







DCPS Recommended Summer Reading List 2011 Grades 6-8





 Cultural 			
Title	Author	Summary	Lexile
The Conch Bearer	Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni	Set in contemporary India, the story opens in a poor section of Calcutta, where 12-year-old Anand is entrusted with a conch shell imbued with mystical powers. Anand's task is to return the shell to its rightful home high in the Himalayas. Will he succeed? This is literary fiction of the highest order, as well as an adventure story that is almost impossible to put down.	790L
Red Scarf Girl	Ji-Li Jiang	When China's Communist Party detained Ji-li's father, the 12-year-old was faced with the most difficult choice of her life. She could denounce her father and break with her family, or she could refuse to testify and sacrifice her future in her beloved Communist Party.	780L
Voices From The Fields: Children of Migrant Workers	S. Beth Atkin	<i>Voices From The Fields</i> is about nine different children all of which are Mexican/Spanish. All of these children have one thing in common, they work in the fields or they have a close relative that works in a field. Their stories range from being involved with gangs to the difficulty of moving up in society.	850L
The Broken Bridge	Phillip Pullman	At 16, Ginny finds that her love of painting connects her to the artistic Haitian mother she never knew and eases the isolation she feels as the only mixed-race teen in her Welsh village. When she learns she has a half-brother by her father's first marriage, her world is shattered. Ginny embarks on a quest for the truth that will allow her to claim her artistic heritage and face her father.	780L
 Non-Fiction 			
For Boys Only: The Biggest, Baddest Book Ever!	Marc Aronson H.P. Newquist	Boys: Want to have some fun? Maybe learn how to land an airplane in an emergency? Or fight off an alligator? Escape from being tied up? How about taking a ride on one of America's <i>scariest</i> roller coasters? Learn how to make fake blood or turn a real bone into a pretzel. What if you could find out how to identify some of the world's most horrifying creatures? Or learn the secret of making a blockbuster movie? This and much more.	N/A
For Girls Only: Everything Great About Being a Girl	Laura Dower	Beginning with a letter that urges girls not to read the book from start to finish, but rather to savor the entries at random, the author includes the silly ("Menu of the World Weird"), the practical ("How to Write a Thank You note"), the mystical ("Phrenology anyone?") and the sage (tips on going green). Where's a great hiding spot for your secret journal?	N/A
Famous Hispanic Americans	Janet Nomura Morey	Fourteen outstanding Hispanic Americans are profiled from every walk of life, listing their contributions and achievements.	1170L



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Portraits of African American Heroes	Tonya Bolden	This stunning book consists of portraits — in pictures and words — of twenty outstanding African-Americans. These inspiring individuals range from historical to contemporary figures, such as dancer Judith Jamison, Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall, and boxer Joe Louis.	1140L
Native American Scientists	Jetty St John Fred M. B. Amram	This book gives five biographies of Native Americans who have made careers in science.	610L
The Power of Half	Kevin Salwen Hannah Salwen	It all started when 14-year old Hannah Salwen, idealistic but troubled by a growing sense of injustice in the world, had a eureka moment when a homeless man in her neighborhood was juxtaposed against a glistening Mercedes coupe. This glaring disparity led the Salwen family of four, caught up like so many other Americans in this age of consumption and waste, to follow Hannah's urge to do something, to finally <i>just do something</i> . They decided to sell their Atlanta mansion, downsize to a house half its size, and give half of their profits to a worthy charity. Each week they met over dinner to discuss their plan. It would transport them across the globe and well out of their comfort zone. Along the way they would inspire so many others wrestling with the same questions: Do I give enough? How much is enough? How can I make an impact in the world?	1010L
 Sports 			
Last Shot: The Final Four	John Feinstein	Steven Thomas is one of two lucky winners of the U.S. Basketball Writer's Association's contest for aspiring journalists. His prize? A trip to New Orleans and a coveted press pass for the Final Four. It's a basketball junkie's dream come true! But the games going on behind the scenes between the coaches, the players, the media, the money-men, and the fans turn out to be even more fiercely competitive than those on the court. Steven and his fellow winner, Susan Carol Anderson, are nosing around the Superdome and overhear what sounds like a threat to throw the championship game. Now they have just 48 hours to figure out who is blackmailing one of MSU's star	760L
Amazing Grace	Megan Shull	Teenage tennis-star Grace Ace Kincaid has the talent and looks that make her a hit both on the court and on Madison Avenue. But she is falling apart, breaking under the tremendous pressure of worldwide fame. She wants OUT. And she gets her wish—a total break from her lifestyle and identity. She becomes Emily O'Brien, everyday teenager, with nose-ring intact. She is transported to remote Medicine Hat, AK, where she lives with her new guardian, retired FBI-agent Ava Grady, in a rustic cabin, complete with outhouse and freezing-cold showers. It is here that she experiences a sense of normalcy in her life.	720L



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A True Book: Wrestling	Christian Ditchfield	<i>True Books</i> covers a photo-filled chapter book on basic information about wrestling. This book includes lively sidebars and a comprehensive "To Find Out More" section listing books, organizations, and Internet sites.	910L
Tony Hawk: Professional Skateboarder	Tony Hawk	Hawk speaks of being a super-competitive "demon" child who found peace while on a skateboard. Classmates teased him because of his interest in an "uncool" sport. Instead of retaliating with violence, he practiced even more. With his story, he will inspire a younger generation of fans to stand up for what they believe in and follow their dreams.	1000L
 Urban Myths and Legends 			
Greek Myths and Legends	Cheryl Evans Anne Millard	Presents over two-hundred Greek myths and legends, personalities, gods and goddesses, heroes, and monsters.	950L
Beowulf Monster Slayer	Paul D. Storrie Ron Randall	Beowulf is a graphic novel with vivid panels that capture the high drama, whether in depictions of the brave, stern hero or the well-fanged monsters he bests.	700L
Legends of Dracula	Thomas Streissguth	Legends surrounding Count Dracula and other vampire tales have circulated for hundreds of years. Readers of this book can follow these Dracula stories from their start in the Ottoman Empire to their portrayal in Hollywood and beyond.	1060L
Spiders in The Hairdo	David Holt	Urban legends are the tabloids of living folklore. Adults, older children, and especially teens are fascinated by these contemporary tales.	720L
 Contemporary 			
Extra Credit	Andrew Clements	Three young middle-school-age children, Abby, Amira, and Sadeed, exchange letters back and forth between the prairies of Illinois and the mountains of Afghanistan and begin to bridge a gap across cultural and religious divides. Students may choose any of the other upper grade books by Andrew Clements.	830L
The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place	E. L. Konigsburg	Upon leaving an oppressive summer camp, twelve-year-old Margaret Rose Kane spearheads a campaign to preserve three unique towers her granduncles have been building in their backyard for over forty years.	840L
Millicent Min, Girl Genius	Lisa Yee	In a series of journal entries, eleven-year-old Millicent Min records her struggles to learn to play volleyball, tutor her enemy, deal with her grandmother's departure, and make friends over the course of a tumultuous summer.	800L
When You Reach Me	Rebecca Stead	As her mother prepares to be a contestant on the 1980s television game show, "The \$20,000 Pyramid," a twelve-year-old New York City girl tries to make sense of a series of mysterious notes received from an anonymous source that seems to defy the laws of time and space.	750L



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Realistic Fiction



All of The Above	Shelley Pearsall	Exhausted by his efforts to teach math to apathetic middle schoolers, Mr. Collins proposes that his class attempt to build the world's largest tetrahedron structure. The resulting endeavor, described in alternating chapters by Mr. Collins and four of the students, builds more than geometry as readers come to see them as individuals and as a developing unit. They include artistic tough guy James Harris III, who insists that the individual tetrahedrons color coordinate; Marcel the Magnificent, who works vigorously at his father's barbecue grill; veteran foster child Sharice; and quietly ambitious Rhondell. Marcel's dad's recipes are sprinkled throughout. This novel is based on the true story of a Cleveland middle school tetrahedron built in 2002	1000L
Hush	Jacqueline Woodson	Toswiah Green's life ended the moment her policeman father decided to testify against a fellow officer. The Greens have had to change their identities and move to a different city. Now Toswiah is Evie Thomas, and that is the least of the changes. Her defeated father spends his days sitting by the window. Since her mother can no longer work as a teacher, she puts her energy into their new church. Her only sister is making secret plans to leave. And Evie, struggling to find her way, wonders who she is now and how she can make her future as bright as her past once was.	640L
Looking For Red	Angela Johnson	Twelve-year-old Mike -- short for Michaela -- loves the ocean. The sights, sounds, and smells of her coastal home are embedded in her very soul. But Michaela loves her brother, Red, even more. Then one day Red disappears. One minute he's there, the next...gone. No warning. No time to prepare. And Mike must come to terms with that loss or risk never finding comfort in what remains of the life she and her brother once shared.	740L
Summer on Wheels	Gary Soto	Hector and his best friend Mondo embark on many exciting adventures during their summer vacation when they take a six-day bike trip from their East Los Angeles neighborhood to the Santa Monica beach.	750L
The Art of Racing In The Rain	Garth Stein	Have you ever wondered what your dog is thinking? Enzo is a lab terrier mix plucked from a farm outside Seattle to ride shotgun with race car driver Denny Swift as he pursues success on the track and off. Denny meets and marries Eve, has a daughter, Zoë, and risks his savings and his life to make it on the professional racing circuit. Enzo, frustrated by his inability to speak and his lack of opposable thumbs, watches Denny's old racing videos, coins koanlike aphorisms that apply to both driving and life, and hopes for the day when his life as a dog will be over and he can be reborn a man.	850L



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Airman	Eoin Colfer	The bestselling creator of the "Artemis Fowl" series returns with a new adventure set in the 1890s. Thrown into prison for a murder he didn't commit, Conor Broekhart passes the time scratching designs for a flying machine onto the walls of his cell. After two years, Conor is finally able to build a glider and executes a daring escape to the mainland.	800L
The Graveyard Book	Neil Gaiman	Nobody Owens, known to his friends as Bod, is a normal boy. He would be "completely" normal if he didn't live in a sprawling graveyard, being raised and educated by ghosts, with a solitary guardian who belongs to neither the world of the living nor of the dead. But if Bod leaves the graveyard, then he will come under attack from the man Jack — who has already killed Bod's family.	820L
The Supernaturalist	Eoin Colfer	In futuristic Satellite City, fourteen-year-old Cosmo Hill teams up with three other people who share his ability to see supernatural creatures, and together they determine the nature and purpose of the swarming blue Parasites that are plaguing the city.	650L
The Thief, Liar and Gentleman	Eleanor Updale	When a petty thief falls through a glass roof while fleeing from the police, it should have been the death of him. Instead, it marks the beginning of a whole new life. Soon he has become the most successful -- and elusive -- burglar in Victorian London, plotting daring raids and using London's new sewer system to escape. He adopts a dual existence to fit his new lifestyle, taking on the roles of a respectable, wealthy gentleman named Montmorency and his corrupt servant, Scarper	1100L
There's A Dead Person Following My Sister Around	Vivian Vande Velde	When Ted's five-year-old sister Vicki invents an imaginary friend, no one is too concerned . . . until they realize that her friend can move things. Ted is sure that Vicki's "friend" Marella is a ghost. But why would a ghost haunt Vicki? And why does Marella seem to be terrified of another ghost—a dark figure that is haunting Ted?	870L



Call me Maria	Judith Ortiz Cofer	Maria is a girl caught between two worlds: Puerto Rico, where she was born, and her new home, New York. As she struggles to lose her island accent, Maria does her best to find her place within the unfamiliar culture of the barrio. With the Spanglish of the barrio people ringing in her ears, she finds the poet within herself.	970L
From Totems to Hip-Hop: A Multicultural Anthology of Poetry Across the Americas 1900-2002	Ishmael Reed (Editor)	Celebrated novelist, poet, and MacArthur fellow Ishmael Reed pushes the boundaries once again in the publication of <i>From Totems to Hip Hop</i> . This important collection synthesizes and presents broad swaths of work from poets of all races and backgrounds.	N/A



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Love That Dog	S. Creech	Jack hates poetry. Only girls write it and every time he tries to, his brain feels empty. But his teacher, Ms. Stretchberry, won't stop giving her class poetry assignments — and Jack can't avoid them. But then something amazing happens. The more he writes, the more he learns he does have something to say. Each entry is written as a poem. He gains more confidence as the students show they enjoy his work.	1010L
Technically, It's Not My Fault	J. Grandits	<i>Technically, It's Not My Fault</i> is an anthology of concrete poems. Each poem is about the life of eleven year old Robert. His musings cover the usual stuff, like pizza, homework, thank-you notes, and his annoying older sister. In addition, he speculates about professional wrestling for animals, wonders why no one makes scratch-and-sniff fart stickers, designs the ultimate roller coaster (complete with poisonous spiders), and deconstructs the origins of a new word, snarpy .	N/A
Amiri and Odette	Walter Dean Myers	Set on the asphalt of a housing project and the concrete of a basketball court, this compelling work by Walter Dean Myers is delivered with rhythms that twist, hover, pounce, and inspire. For Amiri and Odette, love is hard when the streets are mean. Their dance for two becomes a fight for three, and their only chance is to hold fast to the power of being together as one. Part poem, part love story, part rap and rhapsody, <i>Amiri and Odette: A Love Story</i> is a celebration of two hearts that beat forever.	N/A