

John B. Connally Middle School
2009 Summer Reading List
English Pre-AP

6th Grade

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bud, Not Buddy*.

Ten-year-old Bud Caldwell is on the lam. Running from the barren, impersonal confines of a 1930s orphanage and a stupidly cruel and dysfunctional foster home, he is off on a search for his birth father. All Bud has in the world he carries in a battered suitcase which he guards with his life. There is a picture of his mother, some stones she treasured, a blanket, and the only clue to his father, a blue flyer advertising Herman E. Calloway.

Holt, Kimberly Willis. *My Louisiana Sky*.

Tiger Ann Parker is bright in school and good at baseball, but she is forever being teased about her family by the girls in her class. Tiger knows that her folks are different from the others in their small town, Saitter, Louisiana, and that she will have to make the most important decision of her life.

Holt, Kimberly Willis. *When Zachary Beaver Came To Town*.

Nothing ever happens in Toby's small Texas town. Nothing much, that is, until this summer. This summer everyone seems to be leaving. Toby's mother leaves home to be a country singer. His best friend Cal's older brother goes off to fight in Vietnam. But their sleepy town is about to get a jolt with the arrival of Zachary Beaver, billed as the fattest boy in the world.

Lewis C.S. *The Magician's Nephew*.

Digory's Uncle Andrew is a magician, but Digory and his friend Polly don't know this until Polly puts on one of Andrew's magic rings and disappears. When Digory follows her, their adventures take them to Narnia.

Paulsen, Gary. *The River*.

Because of his success surviving alone in the wilderness for fifty-four days, fifteen-year-old Brian, profoundly changed by his time in the wild, is asked to undergo a similar experience to help scientists learn more about the psychology of survival.

Sebestyen, Ouida. *Words By Heart*.

Lena can recite the Scriptures by heart. Hoping to make her adored Papa proud of her and to make her white classmates notice her "Magic Mind," not her black skin, Lena vows to win the Bible-quoting contest. But winning does not bring Lena what she expected. Instead of honor, violence and death erupt and strike the one she loves most dearly. Lena, who once believed in vengeance, must now learn how to forgive.

Taylor, Mildred D. *The Land*.

Mildred D. Taylor combines her personal family history with that of a country divided by racism, prejudice, and slavery. The events in *The Land* unfold through the eyes of Paul Logan, the son of a one-time slave and the white man who owned her. Paul's father treats him fairly and with kindness most of the time, frequently allowing him the same privileges he gives his legitimate sons. However, as Paul grows older, certain harsh realities make him realize that he will never be considered a true equal to his white brothers—or any white man, for that matter—even if his skin is so light that he might be able to "pass."

Voigt, Cynthia. *Homecoming*.

“It’s still true.” That’s the first thing James Tillerman says to his sister Dicey every morning. It’s still true that their mother has abandoned the four Tillerman children somewhere in the middle of Connecticut. It’s still true they have to find their way, somehow, to Great-aunt Cilla’s house in Bridgeport, which may be their only hope of staying together as a family.

7th Grade

Ames, Mildred. *Anna to the Infinite Power*.

Anna Zimmerman Hart had always been different from other people. She was considered practically a genius—even for the 1990’s. She never seemed to have much in common with her family, and she didn’t have any friends. Anna didn’t mind being different, though. She liked it that way, but Anna didn’t realize how different she was. She didn’t know she was being watched, and she never suspected she was part of a grand master plan that would take away her whole identity. *Please note that only used copies of this book are available.*

Griffin, Peni. *Switching Well*.

Ada and Amber are living in two different time periods in San Antonio, Texas. Ada is growing up in 1891, and Amber is living in 1991. The two girls go to the same well at the same time and wish they were somewhere else and the switch places. Now Ada is living in 1991, and Amber is living in 1891. They struggle with their new lives and want to go back to their own homes. Will they get back?

Lewis, C. S. *Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia*

This is the Pevensie children's second trip to Narnia. They are drawn back by the power of Susan's horn, blown by Prince Caspian to summon help in his hour of need. Caspian has fled into the woods to escape his uncle, Miraz, who had usurped the throne. The children set out once again to save Narnia; and aided by other Narnians, and ultimately by Aslan, they return the throne to Caspian, the rightful ruler.

Paterson, Katherine. *Jacob Have I Loved*.

Sara Louise Bradshaw knows that she should be proud of her beautiful twin sister Caroline. But how can she? Ever since they were born, Caroline has done nothing but take from Louise: their parents’ love, Louise’s hopes for an education, even her best—and only—friend.

Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Notes from a Midnight Driver*.

Sixteen-year-old Alex Gregory miscalculated the consequences of his anger when he decided to teach his father a lesson. Nothing good can come of a poorly thought out plan, especially when it entails stealing your mother's car and obliterating a poor unsuspecting lawn gnome.

Steinbeck, John. *The Red Pony*.

Raised on a ranch in northern California, Jody is well-schooled in the hard work and demands of a rancher’s life. Still, Jody discovers there are lessons he must learn about the ways of nature and, particularly, the ways of man.

Stevenson, R. L. *Treasure Island*.

Jim Hawkins is a young boy who lives at his parents' inn, the Admiral Benbow, near Bristol, England, in the eighteenth century. An old sea captain named Billy Bones dies in the inn after being presented with a black spot, or official pirate verdict of guilt or judgment. Jim is stirred to action by the spot and its mysterious, accurate portent of Billy's death. Hastily, Jim and his mother unlock Billy's sea chest, finding a logbook and map inside. Hearing steps outside, they leave with the documents before Billy's pursuers ransack the inn.

Taylor, Mildred. D. *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*.

For the Logan family, it is a frightening and turbulent time. First, their friend T.J. must go on trail for murder—and confront an all white jury. Then Cousin Suzella tries to pass for white which results in humiliating consequences. And when Cassie's neighbor Mrs. Lee Annie stands up for her right to vote, she and her family are driven from their home. Other neighbors are destroyed and shattered by the greed of landowners. But through it all, Cassie and the Logans proudly stand together—proving that courage, love, and understanding can defy even the deepest prejudice.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit*.

The Hobbit opens as the wizard Gandalf visits hobbit Bilbo Baggins and invites him on an adventure. Bilbo reluctantly agrees to leave his comfy hobbit-hole and go with Gandalf and a band of dwarves. The journey takes them through forests, across enchanted lakes, and over mountains, where Bilbo encounters trolls, goblins, a dragon, and treasure.

Voigt, Cynthia. *Dacey's Song*.

Keeping her family together is what thirteen-year-old Dacey does best. But now that all four Tillerman children have found a new home with their grandmother, Dacey has to learn to let go a little and let them live their own lives. She just can't solve all their problems anymore.

8th Grade

Daly, Maureen. *Seventeenth Summer*.

What better time than summer for a little romance? Except for Angie, who doesn't really date. *Didn't* date, that is—until she saw Jack Duluth's crew cut peeking out over a booth in McKnight's drugstore one night. “He looked over at me, smiled, and then sat down again.” Thus starts a summer Angie will never forget -- one full of spine chills, total bliss, heartache, and confusion...all the feelings that spell love.

Greene, Bette. *Summer of My German Soldier*.

The summer that Patty Bergen turns twelve is a summer that will haunt her forever. When her small hometown in Arkansas becomes the site of a camp housing German prisoners during World War II, Patty learns what it means to open her heart. Even though she's Jewish, she begins to see a prison escapee, Anton, not as a Nazi, but as a lonely, frightened young man with feelings not unlike her own.

Hobbs, Will. *River Thunder*.

Despite some reservations, sixteen-year-old Jessie joins her companions from the previous year's adventure on the Colorado River for a legal rafting trip through the Grand Canyon.

Le Guin, Ursula. *Wizard of Earthsea*. Ged, the main character, has the ability to develop extraordinary magical power. He is in many ways like all children; he must learn to accept responsibility for himself and for others before he can enter adult life. Ged's problem is special because he is gifted and must learn about his gift; but at the same time he must go through the ordinary process of growing up.

Lowery, Lois. *Gathering Blue*.

“Kira saw that she was surrounded by hostile women who had come from their cots and were watching Vandara for instructions and leadership. Several, she noticed, had rocks in their hands. If one rock were thrown, others would follow, she knew. They were all waiting for the first...” When Kira is summoned to judgment by the council of the Guardians to resolve a village conflict, Kira knows she is fighting for her life. Perhaps only her special, almost magical talent will save her now.

O'Brien, Robert. *Z for Zachariah*.

“There is not one left alive... I know, because after the war ended, and all the telephones went dead, my family went... to see what was happening. They never came back...” Ann Burden is sixteen and, as far as she knows, the only person left in the world. The nuclear radiation that destroyed the rest of the world has not touched the valley where she lives, and so she has remained, surviving as best she knows how, for the past year.

Sonnenblick, Jordan. *Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie*.

Thirteen-year-old Steven has a totally normal life: he plays drums in the All-Star Jazz band, has a crush on the hottest girl in the school, and is constantly annoyed by his five-year-old brother, Jeffrey. But when Jeffrey is diagnosed with leukemia, Steven's world is turned upside down. He is forced to deal with his brother's illness and his parents' attempts to keep the family in one piece.

Taylor, Mildred. D. *The Road to Memphis*. (A Coretta Scott King Author Award Book) Set in Mississippi in 1941, *The Road to Memphis* describes three harrowing, unforgettable days in the life of an African-American high school girl dreaming of law school. Caught up in the center of tense racial dramas, Cassie Logan is forced to confront the adult world as never before.

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Where there's trouble, that's where you'll find Tom Sawyer. Who else would get out of the boring job of whitewashing a fence by tricking every boy in town to do it for him? And when Tom teams up with rascally Huck Finn, the trouble doubles.