

A bibliography of books that appeal to middle school readers compiled by Hollis Rudiger, Cooperative Children's Book Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, for the 2004 ALSC National Institute.

## **Great Middle School Reads**

**Compiled by Hollis Margaret Rudiger, Cooperative  
Children's Book Center,  
School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison.**

**Prepared for the 2004 ALSC Leadership Institute, Minneapolis, MN**

The following is a very short list of books that will appeal to middle school readers. The term "middle school" is a problematic descriptor when it comes to identifying appropriate books because it refers to a culturally specific, often building specific, group of readers.

For our purposes "middle school" refers to children in grades 6-8, or roughly 10-14 years old. It refers to the period in a child's life when there are more variables among like-aged children than in any other period, so the only real common denominator among all of them is the building in which they are educated. So this list, like everything else for these kids, is uncertain and constantly evolving. The categories are based on common interests and concerns of middle schoolers, and many of the books would fit in multiple categories.

### **When the World Lets You Down**

Doyle, Brian. *Uncle Ronald*. Greenwood, 1997. 138 pages.

Easton, Kelly. *Walking on Air*. McElderry Books, 2004. 233 pages.

Flake, Sharon G. *Begging for Change*. Jump at the Sun/ Hyperion, 2003. 235 pages.

Gaiman, Neil. *The Wolves in the Walls*. HarperCollins, 2003. 56 pages.

Smith, Hope Anita. *The Way a Door Closes*. Henry Holt, 2003. 52 pages.

Williams-Garcia, Rita. *No Laughter Here*. HarperCollins, 2004. 133 pages.

### **Laughing Through The Tears**

Gantos, Jack. *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key* (and others in the series). Farrar Straus Giroux, 1998. 154 pages.

McKay, Hilary. *Saffy's Angel*. U.S. Edition: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2002. 152 pages.

Naifeh, Ted. *Courtney Crumrin and the Night Things* (and other volumes). Oni Press, 2001.

Wheeler, Lisa. *Seadogs: An Epic Ocean Operetta*. Jackson/Atheneum, 2004. Unpaged.

Wynne-Jones, Tim. *Some of the Kinder Planets*. Orchard, 1995. 130 pages.

Yee, Lisa. *Millicent Min: Girl Genius*. Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic Press, 2003. 256 pages.

### **Who Am I if not My Family?**

Avi. *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. Hyperion, 2002. 262 pages.

Huser, Glen. *Stitches*. Groundwood, 2003. 198 pages.

Funke, Cornelia. *Inkheart*. Translated from the German by Anthea Bell. The Chicken House/Scholastic, 2003. 534 pages.

Gaiman, Neil. *Coraline*. HarperCollins, 2002. 162 pages.

Giff, Patricia Reilly. *Pictures of Hollis Woods*. Wendy Lamb Books/Random House, 2002. 166 pages.

Osa, Nancy. *Cuba 15*. Delacorte Press, 2003. 277 pages.

Park, Linda Sue. *When My Name Was Keoko*. Clarion, 2002. 199 pages.

Sheth, Kashmira. *Blue Jasmine*. Hyperion, 2004. 186 pages.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Hush*. Putnam, 2002. 181 pages.

### **Decisions, Decisions (That's Not Fair!)**

Bruchac, Joseph. *The Heart of a Chief*. Dial, 1998. 153 pages.

Crowe, Chris. *Getting Away With Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case*. Phyllis Fogelman Books/Penguin, 2003. 128 pages.

DuPrau, Jeanne. *The City of Ember*. Random House, 2003. 270 pages.

Erlbach, Arlene. *Worth the Risk*. Free Spirit Press, 1999. 122 pages.

Farmer, Nancy. *The House of the Scorpion*. A Richard Jackson Book/Atheneum, 2002. 380 pages.

Goodall, Jane. *The Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours*. A Byron Preiss Book/Scholastic Press, 2001. 80 pages.

Hiaasen, Carl. *Hoot*. Alfred A Knopf, 2002. 292 pages.

Konigsburg, E.L. *The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place*. Atheneum, 2004. 296 pages.

Lowry, Lois. *Messenger*. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. 169 pages.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam*. HarperCollins, 2002. 32 pages.

Reeve, Philip. *Mortal Engines* (The Hungry City Chronicles). Eos/HarperCollins, 2003. 310 pages.

Spinelli, Jerry. *Stargirl*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2000. 186 pages.

### **When You Have to be the Grown-up...**

Choldenko, Gennifer. *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. Putnam, 2004. 240 pages.

Clarke, Judith. *Wolf on the Fold*. U.S. Edition: Front Street, 2002. 169 pages.

Collins, Suzanne. *Gregor the Overlander*. Scholastic Press, 2003. 310 pages.

Ellis, Deborah. *Mud City* (The final book in the Breadwinner Trilogy). Groundwood/Douglas & McIntyre, 2003. 164 pages.

Mizayaki, Hayao. *Spirited Away, vol 1*. Viz Comics, 2002.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Esperanza Rising*. Scholastic Press, 2000. 262 pages.

### **Coming of Ages, Living and Dying**

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *Bucking the Sarge*. Wendy Lamb, 2004. 272 pages.

Gandolfi, Sylvana. *Aldabra*. Translated from the Italian by Lynne Sharon Schwartz. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2004. 160 pages.

Henkes, Kevin. *Olive's Ocean*. Greenwillow/HarperCollins, 2003. 224 pages.

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Kira-Kira*. Atheneum, 2004. 256 pages.

Nye, Naomi Shihab. *What Have You Lost?* Greenwillow, 1999. 205 pages.

Winick, Judd. *Pedro and Me: Friendship, Loss, and What I Learned*. Henry Holt, 2000. 187 pages.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Locomotion*. Putnam, 2003. 128 pages.

### **Cool People/All Kinds of Heroes**

Cummins, Julie. *Tomboy of the Air: Daredevil Pilot Blanche Stuart Scott*. HarperCollins, 2001. 80 pages.

Fleming, Candace. *Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good Gentleman's Life*. An Anne Schwartz Book/Atheneum, 2003. 120 pages.

Greenberg, Jan and Sandra Jordan. *Runaway Girl: The Artist Louise Bourgeois*. Harry N. Abrams, 2003. 80 pages.

Johnson, Angela. *The Other Side: Shorter Poems*. Orchard, 1998. 44 pages.

Macy, Sue. *Bulls-eye: A Photobiography of Annie Oakley*. National Geographic Society, 2001. 64 pages.

Maurer, Richard. *The Wright Sister: Katharine Wright and Her Famous Brothers*. Roaring Book Press, 2003. 127 pages.

Nelson, Marilyn. *Carver, a Life in Poems*. Front Street, 2001. 103 pages.

Partridge, Elizabeth. *This Land was Made for You and Me: The Life and Songs of Woody Guthrie*. Viking, 2002. 217 pages.

### **Survive Middle School, then Survive THIS!**

Bredeson, Carmen. *After the Last Dog Died: The True-Life, Hair-Raising Adventure of Douglas Mawson and His 1912 Antarctic Expedition*. National Geographic, 2003. 63 pages.

Murphy, Jim. *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793*. Clarion, 2003. 165 pages.

Fleischman, John. *Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science*. Houghton Mifflin, 2002. 86 pages.

Gaiman, Neil. *The Books of Magic*. DC Comics/Vertigo, 1993.

Lawlor, Laurie. *Magnificent Voyage: An American Adventurer on Captain James Cook's Final Expedition*. Holiday House, 2002. 236 pages.

Matthews, L. S. *Fish*. Delacorte, 2004. 183 pages.

Orlev, Uri. *Run, Boy, Run*. Translated from the Hebrew by Hillel Halkin. Walter Lorraine Books/Houghton Mifflin, 2003. 186 pages.

Philbrick, Nathaniel. *Revenge of the Whale: The True Story of the Whaleship Essex*. Putnam, 2002. 164 pages.

Ross, Val. *The Road to There: Mapmakers and Their Stories*. Tundra, 2003. 146 pages.

Schyffert, Bea Uusma. *The Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon: The Story of Apollo 11 Astronaut Michael Collins*. Chronicle, 2003. 77 pages.

[Back to main Book Lists Page](#)