



# SUMMER READING LIST\*

## A Universe of Stories! ~ Grades 9-12

*Suggested space-themed summer reading titles  
compiled for the Connecticut State Department of Education  
by Linda Williams, Connecticut State Library*

### FICTION

#### **The Weight of the Stars** by K. Ancrum

After a horrific accident brings loners Ryann and Alexandria together, Ryann learns that Alexandria's mother is an astronaut who volunteered for a one-way trip to the edge of the solar system.

#### **Midnight at the Electric** by Jodi Lynn Anderson

In the months before her one-way trip to Mars, Adri Ortiz is sent to Wichita to live with a elderly cousin and finds herself fixating on where she came from and the stories of two women who lived more than a hundred years earlier. | ALA | Lexile: 810

#### **Landscape with Invisible Hand** by M. T. Anderson

An artistic youth stages creative romantic scenes as entertainment for the Earth's alien overlords to support his unemployed family, a situation that is compromised by an estrangement from his girlfriend. | ALA | Lexile: 730

#### **Red Rising** by Pierce Brown

A tale set in a bleak future society torn by class divisions follows the experiences of secret revolutionary Darrow, who after witnessing his wife's execution by an oppressive government joins a revolutionary cell and attempts to infiltrate an elite military academy. | *Nutmeg 2018* | Lexile: 630

#### **2001: A Space Odyssey** by Arthur C. Clarke

Two astronauts find their journey into space and their very lives jeopardized by the jealousy of an extraordinary computer named Hal. | Lexile: 1060

#### **A Conspiracy of Stars** by Olivia A. Cole

Octavia is excited to study the plants and animals of Faloiv until she witnesses one of the planet's indigenous people being attacked and begins to question her own family history and the scientists she has always admired. | ALA

#### **Waste of Space** by Gina Damico

Cram ten hormonal teens into a spaceship and blast off: that's the premise for the ill-conceived reality show *Waste of Space*. The kids who are cast know everything about drama--and nothing about the fact that the production is fake. | ILA | Lexile: 700



#### **On the Edge of Gone** by Corinne Duyvis

In Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 2034, a comet is due to hit the Earth within the hour. Denise, who's sixteen years old and autistic, must try to find her missing sister and also help her neglectful, undependable mother safely aboard a spaceship. | ALA | Lexile: 640

#### **172 Hours on the Moon** by Johan Harstad

In 2019, teens Mia, Antoine, and Midori are selected by lottery to join experienced astronauts on a NASA mission to the once top-secret moon base, DARLAH 2, while in a Florida nursing home, a former astronaut struggles to warn someone of the terrible danger there.

#### **We Are the Ants** by Shaun David Hutchinson

After the suicide of his boyfriend, Henry deals with depression and family issues, all while wondering if he was really abducted and told he has 144 days to decide whether or not the world is worth saving. | ALA, *Nutmeg 2018* | Lexile: 800

#### **Unearthed** by Amie Kaufman & Meagen Spooner

Scholar Jules Addison and scavenger Amelia Radcliffe join forces to unravel secrets of a long-extinct civilization, only to discover something that could spell the end of the human race. | Lexile: 960

#### **Life As We Knew It** by Susan Beth Pfeffer

Through journal entries sixteen-year-old Miranda describes her family's struggle to survive after a meteor hits the moon, causing worldwide tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. | ALA, *Nutmeg 2010* | Lexile: 770

#### **Rabbit & Robot** by Andrew Smith

Stranded aboard the lunar cruise ship Tennessee, Cager Messer and his best friend, Billy, both sixteen, are surrounded by insane robots while watching thirty simultaneous wars turn Earth into a toxic wasteland. | Lexile: 870

#### **When Light Left Us** by Leah Thomas

Not long after Hank, Ana, and Milo Vasquez's father leaves, an alien named Luz arrives and uses them to satisfy his curiosity, then leaves them forever changed. | ALA



# SUMMER READING LIST\*

## **The Martian** by Andy Weir

Stranded on Mars by a duststorm that compromised his space suit and forced his crew to leave him behind, astronaut Mark Watney struggles to survive in spite of minimal supplies and harsh environmental challenges that test his ingenuity in unique ways. | ALA | Lexile: 680

## **The 5th Wave** by Rick Yancey

Cassie Sullivan, the survivor of an alien invasion, must rescue her young brother from the enemy with help from a boy who may be one of them. | ALA | Lexile: 690

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### GRAPHIC NOVELS

## **Laika** by Nick Abadzis

This is the journey of Laika, the abandoned puppy destined to become Earth's first space traveler. With the blending of fact and fiction, this story intertwines three compelling lives. Along with Laika, there is Korolev, a driven engineer at the top of the Soviet space program and Yelena, the lab technician responsible for Laika's health and life. | ALA | Lexile: 370

## **How to Fake a Moon Landing: Exposing the Myths of Science Denial** by Darryl Cunningham

Explores scientific controversies, including fracking, the moon landing, and evolution, examining the history of each and the facts that do or do not support claims made. | ALA

## **Grease Monkey: A Tale of Growing Up in Orbit** by Tim Eldred

Mac Gimbensky is an eight hundred pound intelligent gorilla and expert fighter mechanic on the flagship *Fist of Earth*, where, with the help of his cadet assistant Robin Plotnik, he maintains the ships of the all-female Barbarian Squadron. | ALA

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### NONFICTION

## **American Moonshot: John F. Kennedy and the Great Space Race** by Douglas Brinkley

Draws on new primary source material and firsthand interviews in a reassessment of the space program that examines the political, cultural, and scientific factors that launched NASA and the space race.

## **How I Killed Pluto and Why It Had It Coming** by Mike Brown

The astronomer who inadvertently triggered the "demotion" of Pluto in his effort to officially recognize the solar system's tenth planet describes the ensuing debates and public outcry while revealing the behind-the-scenes story of his discovery. | OBFTCB |

## **Packing for Mars: The Curious Science of Life in the Void** by Mary Roach

Describes the weirdness of space travel, answers questions about the long-term effects of living in zero gravity on the human body, and explains how space simulations on Earth can provide a preview to life in space. | OBFTCB | Lexile: 1070

## **Apollo 8: The Mission That Changed Everything** by Martin W. Sandler

Complemented by full-color photos including the iconic Earthrise image, a middle-grade introduction to the historic Apollo 8 mission describes the mid-20th-century Space Race and the heroic achievements of NASA scientists and astronauts. | NCSS | Lexile: 1200

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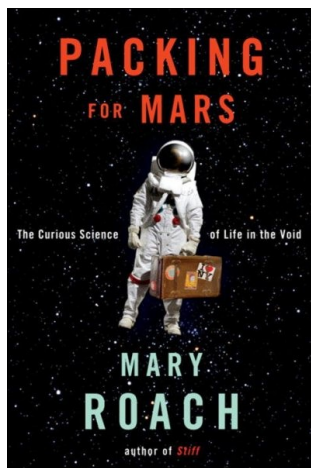
### BIOGRAPHY

## **Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race** by Margot Lee Shetterly

An account of the previously unheralded but pivotal contributions of NASA's African-American women mathematicians to America's space program describes how they were segregated from their white counterparts by Jim Crow laws in spite of their groundbreaking successes. | NCTM

## **Rocket Boys: A Memoir** by Homer Hickam

The author traces the boyhood enthusiasm for rockets that eventually led to a career at NASA, describing how he built model rockets in the family garage in West Virginia, inspired by the launch of the Soviet satellite "Sputnik" | ALA



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\*Many of the listed books were selected as exemplary books by one or more of the following organizations: the American Library Association (ALA), the International Literacy Association (ILA), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), ALA Outstanding Books for the College Bound (OBFTCB), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) or the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY). Other awards as noted.



# SUMMER READING

## New Favorites & Classics

For Grades 9-12

### NUTMEG AWARD HIGH SCHOOL NOMINEES

Find the High School Nutmeg list at: <http://nutmegaward.org>

### FAVORITES & CLASSICS

#### **The Poet X\*** by Elizabeth Acevedo

When Xiomara Batista, who pours all her frustrations and passion into poetry, is invited to join the school slam poetry club, she struggles with her mother's expectations and her need to be heard. | ALA, NBA | Lexile: 800

#### **Children of Blood and Bone\*** by Tomi

Adyemi

Seventeen-year-old Zélie, her older brother Tzain, and rogue princess Amari fight to restore magic to the land and activate a new generation of magi, but they are ruthlessly pursued by the crown prince, who believes the return of magic will mean the end of the monarchy. | ALA | Lexile:

#### **Speak** by Laurie R. Halse Anderson

A traumatic event near the end of the summer has a devastating effect on Melinda's freshman year in high school. | Lexile: 690

#### **Feed** by M. T. Anderson

In a future where most people have computer implants in their heads to control their environment, a boy meets an unusual girl who is in serious trouble. | Lexile: 770

#### **The Handmaid's Tale** by Margaret Atwood

Set in the near future, America has become a puritanical theocracy and Offred tells her story as a Handmaid under the new social order. | Lexile: 750

#### **Love in the Time of Global Warming** by Francesca Lia Block

After a devastating earthquake destroys the West Coast, causing seventeen-year-old Penelope to lose her home, her parents, and her ten-year-old brother, she navigates a dark world, holding hope and love in her hands and refusing to be defeated. | Lexile: 890

#### **Kindred** by Octavia Butler

A young African-American woman is mysteriously transferred back in time leading to an irresistible curiosity about her family's past. | Lexile: 580

#### **The House on Mango Street** by Sandra Cisneros

A young girl living in a Hispanic neighborhood in Chicago ponders the advantages and disadvantages of her environment and evaluates her relationships with family and friends. | Lexile: 850

#### **Copper Sun** by Sharon M. Draper

Two fifteen-year-old girls—one a slave and the other an indentured servant—escape their Carolina plantation and try to make their way to Fort Moses, Florida, a Spanish colony that gives sanctuary to slaves. | Lexile: 820

#### **Picture Us in the Light\*** by Kelly Loy Gilbert

Daniel, a Chinese-American teen, must grapple with his plans for the future, his feelings for his best friend Harry, and his discovery of a family secret that could shatter everything. | ALA | Lexile: 890

#### **The Fault in Our Stars** by John Green

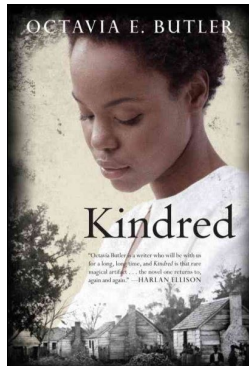
Sixteen-year-old Hazel, a stage IV thyroid cancer patient, has accepted her terminal diagnosis until a chance meeting with a boy at cancer support group forces her to reexamine her perspective on love, loss, and life. | Lexile: 850

#### **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime** by Mark Haddon

Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother. | Lexile: 1180

#### **Seraphina** by Rachel Hartman

In a world where dragons and humans coexist in an uneasy truce and dragons can assume human form, Seraphina, whose mother died giving birth to her, grapples with her own identity amid magical secrets and royal scandals, while she struggles to accept and develop her extraordinary musical talents. | Lexile: 760







# SUMMER READING

## New Favorites & Classics

*For Grades 9-12*

### **March: Book One\*** by John Lewis

Presents in graphic novel format the life of Georgia congressman John Lewis, focusing on his youth in rural Alabama, his meeting with Martin Luther King Jr. and the birth of the Nashville Student Movement. | ALA | Lexile: 760

### **Monster** by Walter Dean Myers

While on trial as an accomplice to a murder, sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon records his experiences in prison and in the courtroom in the form of a film script as he tries to come to terms with the course his life has taken. | Lexile: 670

### **The Astonishing Color of After\*** by Emily X. R. Pan

After her mother's suicide, grief-stricken Leigh Sanders travels to Taiwan to stay with grandparents she never met, determined to find her mother who she believes turned into a bird. || Lexile: 670

### **Persepolis** by Marjane Satrapi

Contains black-and-white comic strip images in which the author shares the story of her life in Tehran, Iran, where she lived from ages six to fourteen while the country came under control of the Islamic regime. | Lexile: 380

### **Midwinterblood** by Marcus Sedgwick

Seven linked vignettes unfold on a Scandinavian island inhabited--throughout various time periods--by Vikings, vampires, ghosts, and a curiously powerful plant. | Lexile: 770

### **A Tree Grows in Brooklyn** by Betty Smith

Young Francie Nolan, having inherited both her father's romantic and her mother's practical nature, struggles to survive and thrive growing up in the slums of Brooklyn in the early twentieth century. | Lexile: 810

### **Buried Onions** by Gary Soto

When nineteen-year-old Eddie drops out of college, he struggles to find a place for himself as a Mexican American living in a violence-infested neighborhood of Fresno, California. | Lexile: 850

### **Marcelo in the Real World** by Francisco X. Stork

Marcelo Sandoval, a seventeen-year-old boy on the high-functioning end of the autistic spectrum, faces new challenges, including romance and injustice, when he goes to work for his father in the mailroom of a corporate law firm. | Lexile: 700

### **On the Come Up\*** by Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Bri hopes to become a great rapper, and after her first song goes viral for all the wrong reasons, must decide whether to sell out or face eviction with her widowed mother. | Lexile: 550



### **Jumped** by Rita Williams-Garcia

The lives of Leticia, Dominique, and Trina are irrevocably intertwined through the course of one day in an urban high school after Leticia overhears Dominique's plans to beat up Trina and must decide whether or not to get involved. | Lexile: 600

### **How to Save a Life** by Sara Zarr

Told from their own viewpoints, seventeen-year-old Jill, in grief over the loss of her father, and Mandy, nearly nineteen, are thrown together when Jill's mother agrees to adopt Mandy's unborn child but nothing turns out as they had anticipated. | Lexile: 710

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## SERIES

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**Weetzie Bat** by Francesca Lia Block

**Finishing School** by Gail Carriger

**The Mortal Instruments** by Cassandra Clare

**The Hunger Games** by Suzanne Collins

**The Maze Runner** by James Dashner

**Earthsea** by Ursula K. Le Guin

**His Dark Materials** by Philip Pullman

**Divergent** by Veronica Roth

**The Raven Cycle** by Maggie Stiefvater

**Shiver** trilogy by Maggie Stiefvater

**Daughter of Smoke and Bone** by Laini Taylor

**Uglies** by Scott Westerfeld

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