

Our Favorites to Read as a Community: Grades 5-8

Success Academy Middle School Whole Class Novels

Grade 5

Title	Author	Description
The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963	Christopher Paul Curtis	<i>A quirky family from Michigan heads South, toward one of the darkest moments in American history.</i> Hilarious and heartwarming
Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice	Phillip Hoose	<i>A young woman’s courageous actions change history.</i> Riveting and rigorous
Where the Mountain Meets the Moon	Grace Lin	<i>An adventurous girl on a quest to change her family's fortune.</i> Captivating and illuminating
Ninth Ward	Jewell Parker Rhodes	<i>A young girl experiences the devastation and loss of Hurricane Katrina.</i> Uplifting and heartbreaking
Locomotion	Jacqueline Woodson	<i>A boy grappling with the loss of his parents begins to heal through writing.</i> Told in verse
Holes	Louis Sachar	<i>A boy sent to a detention camp for a crime he didn’t commit learns about the power of friendship.</i> Insightful and funny coming-of-age novel

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Grade 6

Title	Author	Description
The Giver	Lois Lowry	<i>Dystopian story of a young boy who lives in a seemingly ideal, if colorless, world of conformity.</i> Poignant and captivating
Before Columbus	Charles C. Mann	<i>Challenges the traditional historical narrative about the development of civilizations in the Americas.</i> Provocative and powerful
Chains	Laurie Halse Anderson	<i>A slave's journey to freedom during the American Revolution.</i> Gripping and fateful <i>Note: You're in luck. There are two more books in this trilogy -- Forge and Ashes. Read all three!</i>
Heart of a Samurai	Margi Preus	<i>Story of a young fisherman who becomes the first Japanese person to set foot in America.</i> Deep and illuminating
Home of the Brave	Katherine Applegate	<i>A Sudanese refugee struggles to adjust to life in America.</i> Free-verse poetry
Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl	Anne Frank	<i>First-hand account of a Jewish girl in hiding during WWII.</i> Absorbing and thought-provoking

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Grade 7

Title	Author	Description
The Outsiders	S.E. Hinton	<i>Rival gangs and young people grappling with loyalty and belonging.</i> Poignant and enthralling
Hitler Youth: Growing Up in Hitler's Shadow	Susan Campbell Bartoletti	<i>How 3.5 million children came to belong to the Hitler Youth.</i> Painful and important
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian	Sherman Alexie	<i>A budding cartoonist transfers to an all-white school where the only other Indian is the mascot.</i> Honest and uncompromising
Brown Girl Dreaming	Jacqueline Woodson	<i>Memoir in verse, told through the childhood eyes of the author.</i> Wonderful and poetical
The House on Mango Street	Sandra Cisneros	<i>Vignettes of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago.</i> Heartbreaking and joyful
Fahrenheit 451	Ray Bradbury	<i>A fireman begins to question the rules of his society.</i> Engrossing and eye-opening

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Grade 8

Title	Author	Description
The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates	Wes Moore	<i>Memoir of two boys who lived parallel lives.</i> Compelling and inspirational
To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee	<i>A young white girl navigates Southern life as her father defends a black man accused of a terrible crime.</i> Heart-wrenching and consequential
The Autobiography of Malcolm X	Alex Haley	The journey of Malcolm X to becoming one of the most influential figures of the 20th Century. Enthralling and painful
Animal Farm	George Orwell	<i>A farm is taken over by its overworked, mistreated animals.</i> Thought-provoking and engaging
In the Time of the Butterflies	Julia Alvarez	<i>Four sisters during the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic.</i> Courageous and magical
Freakonomics	Stephen J. Dubner and Steven Levitt	<i>Using economics to investigate the strange riddles of everyday life.</i> Entertaining and illuminating

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Bonus Picks

A few more favs (if only school ran year-round!)...

Title	Author	Description
Speak	Laurie Halse Anderson	<i>The victim of an assault, a teenage girl uses art to find her voice.</i> Moving and powerful
Esperanza Rising	Pam Munoz Ryan	<i>Tragedy forces a family to flee from Mexico to a camp for immigrant farmworkers in California.</i> Passionate and eloquent