But as he learns to navigate the new school and copes with family tragedies, Arnold begins to get a larger picture of who he is and who he wants to be. High School.

An Abundance of Katherines by John Green (2006)
Recent high school grad and child prodigy Colin Singleton is devastated when his girlfriend Katherine dumps him. Of course this should be old hat by now, as this is Colin’s 19th dumping—all of them by girls named Katherine. Depressed over the love of his life’s rejection and the fact that his status as a child prodigy is over, Colin and his best friend Hassan— a wise-cracking, Judge Judy fanatic who lives with his parents and refuses to consider college or getting a job—head south on a road trip. This is a delightfully inventive and frequently hilarious adventure where the destination turns out to be the least of the journey. And, as a bonus, it has one of the funniest fight scenes ever. High School.

Amy and Roger’s Epic Detour by Morgan Matson (2010)
Seventeen-year-old Amy Curry is still reeling from her father’s death when she sets out on a cross-country road trip in the company of Roger, a 19-year-old college student and total stranger. Along the way, they make several unscheduled stops to take in the local color and pursue separate missions. This is a compulsively readable novel, punctuated with awesome playlists, whimsical drawings, and other mementos to document their journey and add flavor to the story itself. Amy and Roger are likeable, -drawn characters, and their conversations are fresh and believable. This is a wonderful, heartwarming book filled with adventure, drama, romance, and laugh-out-loud humor. High School.
Angela’s Ashes by Frank McCourt (1996)
This engaging memoir tells the story of Frank McCourt and his family, who left Depression-era America to “go home” to Ireland after a family tragedy. It is a powerful, gritty depiction of poverty and the glimpses of hope and humor that can be found in even in the most miserable childhoods. High School.

Anne of Green Gables (series)
by L.M. Montgomery (1908–1921)
When Anne Shirley, an irrepressibly imaginative red-haired orphan, is sent by mistake to live with a lonely, middle-aged brother and sister on a Prince Edward Island farm, she proceeds to make an indelible impression on everyone around her. This is a beloved, heartwarming, often hilarious tale and the first of a series that follows Anne from the age of eleven through adulthood. Middle School/High School.

Titles include:
1. Anne of Green Gables
2. Anne of Avonlea
3. Anne of the Island
4. Anne of Windy Poplars aka Anne of Windy Willows
5. Anne’s House of Dreams
6. Anne of Ingleside
7. Rainbow Valley
8. Rilla of Ingleside

Annie on My Mind by Nancy Garden (1982)
From the moment Liza Winthrop meets Annie Kenyon at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she knows there is something special between them. But when their relationship is discovered, Liza begins to doubt her feelings. High School.

Quoted:
“No single work has done more for young adult LGBT fiction than this classic about two teenage girls who fall in love.” —School Library Journal

Ashfall by Mike Mullin (2011)
Fifteen-year-old Alex is home alone for the weekend when a super volcano explodes and everything goes haywire. To find his family, he must trek over 100 miles through a dangerous landscape of ash and snow, trying to survive both nature and a new world in which all the old rules of civilization have vanished. This is an epic survival story with plenty of violence and peril. Touches of romance and humor are mixed in to relieve the darkness. The characters are superbly drawn—especially the brash, MacGyver-esque Darla—and the writing is solid. The unfathomable situations Alex encounters feel real and immediate, and the suspense never lets up in this gripping apocalyptic thriller. High School.

Bastard Out of Carolina by Dorothy Allison (1992)
This is an emotionally difficult yet riveting novel about growing up poor and white in the South. The book centers on Ruth Anne “Bone” Boatwright, an illegitimate child in a family of social outcasts who grows up with her young waitress mother, younger sister, and large extended family. It is a tumultuous childhood, especially after her mother marries “Daddy Glenn,” a jealous and unpredictable man whose behavior escalates into sexual abuse. High School (mature).
**Before I Fall by Lauren Oliver** (2010)
Beautiful and ruthless, Samantha Kingston is the queen bee of her high school. She and her friends party hard and do as they like, regardless of the consequences to others. But one fateful night a car crash on the way home from a party brings an end to everything as Sam knows it. Now Sam is forced to live the same day over and over until she finally gets it right. This is a raw, emotional, often beautiful book as Sam reexamines her life and relationships. *High School.*

**Beloved by Toni Morrison** (1987)
Sethe, an escaped slave living in a “spiteful” house with her 10-year-old daughter Denver, is haunted by a terrible choice in her past and her neighbors’ disapproval. After reconnecting with a friend from her days of slavery, Sethe’s life is once again turned upside down by a mysterious woman named Beloved, who quickly becomes a dominate force in Sethe and Denver’s home. Set primarily in post-Civil War Ohio, this story in not narrated chronologically; instead it is peppered with flashbacks, memories, and nightmares. *High School (mature).*

**Big Fish by Daniel Wallace** (1998)
When his attempts to get to know his dying father fail, William Bloom tries to reconcile his memories of his dad with the tall tales and heroic feats Edward Bloom would use to describe his life. As he revisits his father’s mythic tales, William discovers that his father’s exaggerations might—just might—have some basis in reality. *High School.*

**Blood and Chocolate by Annette Curtis Klause** (1997)
A beautiful teenage werewolf falls for a human boy and must cope with the expectations of her pack and the danger that her secrets will be discovered. *High School (mature).*

**Bloody Jack Adventures (series) by L.A. Meyer** (2002–Ongoing)
Streetwise orphan Mary Faber is thirteen (or thereabout) when she disguises herself in boys’ clothes and renames herself “Jack” to trick her way onto a pirate-hunting warship of Her Majesty’s Royal Navy. What follows is an adventure story to remember, as Jacky spends two years keeping her secret (mostly) and plunging headfirst into endless misadventures. There are pirates, shipwrecks, exotic settings, and even a bit of romance. This is a wonderful read, with excellent use of description and dialog—and Jacky is a clever and enterprising character that guys and girls will adore equally. (Description for *Bloody Jack*, book one of the series.) *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

**Titles include:**
1. **Bloody Jack**
2. **Curse of the Blue Tattoo**
3. **Under the Jolly Roger**
4. **In the Belly of the Bloodhound**
5. **Mississippi Jack**
6. **My Bonny Light Horseman**
7. **Rapture of the Deep**
8. **The Wake of the Lorelei Lee**
9. **The Mark of the Golden Dragon**
10. **Viva Jacquelina!**
The Book Thief by Markus Zusak (2006)
Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death narrates the story of Liesel, a young German girl who is eking out a meager existence for herself by thievery when she encounters something she can’t resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares stories to help sustain her neighbors during bombing raids. Middle School (mature)/High School.

By the Time You Read This, I’ll Be Dead by Julie Ann Peters (2010)
Daelyn Rice is broken, and after several suicide attempts, she’s determined to get her death right this time. So she visits a website for “completers” and blogs about her life, revealing a history of bullying that traces all the way back to kindergarten. Meanwhile, an unusual boy tries to draw out the “freak who doesn't talk.” High School (mature).

Carrie by Stephen King (1974)
High-school misfit Carrie White is tormented by her peers at school and repressed at home by her domineering, ultra-religious mother. But after discovering her telekinetic powers, she finds a way to exact revenge. High School.

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger (1951)
In this classic tale of teenage angst and rebellion, sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield leaves behind the hypocrisies of his boarding school and goes on a “four-day odyssey” in New York City. High School.

First Line:
“If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you’ll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don’t feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.”

Imagine if your every thought was broadcast like a radio signal—and you could hear the thoughts of everyone around you, even animals. On the planet of New World, settlers are besieged by endless “Noise,” a result of biological warfare between the planet’s resident aliens and the first human colonizers. Or, at least that’s what Todd Hewitt, the last boy in a town of men, has been told. Supposedly the Noise germ killed all the women on the planet—including Todd’s mother—but just as he is preparing himself for his initiation into manhood Todd stumbles upon a dangerous secret that sends him on the run and makes him question everything he’s ever believed. High School.

Titles include:
1. The Knife of Never Letting Go
2. The Ask and the Answer
3. Monsters of Men
A Child Called “It” by David Pelzer (1995)
This ever-popular favorite tells the story of a child’s abuse at the hands of his emotionally unstable, alcoholic mother. High School.

The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier (1974)
It’s easy to talk about what you believe, but actually taking a stand can be absolutely terrifying. That’s what Jerry Renault learns when he refuses to participate in his school’s annual candy drive and incurs the wrath of senior Archie Costello, his gang of followers, and even the school administration. High School.

The Color Purple by Alice Walker (1982)
This epistolary novel relates the story of a poverty-stricken African American woman in the South during the first half of the twentieth century. Celie became the child bride of a violent and angry widower, but manages to her sustain herself through letters to God and to her sister in Africa. Eventually, Celie’s difficult marriage reveals itself to be a blessing of sorts when she discovers love, hope, and courage through an unlikely friendship with her husband’s mistress. High School (mature).

The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe by Edgar Allan Poe (1902, 2009)
This anthology contains all of Poe’s (1809–1849) poems and tales as well as his only complete novel, The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket, a horror/adventure story about a stowaway on a whaling ship who must endure mutiny, starvation, cannibals, and the ocean’s horrors on his way to the South Pole. Key stories and poems include “The Cask of Amontillado,” “The Masque of the Red Death,” “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Pit and the Pendulum,” and “The Raven.” Most titles are suitable for middle school, though the novel and a few other titles may be best for more mature readers. Middle School/High School.

Crank (series) by Ellen Hopkins (2004–2010)
Kristina Snow is the perfect daughter—until she meets Adam, who introduces her to “the monster.” As she becomes increasingly addicted to crystal meth, Kristina becomes a very different person, struggling to control her life and her mind as she grows up and has children of her own. Novels in verse. High School (mature).

Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter by Tom Franklin (2010)
In 1970s rural Mississippi, two boys—one black, the other white—build an unlikely friendship despite parental discouragement. Decades later, they are thrown together again. One is town constable; the other is the town pariah and lead suspect in the disappearance of a teenage girl. A perfect blending of place, character, and voice give this quiet literary thriller the feel of a classic. High School.

Titles include:
1. Crank
2. Glass
3. Fallout
This is the simple yet extraordinary story of a 15-year-old autistic boy who investigates the death of a neighbor's dog only to uncover shocking secrets about his own family. It is heartbreaking, funny, and remarkably written to convey the workings of an autistic mind. The novel was originally published for adults, but another version (edited for profanity) was later published for younger readers. *High School.*

**Dandelion Wine by Ray Bradbury** (1957)
This story of a boy’s magical small-town summer in 1928 deals with events both mundane and mystical. *Middle School/High School.*

**Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank (trans. by Susan Massotty)** (1947, 1995)
This is the definitive translation of the beloved and deeply admired testament in which Anne Frank recounts the two years she spent hiding in an Amsterdam warehouse with her Jewish family during the Nazi occupation. *Middle School/High School.*

**Discworld/Tiffany Aching (series) by Terry Pratchett** (2003–2012)
Discworld is an extensive comic fantasy series of nearly forty novels, though the books do not need to be read in order. To date, there are four books featuring Tiffany Aching, a young apprentice witch in the Discworld universe. The subseries starts when Tiffany teams up with the Wee Free Men, a clan of six-inch-high blue men, to rescue her baby brother and ward off a sinister invasion from Fairyland. *Middle School.*

**Divergent by Veronica Roth** (2011)
Smart, gutsy characters and a sweet romance add depth to this action-packed, addictively fast-paced read set in a not-too-distant future Chicago where people are divided into five factions. Now that she is sixteen, it is finally time for Beatrice Prior to choose her permanent faction. But her choice won’t be easy. When she takes her aptitude tests, Beatrice learns that she is a Divergent, someone who does not fit easily into any of the predetermined classifications and whose very existence threatens her society. In order to survive, she must keep her secret and excel in the tests administered by her new faction, from weaponry and hand-to-hand combat, to capture the flag and mind-bending virtual reality simulations. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

**Dracula by Bram Stoker** (1897)
Having discovered the double identity of the wealthy Transylvanian nobleman Count Dracula, a small group of people vow to rid the world of the evil vampire. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

**Quoted:**
"It is splendid. No book since Mrs. Shelley’s *Frankenstein* or indeed any other at all has come near yours in originality, or terror." —Bram Stoker’s mother, 1897
**East of Eden by John Steinbeck** (1952)
An American saga set between the beginning of the 20th century and the end of World War I, this epic novel re-imagines the seminal stories of Genesis through the entwined lives of two families in the Salinas Valley. **High School.**

**The Dust of 100 Dogs by A.S. King** (2009)
Seventeenth-century pirate Emer Morrisey was murdered and cursed to live the lives of 100 dogs. Centuries later, Saffron Adams is born with a complete memory of Emer’s life and all the dog lives in between. This novel is multilayered, with several storylines to keep the pages turning. There is Emer’s life in Cromwellian Ireland, her lost love, and her journey to become one of the most fearsome pirates of the Caribbean. Then there is Saffron’s difficult family situation, her hilarious struggle to repress her pirate instincts, and her driving desire to retrieve the treasure that Emer buried just before her death. Also thrown into the mix are the insights gained from centuries living a dog’s life and a disturbed middle-aged man who lives near the treasure site. Dust is the perfect combination of history, adventure, romance, and contemporary realism. **High School.**

**Emma by Jane Austen** (1815)
This classic comedy of manners centers on Emma Woodhouse, a flawed and self-deluding matchmaker with the best of intentions but little understanding of the people around her. **High School.**

**Enchanted Forest Chronicles (series) by Patricia C. Wrede** (1985–1993)
The series begins with Princess Cimorene, who bravely aids dragons in their battle against the wizards trying to overtake their kingdom. **Middle School/High School.**

**Titles include:**
1. Dealing With Dragons
2. Searching for Dragons
3. Calling on Dragons
4. Talking to Dragons

**Ender’s Game by Orson Scott Card** (1985)
A child soldier and now a veteran of simulated war games, Ender believes he is engaged in a computer war game. In truth, he is commanding the last fleet against an alien race seeking the destruction of Earth. **Middle School/High School.**

**Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Myers** (1988)
Seventeen-year-old Richie Perry is fresh out of a Harlem high school and doesn’t have the money for college, so he enlists in the Army. Completely unprepared for the horrors he must face, Richie spends a devastating year on active duty in Vietnam. **High School (mature).**
**The Fault in Our Stars by John Green** (2012)
Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few extra years, Hazel’s cancer is still terminal. But when she meets the wildly clever and charismatic Augustus Waters at her Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel discovers a new zest for life. This is a wonderfully written book about love and loss and learning to live while coping with the reality of death, about wondering how you will be remembered after you’re gone and what will become of those you love. *The Fault in Our Stars* is not an easy read. It is intellectually and emotionally challenging—but worth the effort. By turns brilliant, hilarious, and heartbreaking, this is a book that is not easily forgotten. *High School (mature).*

Eddie, a wounded war veteran killed in a tragic accident, believes he led an uninspired life. But when he awakens in the afterlife, he soon discovers that in heaven there are five people to help the deceased understand the significance and value of their life on earth. *High School.*

**Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes** (1966)
Charlie Gordon, a young man with limited mental capabilities, and a laboratory mouse named Algernon become the joint objects of a scientific experiment to see if Charlie can become “normal.” Based on the 1959 short story of the same name. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

**Forever by Judy Blume** (1975)
Katherine and Michael, along with various friends and acquaintances in suburban New Jersey, discover the possibilities and limitations of love, sex, and personal commitment. They also invent a few interesting names for body parts. *High School.*

**Frankenstein by Mary Shelley** (1818)
This gothic horror classic is considered by many to be the first ever science fiction novel. It’s the story of the arrogant and ego-centric Victor Frankenstein, who becomes obsessed with generating a new life from stolen body parts. However, upon seeing his new creation, Frankenstein rejects his “monster,” leaving it to make its own way in the world with no direction. The results are disastrous for Frankenstein and those he holds dear. Mary Shelley was 19 when *Frankenstein* was first published. *High School.*

**Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café by Fannie Flagg** (1987)
Depressed middle-aged housewife Evelyn Couch finds the power and courage to change her life after befriending Ninny Threadgood, an elderly woman she meets at a nursing home. The novel blends Evelyn and Ninny’s present day (the 1980s) with stories from Ninny’s youth in the 1920s. At the heart of these past stories is Idgie, Ninny’s strong-minded, tomboy sister-in-law, who flouted societal expectations and opened a café with her friend Ruth. *High School.*
**Funny How Things Change** by Melissa Wyatt (2009)

This is a quiet, thoughtful novel set in the coal-mining country of West Virginia. The small town of Dwyer is dying, so when his girlfriend Lisa asks him to go with her to Pennsylvania when she leaves for college, Remy Walker agrees. After all, even his mother left to make a life somewhere else. Still, Remy is torn: he loves Lisa, but knows he will miss life in the mountains. This is a compelling and refreshing novel, with a relatable narrator and a strong sense of place. The characters and events feel authentic rather than contrived, and the writing is crisp and eloquent. *High School.*

**Gemma Doyle Trilogy** (series) by Libba Bray (2003–2007)

In 1895, on Gemma’s 16th birthday, she is assaulted with a terrifying vision of her mother’s death at the hands of a mysterious dark creature. Minutes later, Gemma finds her mother dead in the middle of the Bombay marketplace. Gemma’s visions continue after she is sent to Spence, an all-girls school outside London with a strong gothic atmosphere. There she discovers the existence of secret societies called the Order and the Rakshana—and learns that she holds the power to enter a magical place called the Realms. The series is fascinating as it explores three worlds—the mysteries of Spence, the Realms, and late 19th century London—yet somehow maintains a completely modern sensibility. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

**Titles include:**

1. *A Great and Terrible Beauty*
2. *Rebel Angels*
3. *The Sweet Far Thing*

**The Girl With a Pearl Earring** by Tracy Chevalier (2000)

Have you ever wondered about the story behind a painting? In this radiant novel, Griet, a sixteen-year-old girl based on the unknown subject of one of Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer’s most famous paintings, comes to life. *High School.*

**The Giver by Lois Lowry** (1993)

This ageless favorite is a precursor to the current craze in dystopian fiction. It features a “perfect” world, where there is no such thing as fear or pain. There are no choices to agonize over; everything is decided for you. At the age of twelve, every person is assigned their role in the Community. When his turn comes, Jonas is chosen to receive special attention from the Giver, who holds in trust all the memories of the true pains and pleasures of life. And then Jonas learns a truth from which there is no turning back. *Middle School/High School.*

**The Glass Castle** by Jeannette Walls (2005)

In this heartbreaking and inspiring memoir, the child of an alcoholic father and an eccentric artist mother discusses her family’s nomadic upbringing. While their parents dodged authorities, the Walls children had to learn how to support themselves, even scrounging in school trashcans for food. *High School.*
Go Ask Alice by Anonymous (1971)
Originally sold as the real diary of an actual teenager, this is the faux-memoir of a 15-year-old girl in the 1960s. Despite her stable, secure upbringing—she’s the daughter of a college professor—she tries LSD at a party and is subsequently drawn into a nightmarish world of addiction, hustlers, and dealers. High School.

Gone With the Wind by Margaret Mitchell (1936)
This Pulitzer Prize–winning classic is set during the Civil War and Reconstruction. It introduces its teenage heroine, the spoiled and headstrong Scarlet O’Hara, on the eve of the Civil War and follows her struggles into adulthood. This is a love story, but also an epic historical saga. Middle School (mature)/High School.

The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood (1985)
In a future world where the birth rate has drastically declined, fertile women are rounded up, trained as “housemaids,” and expected to bear the children of prominent men. Offred can remember the days before the Republic of Gilead, when she was a happily married wife and mother; when she had a job, money of her own, and access to knowledge. But now everything has changed. High School.

The Harper Hall Trilogy (series) by Anne McCaffrey (1976–1979)
This trilogy is part of McCaffrey’s larger Dragonriders of Pern series but easily stands on its own. All three books feature Menolly, who challenges traditions and her father’s expectations in her quest to become a Harper, with the aid of nine fire dragons. Although Menolly appears throughout the series, the final book focuses on the adventures of Piemur, a boy soprano. Middle School/High School.

Titles include:
1. Dragonsong
2. Dragonsinger
3. Dragondrums

After discovering on his 11th birthday that he is a wizard, Harry attends Hogwarts School for Wizarding and Witchcraft. There he discovers that he is famous for a childhood encounter with Voldemort, a dark wizard who is determined to gain power. As Harry and his friends age, the novels become progressively darker and more complex. Middle School/High School.

Titles include:
1. Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone
2. Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets
3. Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban
4. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
5. Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix
6. Harry Potter and the Half-blood Prince
7. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows
**Hatchet by Gary Paulsen** (1987)
Thirteen-year-old Brian survives a plane crash only to be stranded in the Canadian wilderness—alone. There he must survive for months with only a hatchet to aid him while also coming to grips with his parents' divorce. *Middle School/High School.*

**The Hero and the Crown by Robin McKinley** (1984)
Although she is the daughter of the king, Aerin has never been accepted as full royalty. Both in and out of Damar’s royal court, people whisper the story of her mother, the witchwoman from the demon-haunted North who was said to have ensorcelled the king into marrying her and died after giving birth to Aerin. But with the guidance of the wizard Luthe and the help of the blue sword, Aerin will do what she must to win her birthright. *Middle School/High School.*

**His Dark Materials Trilogy (series) by Phillip Pullman** (1996–2000)
Lyra Belacqua’s life changes forever after she saves her uncle from an assassination attempt and learns of a mysterious substance called Dust. Children, including Lyra’s friend Roger, start to go missing and Lyra sets off on a rescue mission to the North. This is just the beginning of Lyra’s adventures through multiple universes as she and her friends try to solve the mystery of the Dust. *Middle School/High School.*

Arthur Dent, the last survivor on Earth, embarks on an offbeat, galaxy-hopping tour of the universe under the guidance of a galaxy tour-guide writer. *Middle School/High School.*

**The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien** (1937)
Bilbo Baggins, a respectable, well-to-do hobbit lives happily in quiet comfort until the day the wizard Gandalf and his band of homeless dwarves choose him to join their quest. Prequel to the Lord of the Rings Trilogy. *Middle School/High School.*

**The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros** (1984)
This poetic coming-of-age story centers on Esperanza, a young girl who longs to escape the low expectations and endless landscape of concrete and run-down tenements that come with growing up in her poor Hispanic neighborhood. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

**Howl’s Moving Castle by Diana Wynne Jones** (1986)
Sophie Hatter is living a humdrum life as a hat shop apprentice when a witch turns her into an old woman and she finds herself in the castle of the fearsome wizard Howl, who is rumored to eat souls. *Middle School/High School.*
The Hunger Games Trilogy (series) by Suzanne Collins (2008–2010)
Set in a post-apocalyptic world overseen by a selfish, pleasure-loving Capitol that rules with harshness and terror, this is an absorbing dystopian thriller series. In book one, Katniss and Peeta must compete in the Hunger Games, a televised competition where the teens must kill to survive. Balancing a fast pace with well-developed characters, the story blends gritty action scenes with a backdrop of social commentary. Middle School (mature)/High School.

Titles include:
1. The Hunger Games
2. Catching Fire
3. Mockingjay

If I Stay + Where She Went (companion novels) by Gayle Forman (2009, 2011)
One minute Mia is on a happy, spontaneous family drive; the next, she is standing over her own mangled body as paramedics work to revive her. Mia follows her body to the hospital and over the following hours, she contemplates her life, worries about her little brother, and yearns for her boyfriend. The people and relationships are vividly described, and Mia’s dilemma—to stay or to let go—and the actions of her loved ones are poignant but not overwrought. This is a powerful, lyrical novel that will stay with you. High School.

Love, heartache, betrayal, and music intertwine in this emotional sequel to If I Stay told from Adam’s perspective. Pouring his bitterness into his lyrics has made Adam a worldwide music sensation, but fame hasn’t healed what was damaged and broken. Now, stranded in New York in between flights, Adam decides it is time to confront his past with the girl he can’t get over. Raw and lyrical, Adam’s story is gripping in the tradition of Before Sunrise. The majority of the story takes place in a single day, and readers experience each moment right along with Adam, unsure how it will end until the very last page. High School.

I’ll Be There by Holly Goldberg Sloan (2011)
Intertwining a gripping survival story with a sweet tale of first love, this is a heartfelt story that will stick with you. Seventeen-year-old Sam and his 12-year-old brother Riddle—kidnapped a decade ago by their mentally unstable father—have never known a normal life. Then Sam meets Emily, who finally “sees” him and, eventually, introduces the boys to her family. For the first time, the two boys feel connected to the real world, but what will happen when their father discovers their secret? This is a vividly cinematic novel, with a bit of something for everyone. Middle School/High School.

I Am the Cheese by Robert Cormier (1977)
As Adam bicycles from Massachusetts to Vermont, he retraces memories of his past and his family’s history in the witness protection program. Alternating chapters insert psychological examinations that attempt to uncover Adam’s buried memories. A curious mix of fantasy and reality, this is an unforgettable psychological mystery. Middle School (mature)/High School.
**In Cold Blood by Truman Capote** (1966)
In this pioneer work of the true crime genre, Truman Capote paints a chilling portrait of the grisly 1959 murder of a family in rural Kansas, reconstructing the savage murder and ensuing investigation. *High School (mature).*

**In Country by Bobbie Ann Mason** (1985)
A recent high school graduate in a small Kentucky town tries to make sense of her family and the war that killed her father before she was born. *In Country* is emotionally gripping and subtly humorous as it addresses the challenges of growing up and the lingering consequences of a war long over. *High School.*

**Into the Wild by John Krakauer** (1996)
In 1992, a young man named Christopher McCandless hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness. His body was discovered four months later. In this true story, Krakauer reconstructs the story of McCandless’s adventure and eventual death, in the process exploring the American fascination with the wilderness. *High School.*

**Into Thin Air by John Krakauer** (1997)
The author describes his spring 1996 trek to Mt. Everest, a disastrous expedition that claimed the lives of eight climbers, and explains how he survived the rogue storm that left him stranded. *High School.*

**It by Stephen King** (1986)
Horror master Stephen King spins a story about seven kids who stumbled upon an unimaginable terror in their hometown, something they tried to forget. But now that they are adults, they find themselves drawn back to Derry, Maine, where they must again face their childhood nightmare and a very real, unnamed evil. *High School (mature).*

**Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë** (1847)
This unconventional love story is made unforgettable by the intimate narration and sharp, clever dialog. (Some of Jane and Rochester’s conversations are simply riveting.) But it’s much more than a love story between a governess and her employer: it is the tale of a passionate and intelligent orphan’s path to adulthood and her determination to maintain her dignity and find her place in the world. *High School.*

**The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan** (1989)
In this ultimate book about mother/daughter relationships, four Chinese immigrant mothers and their Chinese American daughters struggle to understand each other. *The Joy Luck Club* is a poignant and relatable novel about generational and cultural divisions, told in vignettes by seven different characters. *High School.*
**Just Listen by Sarah Dessen** (2006)
Sixteen-year-old Annabel Greene’s life is far from perfect. Her “picture perfect” family is keeping secrets, and a recent split with her best friend has left her a social outcast. But Annabel finds an unexpected ally in Owen Armstrong, a music-obsessed, broody loner whose honesty and passion for music help her to finally be honest about what happened at the party that changed everything. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

**Life of Pi by Yann Martel** (2002)
When his family’s ship sinks in the middle of the Pacific, sixteen-year-old Pi is trapped on a lifeboat with a hyena, an orangutan, an injured zebra, and a 450-pound Bengal tiger named Richard Parker. Using his unusual outlook on life and encyclopedic knowledge of the animal world, Pi must find a way to outwit the hungry Bengal tiger and survive. *High School (mature).*

**Little Brother by Cory Doctorow** (2008)
This is a seriously scary book—in a very real way. It takes place in a not-too-distant future where school security systems use gait recognition software to keep intruders out—and students in—and where every keystroke on a school laptop is monitored. Then there is a suspected terrorist attack in San Francisco and things get really crazy. Seventeen-year-old Marcus thinks the Department of Homeland Security is out of control, so he uses his tech savvy to start an underground rebellion against the current government. This book is socially and politically charged, featuring super-smart teen characters who are willing to take risks for what they believe in. *High School (mature).*

**Looking for Alaska by John Green** (2005)
Inspired by the dying words of the poet Francois Rabelais, sixteen-year-old Miles chuck his boring existence in Florida to seek his “Great Perhaps” at an Alabama boarding school. There, he is quickly absorbed into a band of brainy pranksters led by his roommate and a maddening, beautiful girl named Alaska on whom Miles develops an intense and immediate crush. Pranks and other rebellious behavior abound, but the reader is always aware that a Great Catastrophe looms ahead, as the first chapter is ominously labeled “one hundred thirty-six days before.” Sure enough, tragedy strikes, and midway through the book, we reach the “after” section. What could have devolved into sentimentality and melodrama becomes a rich novel full of bittersweet humor, complex characters, and deep meaning. *High School (mature).*

**Lord of the Flies by William Golding** (1954)
A group of English schoolboys marooned on an island they believe to be haunted by a terrifying monster is divided in a power struggle between two groups in this classic tale of survival, morality, and society. *Middle School/High School.*
Lord of the Rings Trilogy (series)
With the fate of the world in his hands, Frodo Baggins and his companions must journey to Mordor to destroy the One Ring of Power before the evil Sauron conquers all of Middle Earth. This is an epic good vs. evil story set in a richly developed world. The trilogy takes place approximately sixty years after the events in The Hobbit. Available as a one-volume set or individual volumes. Middle School/High School.

Individual titles include:
1. The Fellowship of the Ring
2. The Two Towers
3. The Return of the King

Make Lemonade
by Virginia Ewer Wolff (1993)
No one in LaVaughn’s neighborhood goes to college, but fourteen-year-old LaVaughn is determined to escape the poverty and hopelessness she sees every day. To earn money for her college fund, LaVaughn agrees to babysit for Jolly, an overwhelmed 17-year-old mother of two. Quickly, LaVaughn becomes enmeshed in the lives of Jolly and her children, perhaps to the detriment of her own goals. This novel in verse is a quick, engaging read and an authentic look at the crushing poverty that defines the characters’ lives. Middle School/High School.

“The Lottery”
(short story; included in the collection The Lottery)
by Shirley Jackson (1948)
The title story of this collection has been described as a “chilling tale of conformity gone mad.” First published in the New Yorker in 1948, it was hugely controversial but has become one of the most beloved classics of American literature. Middle School (mature)/High School.

The Lovely Bones
by Alice Sebold (2002)
Fourteen-year-old Susie Salmon was raped and murdered. Now in an “interim” heaven till she lets go of earthly concerns, she grapples with her own death and observes the different reactions of friends and family members over the years. While the subject matter is grimly haunting, The Lovely Bones still manages to convey both humor and hope. High School (mature).

Quoted:
“Sebold’s beautiful novel shows how a tragedy can tear a family apart, and bring them back together again.” —Booklist

Maximum Ride (series)
by James Patterson (2005–2012)
The “birdkids” were bred in a laboratory as part of a genetic experiment to be part human, part bird. When one of their group is abducted, they embark on a rescue mission that will change their lives as they struggle to understand their own origins and purpose. Middle School/High School.

Titles include:
1. The Angel Experiment
2. School’s Our—Forever
3. Saving the World and Other Extreme Sports
4. The Final Warning
5. Max
6. Fang
7. Angel
8. Nevermore
**Monster by Walter Dean Myers** (1999)
Steve Harmon is on trial for the murder of a Harlem drugstore owner. He is in jail, maybe for decades. And he is only sixteen years old. As his trial goes on, Steve records his experiences in prison and in the courtroom in the form of a film script, all while struggling to come to terms with the course his life has taken. This is an excellent book for reluctant readers, and it keeps readers wondering: just how involved was Steve in robbery and killing of the drugstore owner? Does he have any responsibility for the crime, or is he as innocent as he claims? *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

**A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness** (2011)
Emotionally gripping and intense from start to finish, *A Monster Calls* is the story of a 13-year-old coping with fear and loneliness as his mother battles cancer. Conor is plagued by a recurring nightmare, but when a real monster appears in his room one night, he isn’t afraid—until the monster demands to know the secrets of Conor’s dream. This is a powerful, timeless book full of sharp humor, insight, and a dark eeriness that is echoed perfectly in nightmarish pen and ink drawings. *Middle School/High School.*

**The Monstrumologist by Rick Yancey** (2009)
Dark, suspenseful, and unabashedly gory, this morbidly delicious Victorian tale is not for the faint of heart (or stomach). Twelve-year-old orphan Will Henry has nothing in the world but a too-small cap given to him by his father and Dr. Pellinore Walthrop, an eccentric “doctor” who studies and dissects real-life monsters. Will is his apprentice, and when a pod of hulking, headless, people-devouring Anthropophagi is discovered in a nearby cemetery, it is up to Will and the doctor to keep their sleepy New England town safe. But this stunning gothic adventure is more than pulp horror. It is filled with fully-fleshed, fascinating characters, from Will and the single-minded doctor, to a mysterious monster hunter who may be as dangerous as the creatures he hunts. Yancey’s writing is vividly descriptive and totally absorbing, and the story recalls the best of the classic horror writers—Stevenson, Poe, Shelley, Lovecraft—yet emerges as a unique addition to the horror collection. *High School.*

**The Mortal Instruments (series)**

*by Cassandra Clare* (2007–Ongoing)
Paranormal romance fans who want a bit more action in their story often enjoy the Mortal Instruments series. Book one begins when Clary is suddenly exposed to a world of demon hunters and dangerous supernatural beings she never dreamed were real. For years, her mother has shielded her from the hidden world of Shadowhunters, but now Clary must learn quickly as her mother has disappeared and Clary is being targeted by demons. This is a fast-paced urban fantasy series complete with tragic secrets, forbidden love, gut-wrenching betrayals, and witty verbal sparring, set primarily in an alternate present-day Manhattan. *High School.*

**Titles include:**
1. *City of Bones*
2. *City of Ashes*
3. *City of Glass*
4. *City of Fallen Angels*
5. *City of Lost Souls*
6. *City of Heavenly Fire* (Sept. 2014)
**My Heartbeat by Garret Freymann-Weyr** (2002)

Fourteen-year-old Ellen is just starting high school at an elite prep school and is happy to be considered average. Her older brother Link—an acknowledged math genius—and his super cute friend James, both incoming seniors with bright futures, are her best friends. Her only real friends, actually. Together, the threesome have a unique and easy friendship—or so Ellen believes—until she begins to question the true relationship between the two boys. Are Link and James a couple? Are they in love? With Ellen’s questions, the relationship between the once inseparable threesome changes forever and in ways Ellen could never predict. This is a spare (barely 150 pages) and touching novel about growing up and the complexity of relationships of all types. *High School.*

**Quoted:**

“Breathhtaking in the purity of its emotions and in its refusal to pigeonhole any of its characters, it will engage teen readers to the very last page.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

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**My Sister’s Keeper by Jodi Picoult** (2004)

Anna’s older sister Kate has leukemia. Conceived as a bone marrow match to (hopefully) cure her sister, Anna has endured countless surgeries, transfusions, and shots all her life—even though she isn’t sick. But when Kate needs a kidney transplant, Anna decides to sue her parents for medical emancipation so that she can make her own choices. It’s a decision that tears her family apart and one which could have fatal consequences for the sister she loves. *High School (mature).*

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**Nation by Terry Pratchett** (2008)

After a devastating tsunami strikes, Mau is the only survivor of his people. But soon, other survivors from the storm make their way to his tropical island, including an aristocratic English girl with a wide knowledge of 19th century science. Serving as the de facto leader, Mau forms a community from the survivors and learns about himself, the role of the gods, people from other cultures, books, science, religion, and how to win a battle against an overwhelming number of cannibals. But this is no heavy-handed tome; with his trademark wit and humor, Terry Pratchett provides insights into our culture and foibles while managing to spin a highly entertaining tale. *Middle School/High School.*

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**Nick & Norah’s Infinite Playlist by Rachel Cohn and David Levithan** (2006)

High school student Nick O’Leary, a music enthusiast and rock band member, meets college-bound Norah Silverberg and asks her to be his girlfriend for five minutes—just so he can elude his ex-girlfriend. What follows is a wild, fast-paced, rollercoaster of a night as the two opposites follow the trail of an elusive band, get to know one another, and come to terms with past heartbreak. *High School (mature).*

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**The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern** (2011)

The Cirque des Rêves arrives in the night without warning and captivates its audience from dusk till dawn. What the audience—and most of the performers—do not know is that the circus is merely the arena for a deadly magical battle. This gorgeously imaginative, genre-blending novel is all about atmosphere and tone, creating a feeling of suspended enchantment for the reader. *High School.*
A Northern Light by Jennifer Donnelly (2006)
This award-winning young adult novel combines a true historical murder mystery with a vivid coming of age story. In 1906, 16-year-old Mattie is determined to become a writer but her father has forbidden her to accept the college scholarship she has been offered. Then, while working a summer job at a nearby hotel, Mattie is entrusted with a packet of secret letters just before the letters’ owner dies under suspicious circumstances. High School (mature).

O Pioneers! by Willa Cather (1913)
In this classic American tale set during the turn of the 19th century, a strong and determined woman named Alexandra Bergson struggles to make a success of the family’s Nebraska farm after her father’s death. Over several decades, she and her younger brother find love and face the tribulations of life and the harsh land they are determined to call home. Despite the epic nature of this story and the years spanned, O Pioneers! is a surprisingly quick read. High School.

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck (1937)
Set during the Great Depression, Of Mice and Men is the moving and ultimately tragic tale of the friendship between George, a quick-witted itinerant farm worker, and George, his physically strong but developmentally disabled companion. Frequently controversial, this slim novel is simply told and completely absorbing. Middle School (mature)/High School.

The country of Ancelstierre has cars and electricity, but on the other side of the northern border—in the Old Kingdom—magic rules and the dead don’t always stay dead. Not all the soldiers who guard the Perimeter know why they must carry swords as well as rifles, until electricity fails and the Dead begin to walk. Then it becomes clear that things are different on the other side of the crenellated stone Wall at the border—and that things in the Old Kingdom are only getting worse. Middle School/High School.

Titles include:
1. Sabriel
2. Lirael
3. Abhorsen

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton (1967)
Ponyboy is fourteen, tough, and confused. Since his parents’ deaths, his loyalties have been to his brothers and his Greaser gang, rough boys from the wrong side of the tracks fighting to make a place for themselves in the world. But when his best friend Johnny kills a member of a gang from the wealthier part of town, a nightmare of violence begins and Ponyboy’s life is turned upside down. S.E. Hinton was just 16 years old when she wrote this timeless novel about teens getting caught up in class struggles and gang violence. Middle School/High School.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky (1999)
Fifteen-year-old high freshman Charlie is anxious about starting high school, especially after his only friend committed suicide last year. So he chooses an unnamed stranger as his confidante. Over the course of a year, he sends anonymous letters describing his triumphs and tribulations as he befriends two seniors who welcome him into their eccentric group of friends and show him how to engage with the world. Excellent characterizations and a truly authentic voice highlight this well-crafted story full of hilarity, heartbreak, and inspiration. High School (mature).
High school sophomores John and Lorraine are best friends. They’re nothing alike—at least not extremely controversial.

The Pigman by Paul Zindel (1968)

High school sophomores John and Lorraine are best friends. They’re nothing alike—at least not on the surface—and yet, with their troubled home lives, they understand one another perfectly. One afternoon while making prank phone calls with a couple of troublemakers from school, Lorraine calls Mr. Pignati and the teens pose as representatives of a charity. But when they go to collect a “charity” donation from the lonely, elderly man, he insists they linger to chat. The three quickly forge a special if somewhat bizarre relationship, until a betrayal brings terrible consequences. This slim novel, told alternately from John and Lorraine’s perspectives, was once considered extremely controversial. Middle School/High School.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen (1813)

Witty and independent Elizabeth Bennett is determined to dislike the aristocratically aloof Mr. Darcy, whose pride and apparent coldness infuriates her. Darcy is equally disapproving of the somewhat unconventional Bennett family. And yet, as Darcy and Elizabeth are continually thrown into contact, unfavorable first impressions give way to genuine feelings. This is a charming comedy of manners, full of family foibles and clever repartee. High School.

The Princess Bride by William Goldman (1973)

A former farm boy in disguise must rescue his true love from a handsome (but evil) prince in this timeless twist on the traditional fairy tale. Along the way, he acquires the help of two unlikely allies, a drunken swordsman and a gentle giant. Brilliantly combining adventure, fantasy, romance, and humor, The Princess Bride is a swashbuckling fable for all ages. Middle School/High School.

The Queen’s Thief (series) by Megan Whalen Turner (1996–2010)

Gen is a thief—a very, very cocky one. He boasts he can steal anything, and after his boasting gets him caught with the just-stolen seal of the King of Sounis, the king’s advisor decides to take advantage of Gen’s skills. So Gen is released from prison and sent on a mission to steal an object that will cement the King’s power. And thus begins an adventure story that is much more complex that it first seems. For Gen is also a very, very clever thief. As Gen grows older and the novels’ plots become more sophisticated, the series becomes even more compelling. Set in a world that is much like ancient Greece—only not quite—these books are full of political intrigue, unexpected shocks, and hidden clues that come together perfectly in the end. Middle School/High School.

Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi (2000)

This stunning graphic-format memoir tells the story of Satrapi’s life in Tehran from the age of six to fourteen, through the turbulent period that saw the overthrow of the Shah’s regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution, and the devastating effects of war with Iraq. The art work is simple yet irresistibly charming, and the story is equally charming: insightful, powerful, and surprisingly relatable. Middle School/High School.
Rapunzel’s Revenge by Shannon and Dean Hale, illus. by Nathan Hale (2008)
In this boldly illustrated reimagining of the classic fairy tale, the adventure is just beginning with Rapunzel’s escape from the tower. Instead of a languishing princess awaiting rescue, ‘Punzie is a self-sufficient, tomboyish cowgirl determined to right the wrongs of the evil Mother Gothel and rescue the downtrodden. Along the way, she teams up with a charming huckster named Jack (and his Goose Goldy). Middle School/High School.

Rebecca by Daphne DuMaurier (1938)
Young and naive, the second Mrs. Maxim de Winter arrives at her new husband’s sweeping Cornish estate in a state of awe. There she finds that her life is overshadowed by the beautiful Rebecca, Maxim’s first wife, dead but still a source of mystery. High School.

Rocket Boys/October Sky by Homer Hickam (1998)
It was 1957, and the small mining town of Coalwood, West Virginia, was slowly dying. Faced with a dead-end future, teenaged Homer Hickam dreamed of sending rockets into space. In pursuit of his unlikely dream, he joined forces with a group of misfits, and they learned to build sophisticated, working rockets from unwanted scraps of metal. This is a well-loved memoir full of hope and inspiration; originally titled Rocket Boys, the book was later rereleased as October Sky after the success of the film of the same name. Middle School/High School.

Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants (series) by Ann Brashares (2001–2011)
After finding a pair of jeans that are a perfect fit for all of them, four childhood best friends form the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants. Across the series, these teenage girls grow up, dealing with complicated romantic and family issues, but through it all they have each other and the “magic” jeans that help them reconnect each summer. The later books in the series, especially the final title, which was published as Adult Fiction and revisits the quartet in their late twenties, are best for more mature readers. Middle School (mature)/High School.

Titles include:
1. The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants
2. The Second Summer of the Sisterhood
3. Girls in Pants
4. Forever in Blue
5. Sisterhood Everlasting

Skip Beat (manga series) by Yoshiki Nakamura (2006–Ongoing)
After discovering that her rock idol boy-friend is using her as a maid, Kyoko undergoes a makeover and adjusts her attitude before joining showbiz and seeking revenge against Sho. Using the manga style drawings, Kyoko’s looks and features change depending on her mood and the inner demons she is trying to keep under control. To date, there are 29 volumes in the series. Middle School/High School.

Someday This Pain Will Be Useful to You by Peter Cameron (2007)
Eighteen-year-old James Sveckis is an extremely intelligent, lonely, and confused Manhattanite who is searching for direction. He’s been accepted to Brown but dreams of bypassing college and settling alone in a sleepy Midwestern town. He also might be gay, but prefers not to discuss it. This novel focuses more strongly on character than plot as James psychoanalyzes himself and his disconnect with the world around him. High School (mature).
**Something Wicked This Way Comes by Ray Bradbury** (1962)

Fantasy meets horror in this modern classic about a nightmarish traveling carnival and the two teens who notice something is very, very wrong with the carnival and its effect on the people of their hometown. This novel is tangentially related to Bradbury’s earlier work, *Dandelion Wine*; together, along with the *Dandelion Wine* sequel *Farewell Summer*, the books make up the Green Town Trilogy. *Middle School/High School.*

**Song of the Lioness** *(series) by Tamora Pierce* (1983–1988)

Eleven-year-old Alanna of Trebond was suppose to go to a convent to learn to be a lady. Instead, she disguises herself as a boy and travels to court to pursue her dream of becoming a knight. Across the span of the series, Alanna encounters friends, foes, and numerous misadventures as she learns to embrace her magic and use it wisely. *Middle School/High School.*

Titles include:

1. *Alanna: The First Adventure*
2. *In the Hand of the Goddess*
3. *The Woman Who Rides Like a Man*
4. *Lioness Rampant*

**Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson** (1998)

Melinda became a pariah last summer when she called the cops and busted up the end-of-the-year party. High school should be the best time of Melinda’s life, but instead every day of freshman year is a struggle as she finds herself rejected by her former friends and alienated from her parents. Now Melinda’s barely speaking at all. But inside, beneath the silence, Melinda is witty, ironic—and hurting terribly over what really happened that night. *High School.*

**Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes** by Chris Crutcher (1993)

Outcasts Sarah Byrnes and Eric Calhoune were each other’s only friend since childhood. They were bonded by her terrible scars and his layers of fat, but things were never quite the same after Eric discovered swimming, slimmed down, and made new friends. Still, their friendship persevered and their loyalty remained unquestioned. But now that Sarah Byrnes—the smartest, toughest person Eric knows—sits catatonic in a mental ward, he can’t help but wonder what he should have done differently. Eric is determined to find a way to help his friend, even if it means digging into the secrets Sarah Byrnes wants to keep hidden. Like most of Crutcher’s novels, this book tackles a whole boatload of Big Issues, many of them potentially inflammatory. It’s no coincidence that most of Crutcher’s works are regular targets of censors. But whether you agree with the characters’ views or not, this is a book that inspires thought and critical debate on important issues. It’s also a funny, irreverent, and suspenseful story of perseverance and friendship. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

**Story of a Girl by Sara Zarr** (2007)

Deanna was thirteen when her father caught her in the back of a Buick with her older brother’s friend, seventeen-year-old Tommy. Three years later she is still unfairly branded as the school slut and her father can hardly look at her. Deanna dreams of escaping, perhaps with her brother—who now lives at home with his girlfriend and their child. This is a wonderful, absorbing book that is impossible to put down. It is realistic fiction at its best—a compelling story with believable, likable characters and a satisfying conclusion that in no way minimizes or oversimplifies the lives of its characters. *High School.*
**Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher** (2007)
When Clay Jensen finds a mysterious box with no return address waiting on his front porch, he is intrigued and excited. But he is shocked by its contents: 13 tape recordings from Hannah Baker, his former classmate and secret crush who committed suicide two weeks earlier. The tapes serve as a type of suicide-note-cum-chain-letter and each recording is about a different person who is somehow connected to Hannah’s reasons for committing suicide. Following the instructions on the tapes, Clay ventures out with a (stolen) Walkman on an all-night journey to try to figure out why Hannah made such a terrible choice—and to discover what part he played in her decision. This is an intense, compulsively readable novel for mature readers who will be just as curious and anxious as Clay as they learn all the reasons, great and small, that influenced Hannah’s awful decision. *High School.*

**A Time to Kill by John Grisham** (1989)
John Grisham’s first novel is an excellent legal thriller about racism and uncertain justice in a small Southern town. When the two white men who attacked his ten-year-old daughter go free, a black father decides to take the law into his own hands and shoots them. Now it is up to young criminal lawyer Jake Brigance to defend Carl Hailey’s actions, all in the midst of a deep well of racial prejudice and violence. *High School.*

**To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee** (1960)
In this classic tale of courage and morality in a small, Southern town, a young tomboy tells the story of the summer her father defends a black man accused of raping a white woman. This is a powerful look at discrimination and an emotional exploration of human instinct, as viewed through the eyes of a child. *Middle School/High School.*

**Twilight Saga (series) by Stephenie Meyer** (2005–2008)
When Bella Swan leaves her life in Phoenix to live with her father in Forks, Washington, she is instantly drawn to Edward Cullen, a handsome and mysterious boy who she later learns is a vampire. Over the course of the series, Bella and Edward face several challenges to their relationship and to their lives, and Bella learns more about the secrets of creatures she once thought were only make believe. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

**Titles include:**
1. Twilight
2. New Moon
3. Eclipse
4. Breaking Dawn

**Uglies Quartet (series) by Scott Westerfeld** (2005–2007)
In a future society where people are required to undergo extreme plastic surgery at the age of sixteen—transforming teens from “ugly” to “pretty”—Tally rebels against the enforced conformity and the operation which may affect more than just appearance. *Middle School/High School.*

**Titles include:**
1. Uglies
2. Pretties
3. Specials
4. Extras
**Unwind by Neal Shusterman** (2007)

In a future world where teens ages 13 to 18 can have their lives “unwound” and their body parts harvested for use by others, 16-year-old Connor is stunned to learn that his parents have signed the order. Determined to escape his fate, Connor goes on the run and encounters Risa and Lev while eluding the police. The three teens have nothing in common—except that each of them has been marked for Unwinding. This is an action-packed thriller filled with thought-provoking moral questions. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

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**Watership Down by Richard Adams** (1972)

One of the most beloved fantasy novels of all time, this heroic adventure is the story of what happens when a small band of young males go in search of a new home after Fiver, a clairvoyant, has a terrible vision of the future. But few in the group have been far from home, and their journey is filled with unforeseen dangers and epic struggles. The protagonists of this dynamic tale may be rabbits, but they aren’t the rabbits of Beatrix Potter’s children’s stories. *Middle School/High School.*

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**Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë** (1847)

Set during the 18th century in the harsh and beautiful landscape of the English moors, this novel follows the intertwined lives of two families over several decades. Heathcliff is a powerful, moody figure who dominates those around him, and his relationship with Catherine is all kinds of twisted. Whether you see the book as romantic like *Twilight*’s Bella or think the characters are obsessive and crazy, it’s a masterpiece of Gothic literature. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

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**Xanth (series) by Piers Anthony** (1977–Ongoing)

This is a comic fantasy series set in the magical world of Xanth, where every person is born with a unique magical ability called a talent. Xanth is also populated by centaurs, demons, dragons, goblins, harpies, merfolk, ogres, zombies, and other creatures of legend. There are currently over 30 titles in this series, but these pun-laden adventures do not need to be read consecutively. *Middle School (mature)/High School.*

1. A Spell for Chameleon
2. The Source of Magic
3. Castle Roogna
4. Centaur Aisle
5. Ogre, Ogre
6. Night Mare
7. Dragon on a Pedestal
8. Crewel Lye: A Caustic Yarn
9. Golem in the Gears
10. Vale of the Vole
11. Heaven Cent
12. Man from Mundania
13. Isle of View
14. Question Quest
15. The Color of Her Panties
16. Demons Don’t Dream
17. Harpy Thyme
18. Geis of the Gargoyle
19. Roc and a Hard Place
20. Yon Ill Wind
21. Faun and Games
22. Zombie Lover
23. Xone of Contention
24. The Dastard
25. Swell Foop
26. Up in a Heaval
27. Cube Route
28. Currant Events
29. Pet Peeve
30. Stork Naked
31. Air Apparent
32. Two to the Fifth
33. Jumper Cable
34. Knot Gneiss
35. Well-Tempered Clavicle
36. Luck of the Draw (December 2012)
Did all your favorites make the list? If not, we welcome your feedback!

Simply fill out the form below to let us know what titles you think we should consider adding to next year’s list. Our Ultimate Teen Booklist committee will do our best to read each suggestion and evaluate it for inclusion on the list. The revised list will be released in October 2013 to celebrate Teen Read Week.

Name (optional): ____________________________________

E-mail (optional): ____________________________________

Age (optional): ____

Recommended additions for 2013:

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Would you like to be notified of our decision regarding your suggestion(s)? __________

If yes, please be sure you include your e-mail address above so that we may contact you.

Additional questions or comments: