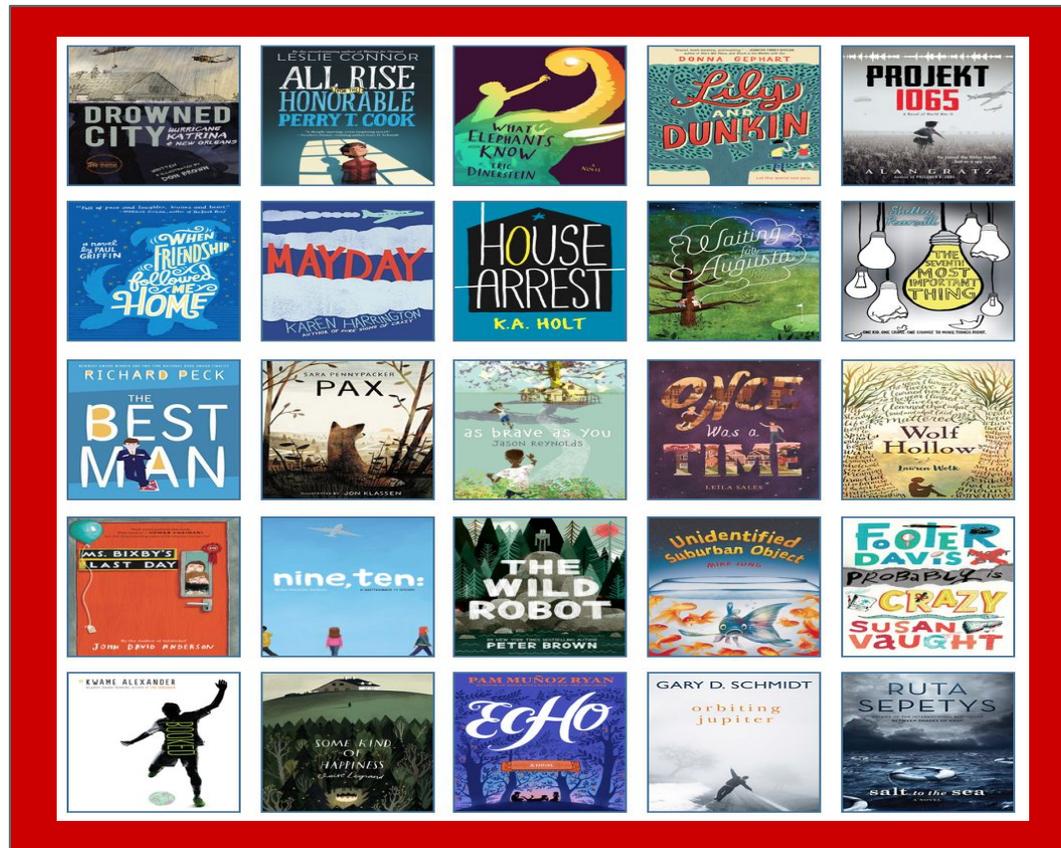


Georgia Children's Book (Gr. 4-8) Award 2017-2018 Finalists



Connecting to Children, Community, and Curriculum

Book Award Selection Committee

Dr. Denise Davila (Chair), *Graduate Faculty*, Language & Literacy Education, University of Georgia

Dr. Sara Kajder (Chair), *Clinical Assistant Professor*, Language & Literacy Education, University of Georgia

Traci Blackstock, *Media Specialist*, Scoggins Middle, Paulding County

Melanie Duncan, *Branch Manager/Librarian*, West Bibb Branch/Middle Georgia Regional Library System, Bibb County

Terrie Gribanow, *Media Specialist*, Dearing Elementary, McDuffie County

Roy Jackson, *Media Specialist*, Springdale Park Elementary, Atlanta Public Schools

Donna Jones (Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl Representative), *Media Specialist*, Avondale Elementary, DeKalb County

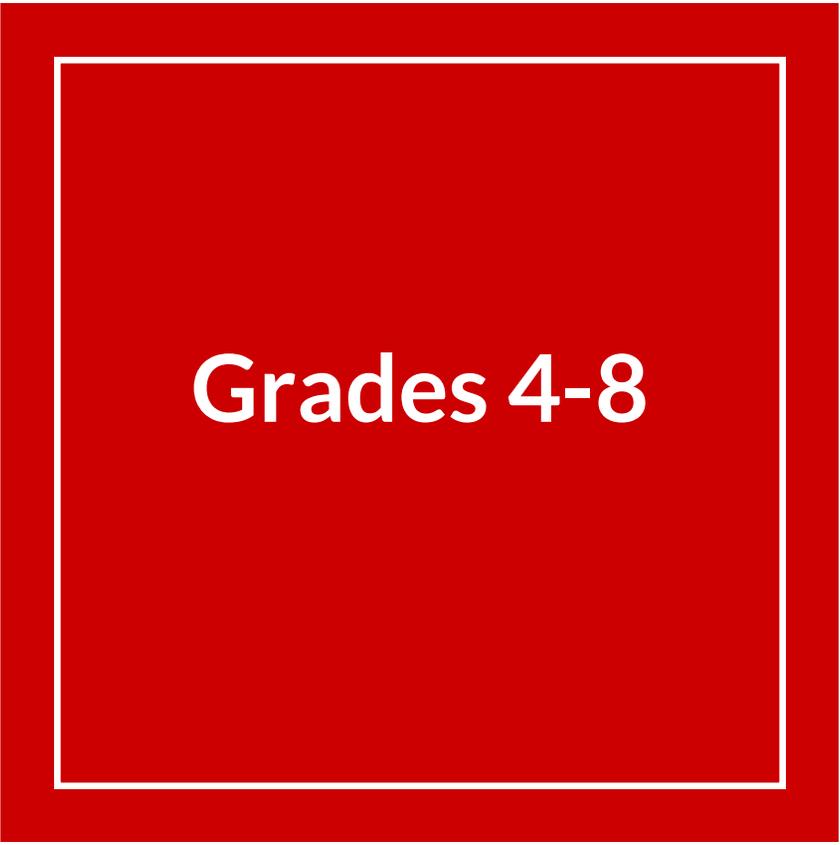
Bev Kodak, *Sixth Grade Teacher*, Ola Middle, Henry County

Leslie Olig, *Media Specialist*, Euchee Creek Elementary, Columbia County

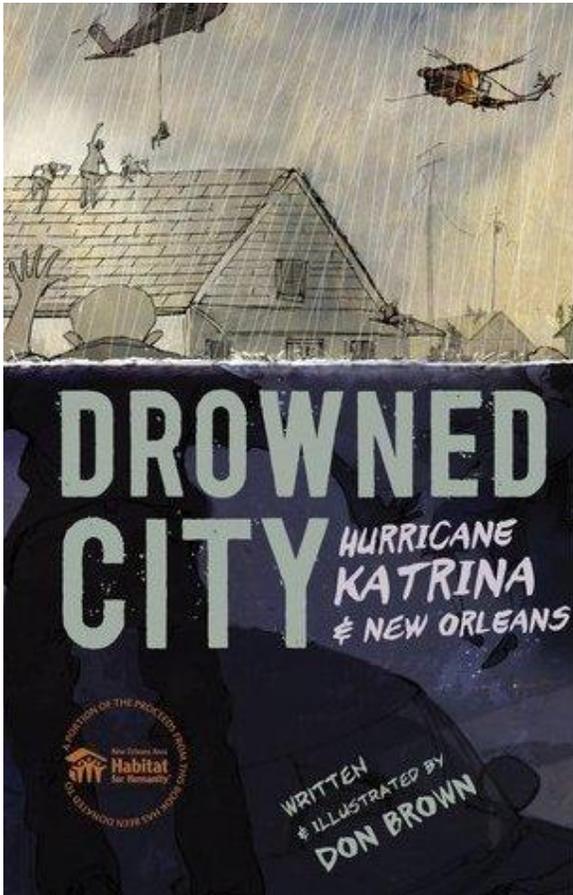
Julie Stokes, *Media Coordinator Grades 6-8*, Dalton Middle School, Whitfield County

LaRita Wiggins, *Assistant Principal*, Austin Road Middle, Henry County

Adam Crawley (Graduate Assistant), *Doctoral Student*, Language & Literacy Education, University of Georgia

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Grades 4-8



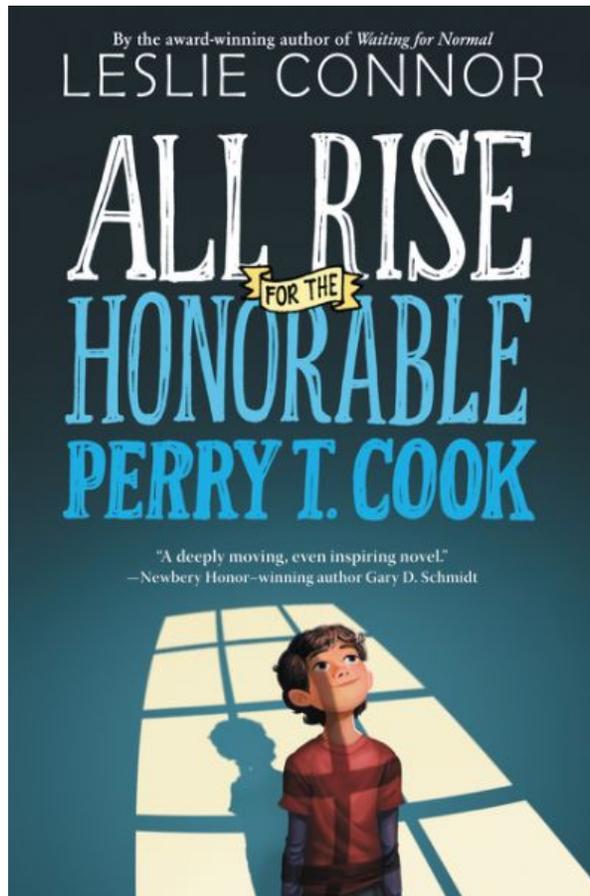
Brown, Don. (2015). *Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans*. New York, NY: HMH.
Lexile - GN920L

Summary:

This graphic novel explores the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the residents of New Orleans, presenting images that unfold from the beginnings of the storm to early evacuation efforts to moments of heroism as ordinary citizens banded together. Rich with details that share the horrors experienced in hospitals, the Superdome, individual homes, and throughout the flooded parishes, the book also shares glimpses of rebuilding, hope, and reunion.

Connections:

- Using a map, have students locate the state, city and parishes impacted by Hurricane Katrina.
- Recreate and/or track the path of Hurricane Katrina using latitude and longitude information and other primary sources.
- Create safety tips for a disaster, and create a survival kit.
- Research or conduct original interviews/oral histories of community members whose lives have been impacted by hurricanes or other major weather events.



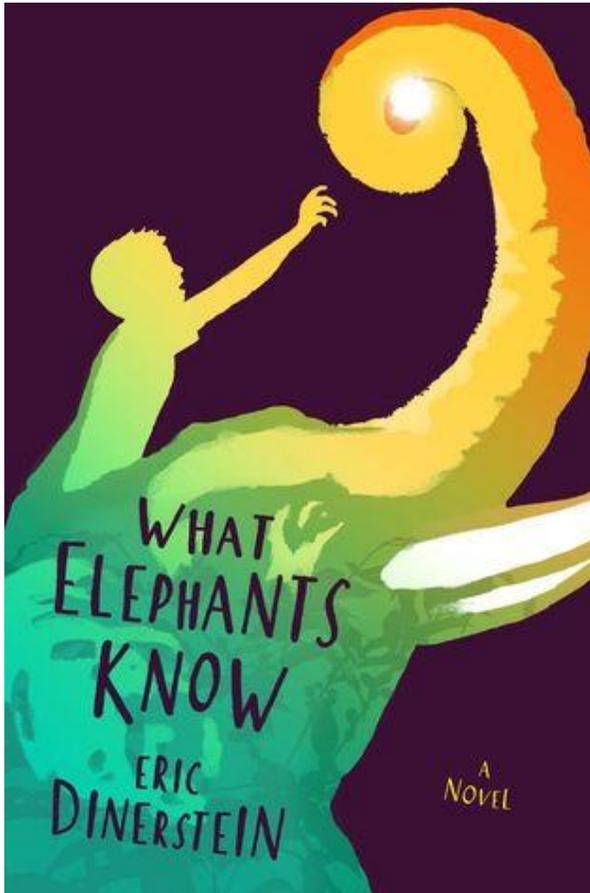
Connor, Leslie. (2016). *All Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook*. New York, NY: Katherine Tegen Books/Harper Collins. Lexile: 540L

Summary:

Perry is an eleven-year-old who calls cell block C home. He has been with his mother (Jessica) at the Blue River Co-Ed Correctional Facility since birth. His home life is like most kids. His mother's term is almost up but the new District Attorney (Tom VanLeer) finds out about Perry and is not happy. He opposes Jessica's parole. Perry is removed from Blue River to a foster home which is with VanLeer. Perry is not happy and feels he has been removed from his home to a prison. He feels like nothing belongs to him. He is determined to go back to his mom. He has an assignment for school and proceeds to interview the other members of his "family" at Blue River and hopes this will help his mother's release. You get to know the family Perry has at Blue River and how his mother come to be at the facility. Perry discovers how love can help someone endure much and what family really means.

Connections:

- Write about why Perry feels he is in prison after he is moved to the foster home. Use a comparison chart to help guide the conclusion.
- Write a persuasive paragraph to the district attorney to have Perry returned to Blue River.



Dinerstein, Eric. (2016). *What Elephants Know*.
Los Angeles, CA: Disney-Hyperion.
Lexile: 790L

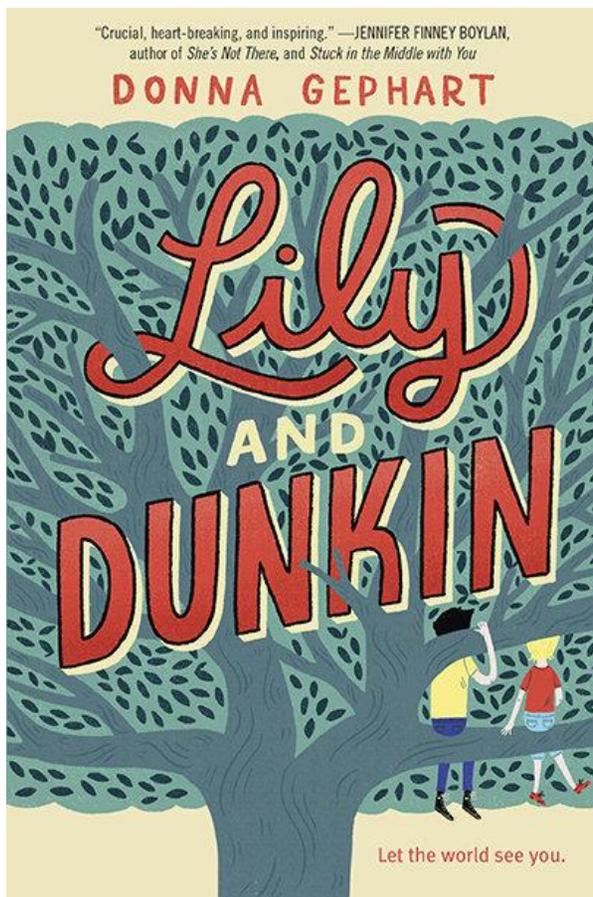
Summary:

Nandu's life is perfect. He lives with his father, the head of the King's elephant stable, and his mother a female elephant named Devi Kali. He has learned the ways of the jungle. He yearns to become an elephant driver. Unfortunately, life as he knows it and his aspirations are in jeopardy when the King's government threatens to close the stable he calls home. Nandu must find a way to save the stable and secure his perfect life in the jungle of Nepal.

Eric Dinerstein creates a memorable story in the breathtaking jungle of Nepal. It is a narrative including details and descriptions about elephants, tigers, rhinos, and other wild animals. These animals are interconnected and help to teach how each of us fits into the world.

Connections:

- In the book, Nandu mentions that he has read about a zoo in Atlanta, which breeds elephants. Have students research the breeding program at the Atlanta zoo and other zoos around the world. Based on their research, have students write a chapter for the book about the stable becoming a breeder of elephants.
- The book alludes to the story, *A Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling. Read this story and compare the two texts.
- Research the history of the Caste System of India. Have students explain social stratification. Then have students determine how it is presented in the text. Based on their research, have students determine if the author effectively depicts the societal hierarchy.



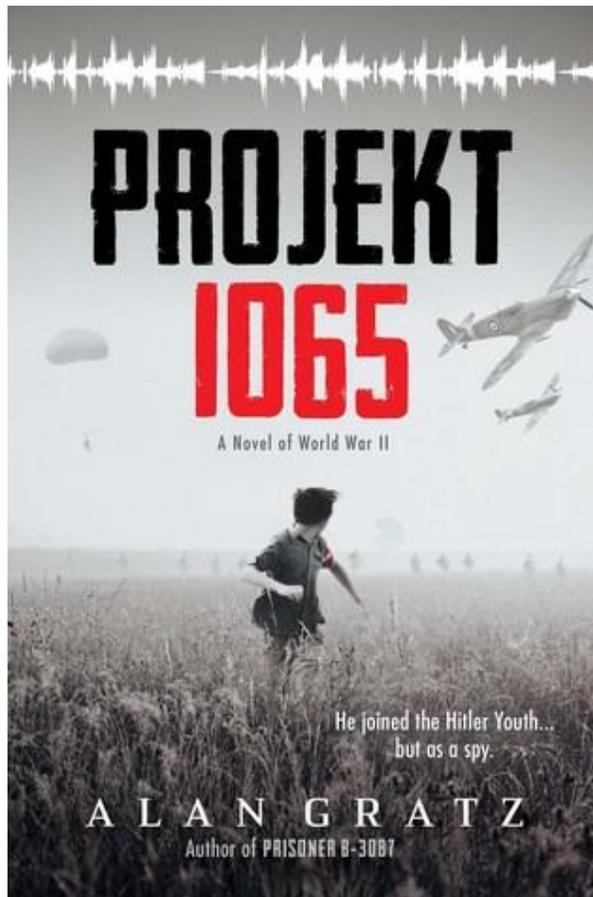
Gephart, Donna. (2016). *Lily and Dunkin*. New York, NY: Delacorte. Lexile: 680L

Summary:

Lily Jo McGrother, born Timothy McGrother, is a girl. Norbert Dorfman, aka Dunkin, is the new kid in town, who just happens to be dealing with bipolar disorder, and a secret. When Lily and Dunkin meet before their eighth grade school year, both of their lives change. They say some books can be like mirrors and windows. Students need to see themselves in the stories they read, much like a window. But students can also read novels and see the world outside, much like a window. *Lily and Dunkin* is a novel about being true to yourself.

Connections:

- **Bipolar Disorder-** Norbert, known to Lily in the story as Dunkin, suffers from bipolar disorder. Conduct some research on what happens in the brain when a person has bipolar disorder? What does medication do? What happens when a bipolar person stops taking that medication? Is the book's portrayal of Norbert's disorder true-to-life?
- **Bullying-** Read about the types of bullying on the bullyingstatistics.org/content/school-bullying.html website. What is your school's policy on bullying? What should you do if you or someone you know is being bullied? What can a bystander do to support someone who is being bullied? Write a short play about bullying which shows bystanders helping or supporting someone being picked on.
- **Gender roles-** How have gender roles changed over the years? What are some things that used to be labeled "feminine"? What are some things that are traditionally "masculine"? Lily is transgender. Have students work with a partner to find examples in the book that describe Lily's transition, then use the examples to create a timeline of significant moments in Lily's life. Encourage students to extend the timeline beyond the scope of the book.
- **Feeling different and fitting in-** Lily has a secret in the book. When people look at her, they see a boy named Tim, but inside, she knows she's a girl. Have you ever felt like you were different than those around you? How would you compare your feelings to hers?
- For more ideas and information, see the excellent free Educator's Guide: <https://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Lily-and-Dunkin-EG.pdf>



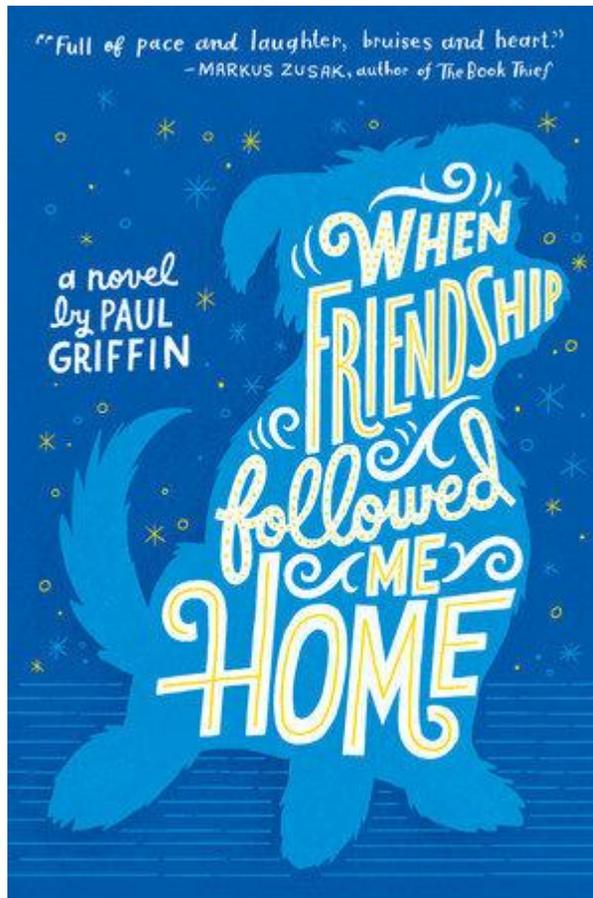
Gratz, Alan. (2016). *Projekt 1065*. New York, NY: Scholastic. Lexile: 780L

Summary:

Chock full of action and adventure, *Projekt 1065* is a novel set during World War II. Michael O'Shaunessey is the son of the Irish ambassador to Germany. His parents are secretly spying on the Third Reich, and Michael feels that it's his duty to help them. He joins the Hitler Youth in order to get closer to some secret plans that will help defeat the Nazis. Fans of Alan Gratz's *Prisoner B3087* will love this book.

Connections:

- World War II- Have students conduct research about the time frame of World War II. Use books in the library or websites to create a dual timeline. On the top half of the timeline, note events from WWII. Underneath the timeline, have students note events from Michael's life.
- The Dangers of Extremism- What does it mean to be patriotic? Is there a difference between patriotism and nationalism? How did the Nazis rise to power and gain so much control over the German people? Are there any parallels you can draw to today? Compare and contrast similarities and differences you see.
- Journalism- Pretend that you are a news reporter during World War II. Write an article to inform newspaper readers (or radio news listeners) about one of the novel's major events related to the war. Be descriptive, but also include the 5 w's in your article.



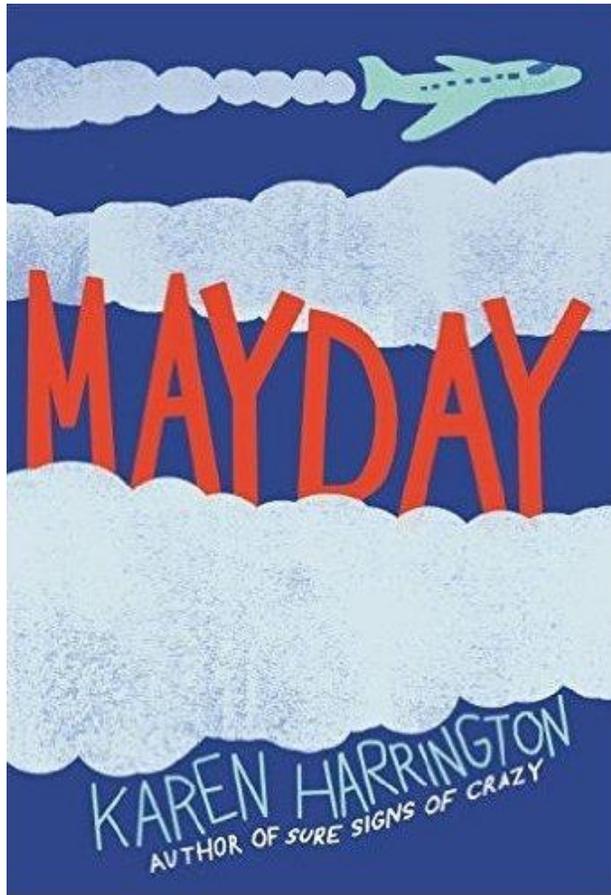
Griffin, Paul. (2016). *When Friendship Followed Me Home*. New York, NY: Dial. Lexile: 590L

Summary:

Ben loves science fiction so he likes going to the library. He prefers the characters in the books as friends. They cannot leave you. He has been in several foster home until age 10 and he gets a loving mother to adopt him. Life is good until it is turned upside down with the loss of his adopted mother. Ben meets and takes home a stray dog Flip. Flip helps Ben find his best friend Halley at the library. Halley's mom is the librarian too and helps Ben through the loss of his mom. Halley convinces Ben to write a book together. Through writing the book together it helps Ben deal with Halley's health issues. You will discover how friendship can help overcome loss no matter the issues you face.

Connections:

- Research therapy dogs. What are the different dog types that are generally trained? What issues are the dogs used to help people? How do the dogs help their master?
- Family is not always made up of people you are related to. Consider who makes up Ben's family in the novel. Create a mind map to illustrate the connections between characters.
- Does the novel *When Friendship Followed Me Home* obey Ben's storytelling rules? Create a guide for the rules of writing a book like *When Friendship Followed Me Home*.



Harrington, Karen. (2016). *Mayday*. New York, NY: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. Lexile: 590L

Summary:

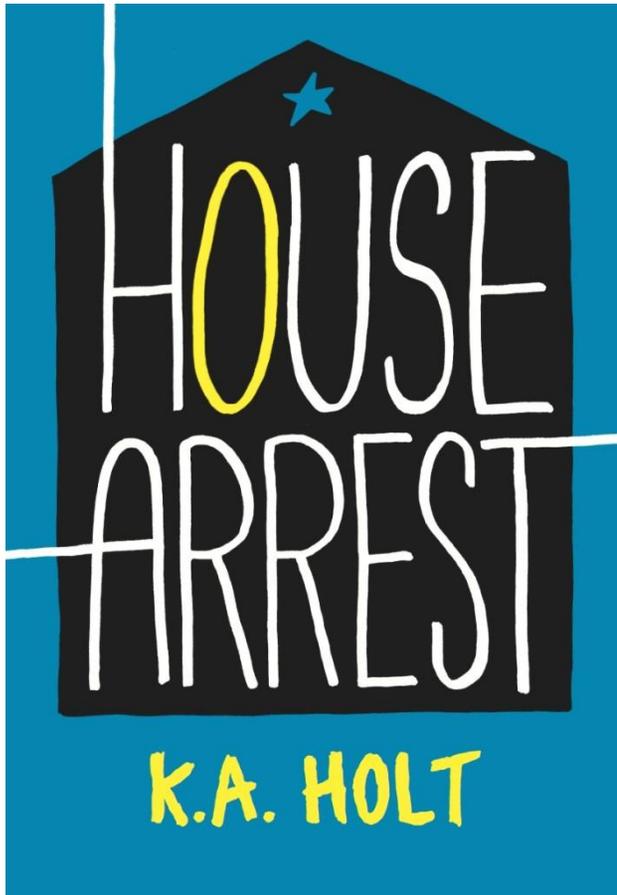
Wayne Kovok lives in two worlds in the book *Mayday*, the before and the after. In the before Wayne communicates with people through his vast knowledge of facts. He is filled with all sorts of random facts about poinsettias and the fact that more people die from vending machines than shark attacks, and can't figure out how to communicate with certain girl. In the before we meet his uncle who is the army, his drill sergeant grandpa, deadbeat dad, and hardworking mother.

Then comes the after. Wayne's uncle dies while on duty. Coming back from his uncle's funeral at Arlington Cemetery on a flight to Texas, his plane crashes. Wayne and his mother survive the crash but Wayne is injured in his throat and is unable to talk for much a long time.

While unable to talk Wayne finds his voice. Unable to talk, he realizes all the things he hasn't been able to say. As readers we get to see through Wayne how important communication is and how we sometimes don't use it. During this time of silence, Wayne learns about the crash, and searches for the flag that draped his uncle's casket. Throughout such sad events, the author manages to bring in humor and relatableness.

Connections:

- Veterans - The story centers on Wayne's uncle who dies while on military duty. Use current events and create an awareness of the US military and where our troops are stationed and what their purpose is.
- Writing - Create a letter writing campaign or pen pal with our troops. Students could write about their lives and learn about our troops and what they do.
- VA - Raise awareness by volunteering or raising donations/monies for local VA medical centers.



Holt, K.A. (2015). *House Arrest*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle. Lexile: 610L

Summary:

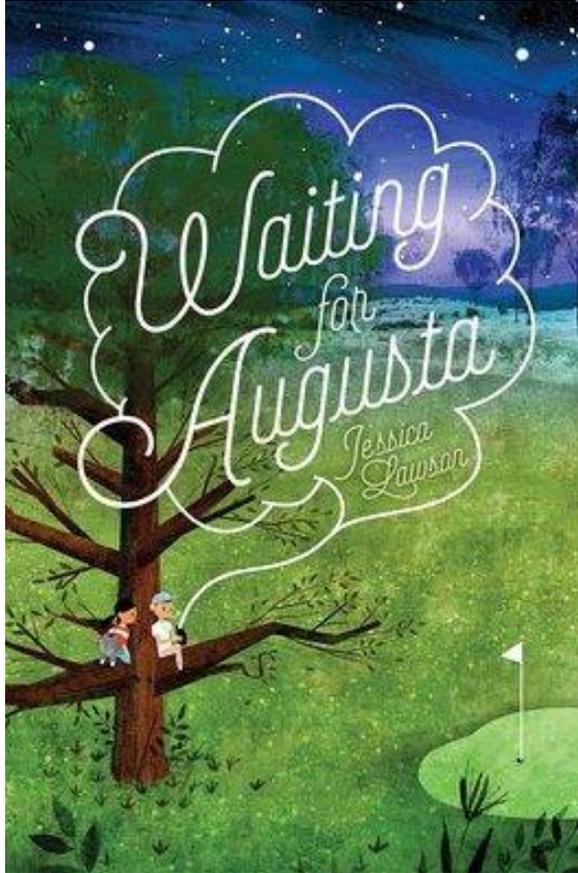
What would you do to save your baby brother? Would you break laws to get him the medicine he needed? Or, the help he needed? We know you would, and so would Timothy.

Timothy's little brother needs expensive medicine and 24 hour care. His single mom is struggling to keep it all together, so 8th grader Timothy tries to help. He is arrested for stealing a man's wallet to buy the meds his brother needs. His punishment is one year of house arrest along with weekly meetings with a PO and a therapist. He is also required to keep a journal. *House Arrest* is his journal written in verse.

You will fall in love with Timothy and find yourself cheering for him as you experience his year of probation. This is also an excellent book for reluctant readers.

Connections:

- Write Timothy's story from his mom's POV. How would changing the perspective to the mom alter the story?
- Levi has a trach. Research the reason why people need a trach and what it does and how it works.
- There are a lot of charities that help with medical expenses for families who cannot afford them. Research some of the local charities and how they raise money and help kids need the medical attention they need.
- Divorce is hard for kids to experience and understand. Help Timothy write a letter to his Dad explaining how he feels and what he needs in order to forgive him.



Lawson, Jessica. (2016). *Waiting for Augusta*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Children. Lexile: 830L

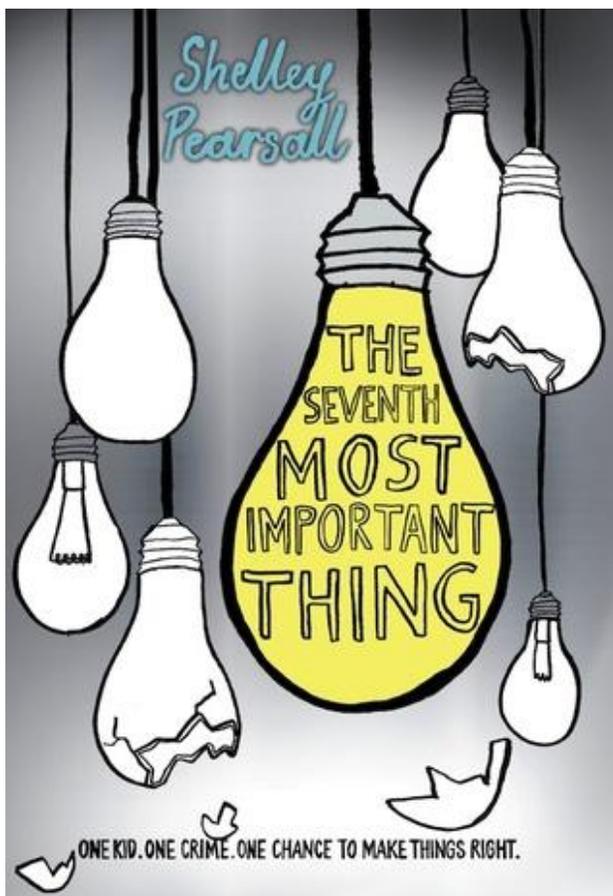
Summary:

It's 1972, and Benjamin Putter has a lump in his throat. He doesn't want to tell his Mom that he's pretty sure it's a golfball. He thinks it might also have something to do with his dad's ashes sitting in the kitchen. Continuing to run the family business after his dad's death has been a lot to swallow, and then it gets weird when the ashes start talking to him.

The ashes remind Benjamin of his father's dying wish to be scattered on the 18th hole at The Augusta National, the world's most famous and coveted golf course. Accompanied by a runaway named Noni, 11-year-old Ben makes his way from Hilltop, Alabama to Augusta, Georgia to fulfill his dad's last wish. Historical Fiction.

Connections:

- Famous Quotes: Ben's father loved to quote golfers to teach his son the important things in life. Have students find an inspiring quote and write why the quote teaches an important or significant aspect of life.
- History: The setting of the book is 1972. What is that world like? How is Ben's world different than what we know today? Use a Venn diagram to map it out and then write a compare/contrast summary comparing Ben's life in 1972 to the your life in 2017.
- The Game of Golf: Each chapter represents one of the 18 holes of golf. What other golf references can students find? For example, Dad's name is Bogey. And, the story is divided into "rounds", representing the traditional Thursday through Sunday time frame of a PGA tournament. What else can students find?



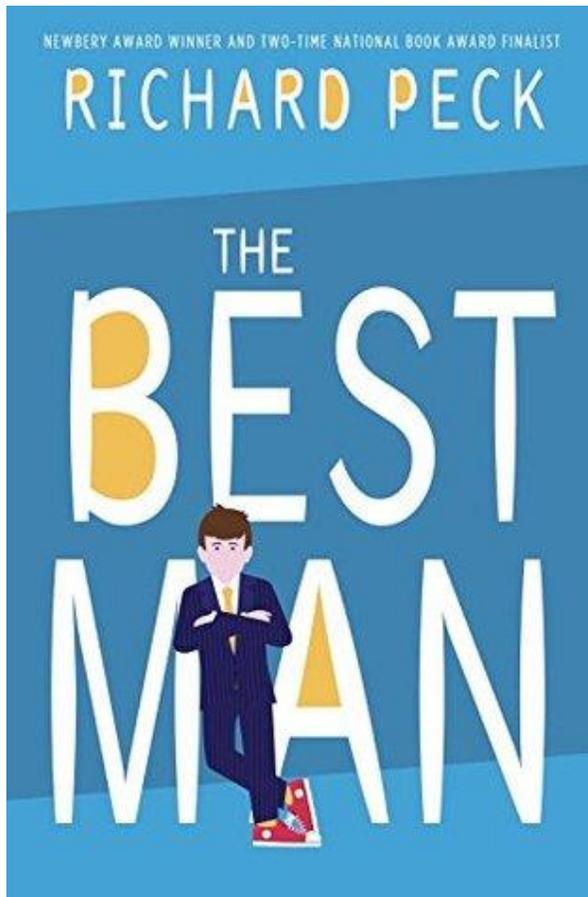
Pearsall, Shelley. (2016). *The Seventh Most Important Thing*. New York, NY: Yearling.
Lexile: 760L

Summary:

Arthur made a mistake. Blinded by grief after his Dad's death, he throws a brick at the local "Junk Man." The judge sentences him to community service under the guidance of that same man - Mr. Hampton - in the place of the crime - the junkyard. Every weekend, he is required help Mr. Hampton locate and collect items across the junkyard to be repurposed into art. In their shared work and time together, Arthur and Mr. Hampton work toward forgiveness while exploring some of life's most important lessons.

Connections:

- Recycling – explain what it means to recycle. Have students create something from materials collected at home (planting pot or musical instrument).
- Art – In groups of 5 have students select an item from the list of the 7 most important things and create a group display from the item (tree or picture collage).
- Writing – Have students create a display of quotes they have heard their family members say and live in practice.



Peck, Richard. (2016). *The Best Man*. New York, NY: Dial. Lexile: 540L

Summary:

Fans of authors like Gary Paulsen or Beverly Cleary will love Richard Peck's newest novel, *The Best Man*. Richard Peck, a Newberry Award winning author, has written over 70 novels for young readers and *The Best Man* ranks among the best of his body of work.

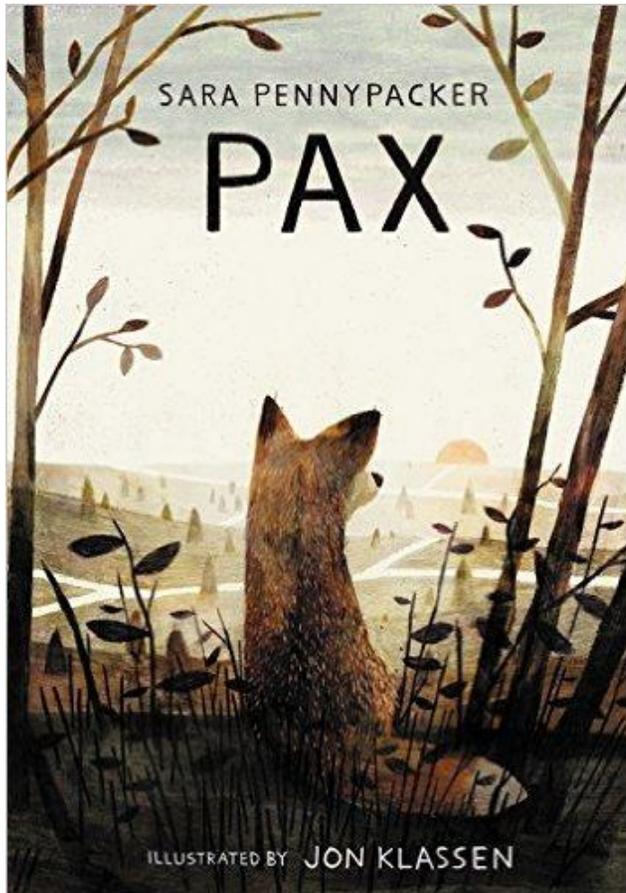
Readers get to follow Archer McGill's life from first grade to sixth grade, bookended with two weddings he is a part of. The first wedding occurs when Archer is six. It is a disastrous event that finds young Archer the ring bearer who shows up to the ceremony in split shorts and muddy. The 2nd wedding occurs when he is in sixth grade where he serves as the best man to his Uncle Paul's wedding.

In between the weddings we read as Archer navigates his elementary school years. Dealing with teachers who make mistakes, bullies, an outspoken best friend of another gender, a sick grandparent, and a student teacher who attracts national attention and becomes famous for a short time.

Along the way we watch as Archer finds role models in the men in his life; his architect grandfather, his fix anything father, big city stylish uncle, and his student teacher Mr. McLeod. The story culminates with the wedding of his uncle to Mr. McLeod. The story weaves unexpected events along the way with a sensitive way of touching on subjects that may otherwise be uncomfortable for kids. Peck makes them all feel normal and realistic without any of the uncomfortableness that grownups can bring to situations.

Connections:

- LGBTQ issues and rights - This book is a great way to bring in lessons on tolerance and social emotional issues. The wedding is depicted as nothing more than a normal event, which it is. Teachers can use this as a segway to alternative families and open discussion to the diversity they may not know lies among their students.
- Aging - When Archer's grandfather becomes ill it impacts his life. Students may explore interviewing grandparents, or other elderly in their lives, to learn about the aging process and what happens as we get older.
- Bullying - On a number of occasions Archer witnesses or faces bullying. Teachers may use excerpts of the book to introduce conversations and activities on bullying and how to deal with it either as a witness to or victim of.



Pennypacker, Sara. (2016). *Pax*. New York, NY: Balzer + Bray. Lexile: 760L

Summary:

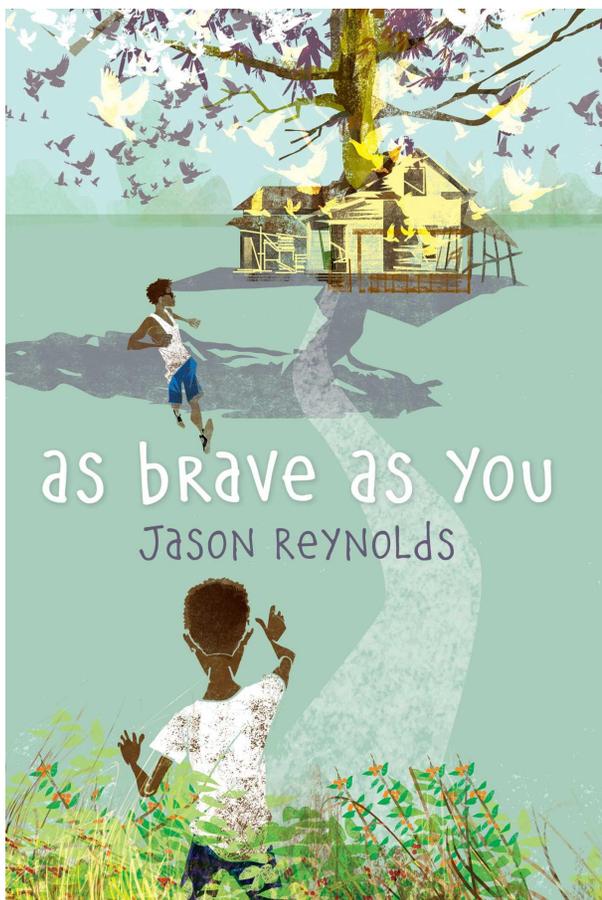
Fans of stories like *Call of the Wild* or *White Fang* will be unable to put *PAX* down. Sara Pennypacker has created a page turning story that begins with tears in the first chapter and keeps the suspense building throughout the entire story, only to bring the reader to tears at the end.

PAX is the story of a tamed fox and his boy Peter. Finding Pax near death as a kit, Peter convinces his father to let him keep him and domesticate the fox. Agreeing, in hopes that the fox will alleviate Peter's grief over his mother's death, Peter's father helps make Pax a part of the family.

When their county is brought to war years later, Peter's father forces Peter to release Pax into the wild while he enlists in the war effort. Peter is sent to live with his grandfather while his father is at war. The story alternates chapters between Peter's adventures while he runs away from his grandfathers as he searches for Pax, and Pax's own adventures as a tamed fox in the wild searching for his human. Pennypacker has created two adventures in one novel that are exciting and heartwarming all at once.

Connections:

- Writing - Pennypacker does an amazing job of personification through Pax and telling his story through the eyes of a tamed animal in the wild. Have students create creative writing stories about their pets, or other animals using personification.
- Art - In the story Peter makes puppets will healing his foot. Students can make finger puppets to accompany their personification writing.
- Foxes - Have students read nonfiction books on foxes and compare them to Pax as a tamed domesticated fox.
- Fables and Folklore - Foxes have long been used in fables and folktales most often as cunning animals. Provide groups of students with library books on Aesop and Uncle Remus, among other folktales involving foxes and compare and contrast them to Pax.



Reynolds, Jason. (2016). *As Brave as You*. New York, NY: Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books. Lexile: 750L

Summary:

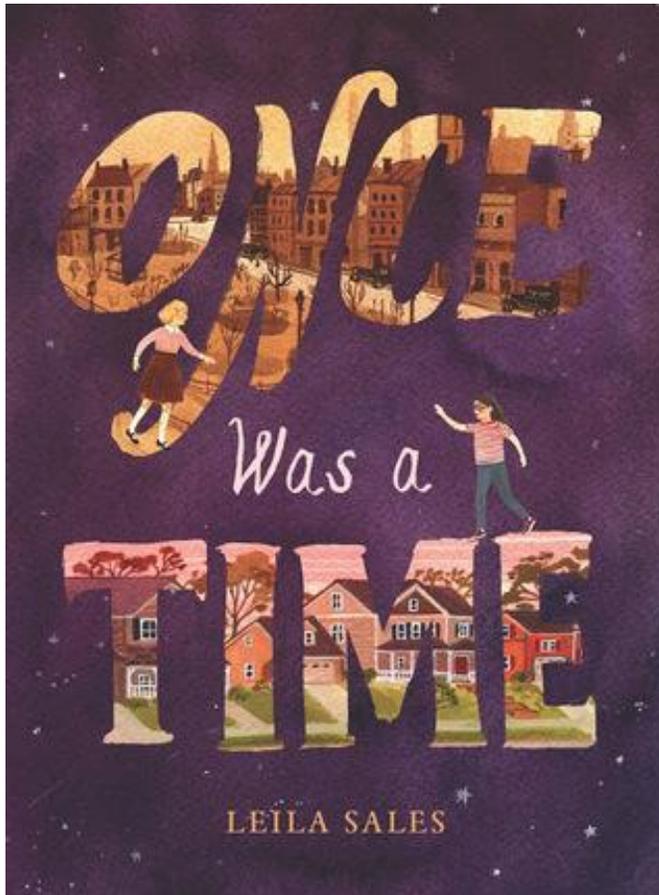
Secrets. Families are full of them. Genie and Ernie are sent to Virginia to spend the summer with their grandparents while their parents work on their failing marriage. While in Virginia, the brothers experience a life vastly different from the one they live in NY. They have chores and responsibilities and no internet at their grandparents' house (thank goodness for neighbors).

They learn a lot about their family and about themselves over the summer. Especially what it means to be brave.

Jason Reynolds writes books for reluctant boy readers and he nailed it with this book. The voice, the dialog, the relationships, the questions that come from growing up are all that middle grade boys will be able to relate to.

Connections:

- Michael Jackson (the bird) died after eating apple seeds. Research the common foods that humans enjoy that are dangerous, even deadly, to animals.
- The boys' great-grandfather committed suicide and the rumor is that he could not live with the memories of the war. Research PTSD and the resources available to soldiers when they get home.
- Grandpop is blind but is fiercely independent. Make up a story about what would happen if you suddenly lost your sight. How would your life change? Would you be as independent as Grandpop? How?
- What does it mean to be brave? Who in your life do you consider to be brave? Write a poem about them or a letter to them describing your feelings about their bravery.
- Genie keeps a notebook full of questions. For two days, keep a journal of questions that you have. Compare them to Genie's.



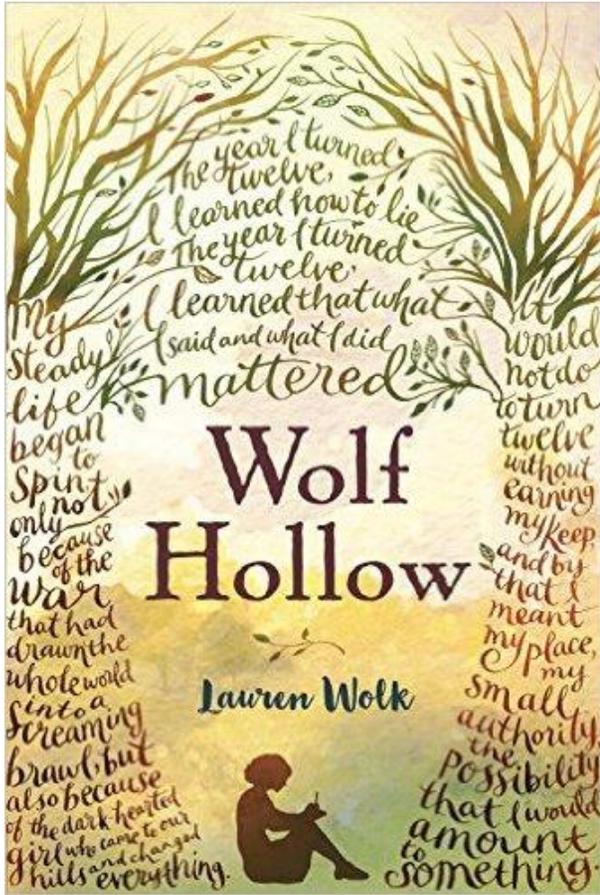
Sales, Leila. (2016). *Once Was a Time*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle. Lexile: 760L

Summary:

Intrigue, mystery and time travel -- this book has it all! 10-year-old Lottie Bromley lives in England during World War II. She and her best friend, Kitty McLaughin are kidnapped, and their lives are threatened. Lottie has to make a quick decision to leap to safety and live or to remain with her best friend and face death. This novel is a tribute to female friendship and the ties binding true friends that even years and distance cannot break.

Connections:

- Research the book *The Little Princess* and determine possible reasons Sales refers to this novella in the story.
- In the text, the small town of Sutton must close the public library due to a lack of funding. Research this topic. Determine where this is happening now in the United States. Create a plan to raise money to keep public libraries open.
- Writing- Write the time travel scene from Kitty's perspective. What happens when Lottie goes through the time travel portal? How do Kitty and Mr. Bromley survive? What do their kidnappers do once they have witnessed Lottie's disappearance?
- Research World War II, and create a timeline of the important events. What was happening in the war at the time of Lottie's experience with time travel?



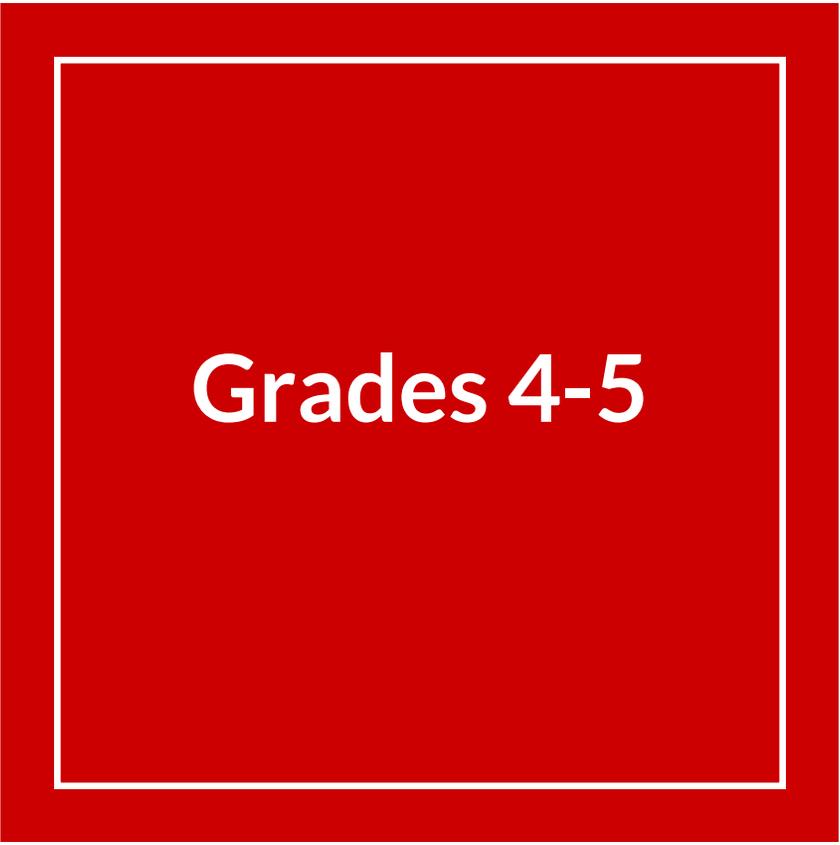
Wolk, Lauren. (2016). *Wolf Hollow*. New York, NY: Dutton. Lexile: 800L

Summary:

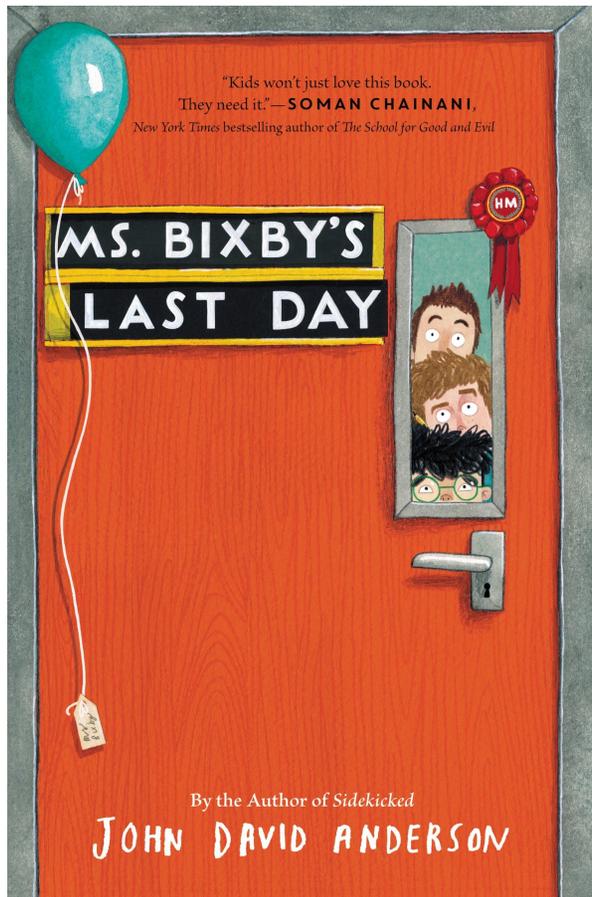
In the fall of 1943 in rural Pennsylvania, 12-year-old Annabelle returns to school to discover a new student in class. Betty quickly targets Annabelle and her younger brothers for vicious bullying, but it isn't until she accuses a solitary World War I veteran, Toby, of attacking her that Annabelle stands up to her by hiding Toby. However, as her neighbors mount a manhunt for Toby, Annabelle becomes the only voice seeking justice rather than vengeance, and she must learn to speak loud enough to make her child's voice heard by the adults.

Connections:

- World War I or II-Have students research the war Toby served in (WWI) or the war the United States is currently involved in during the time period of the book (WWII). Based on their research, have them discuss what may have happened to Toby to make him behave the way he does (post-traumatic stress disorder).
- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving (Bullying)-Discuss with students Betty's actions as a bully and how Annabelle reacted. Should Annabelle have reacted differently when Betty first started bullying her? Do they think it would have changed the story if she had? Why or why not?
- Veterans-Have students discuss what a veteran is. How have things changed or not changed for veterans since Toby served in WWI?
- Vocabulary-Keep a list of new vocabulary words the students are unfamiliar with and discuss in class.
- Social Studies-Draw parallels between current events involving the police and how the police in Wolf Hollow handled Toby.
- Narrative writing-Pretend the student is Annabelle. How would the student have reacted to Betty's bullying? To the accusation against Toby? Would the student have protected Toby or gone to an adult? Why or why not?

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Grades 4-5



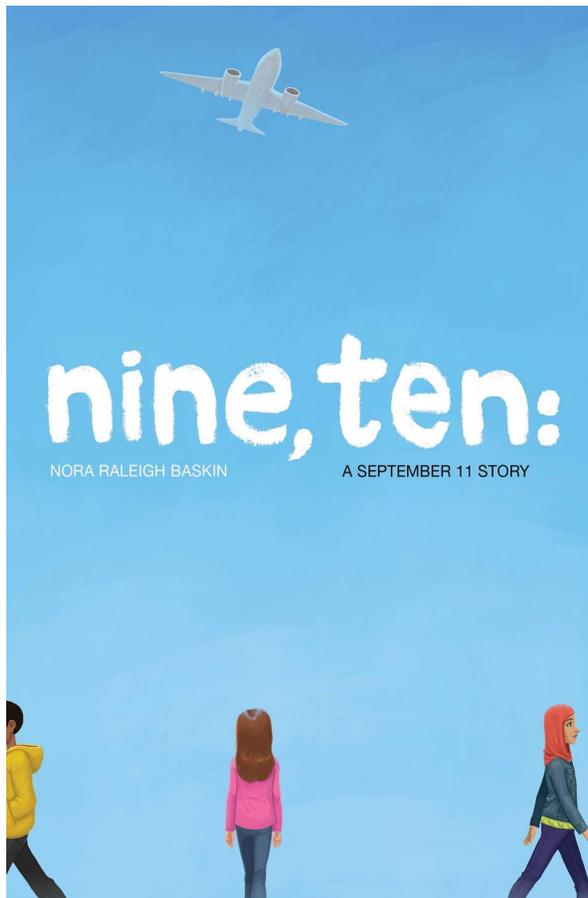
Anderson, John David. (2016). *Ms. Bixby's Last Day*. New York, NY: Walden Pond Press. Lexile: 800L

Summary:

Ms. Bixby is that special sort of teacher who has a way of making school (and sixth grade) matter to each student. Her announcement that she'll be leaving before the year ends in order to receive medical treatment hits her students hard, especially Topher, Brand, and Steve. Together, they go on a brave and bold adventure with the goal of making sure that Ms. Bixby knows just how much she matters to each of them.

Connections:

- Writing: Have students write a letter to a teacher who has made a meaningful impact on their lives.
- Writing: Plan the perfect day that celebrates a person you value who might not know how strongly you feel.
- Social Studies: Identify unsung heroes in your community and capture their stories through interviews and oral history.



Baskin, Nora Raleigh. (2016). *Nine, Ten: A September 11 Story*. New York, NY: Atheneum. Lexile: 730L

Summary:

In the days leading up to Sept. 11, 2001, four middle school students in different parts of the United States are dealing with their own problems as their paths cross briefly at Chicago's O'Hare Airport. Sergio from Brooklyn lives with his grandmother and is coping with an absentee father who only shows up when he wants money. Will lives in Pennsylvania and is struggling after the death of his father in a car accident. Naheed belongs to one of the few Muslim families in her Ohio town, and alternates between celebrating her culture and feeling isolated because of the attention her head scarf brings. Aimee's family just moved to Los Angeles, but her mother has to return to New York for business meetings. Then the planes hit the World Trade Center and their differences—race, religion, gender—don't matter as much as their similarities.

Connections:

- Writing-Have students write from the perspective of someone seeing history happen in person. What historical event have they witnessed in their lifetime and how has it impacted their life?
- Careers-Sergio's friend is a firefighter. Write about firefighters, police officers or other first responders.
- Biographies-Research the events of 9/11 and write about people who were involved that day. What happened to them? What makes them heroes?
- Diversity-Discuss diversity and how people are different and similar.
- Curriculum Guide: <http://www.norabaskin.com/nine-ten-curriculum-guide/>



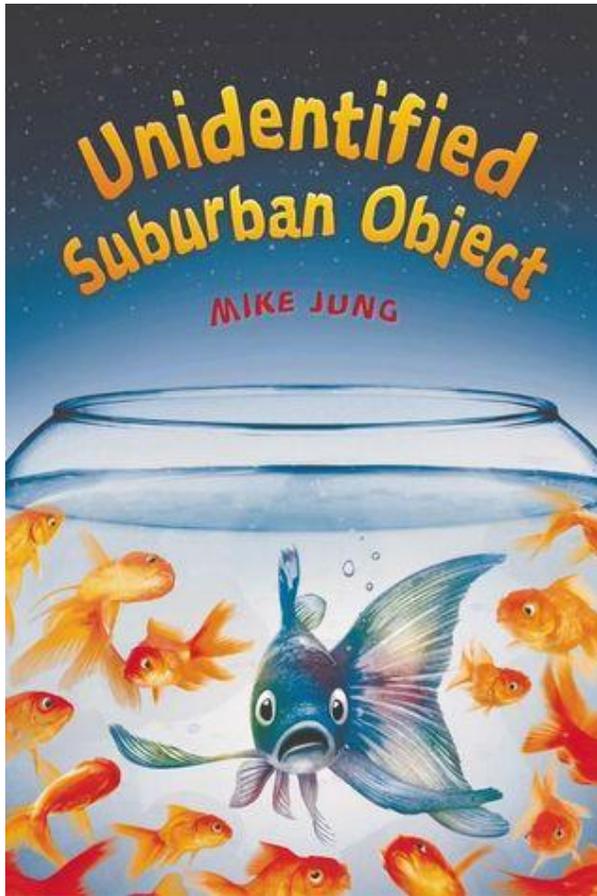
Brown, Peter. (2016). *The Wild Robot*. New York, NY: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. Lexile: 740L

Summary:

When the robot Roz wakes up alone on an island, she doesn't understand why she is there, but she knows she has to survive. After surviving a storm and a bear attack, Roz realizes she needs help from the animals on the island, but the animals don't know what to make of this strange creature. Slowly, Roz earns their trust and settles into a comfortable life on the island. Then one day her past comes hunting her and she must decide how to best protect her loved ones.

Connections:

- Critical Thinking-Discuss how nature and technology can work together or destroy each other.
- Narrative Writing- Compare Roz the robot to the other robots which come hunting her. Is Roz still a robot? Why or why not?
- Science-Research the field of robotics. Is it possible to build a Roz?
- Nature-Study the different types of animals found on Roz's island. How does Roz change their normal behavior?



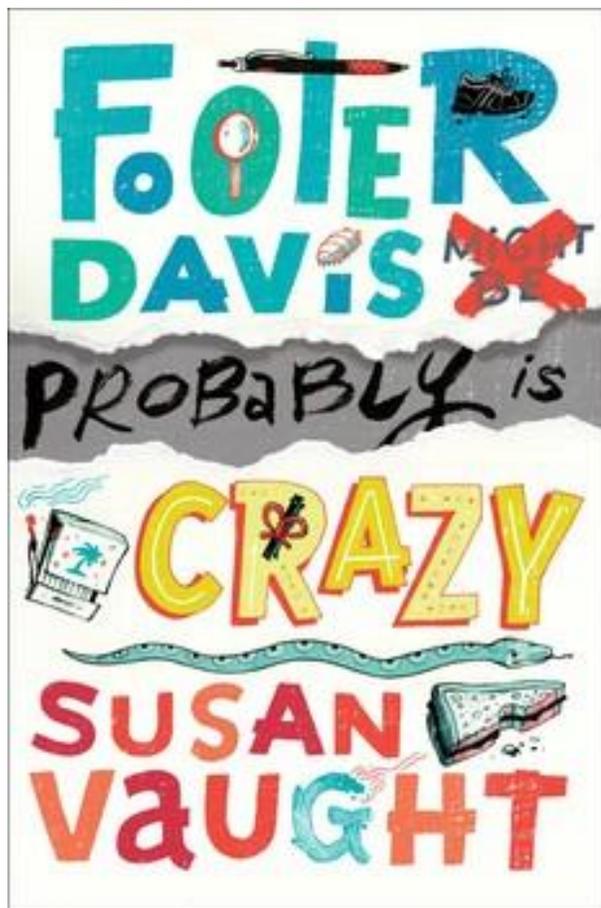
Jung, Mike. (2016). *Unidentified Suburban Object*. New York, NY: Arthur A. Levine.
Lexile: 830L

Summary:

Being different can be difficult. Chloe Cho is the only Asian student in her small town. She wants to know more about her Korean heritage, but her parents do not want to explore this topic at all. Chloe is happy to have a new teacher who is also Korean. She helps Chloe discover her family history. However, Chloe finds out more than she ever expected.

Connections:

- In which ways does Chloe try connecting with her heritage? How have you connected with your heritage? Create a heritage program/ experience for your school.
- Chloe and Shelley work together to participate in their town's first annual Graphic Novel-Making Contest! Create a graphic novel with your friends. Enter your final product in a writing competition.
- What is your family ancestry? Did your relatives emigrate from another country? If so, from where? In addition, what was their life like there? Write a narrative using the information you gathered from your research.



Summary:

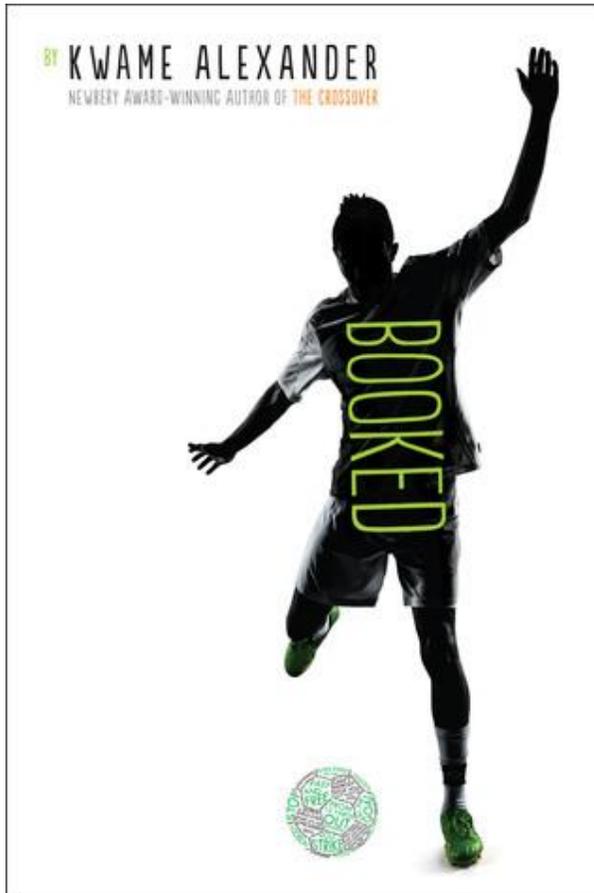
Footer Davis is a fifth grade sleuth who pairs with her friend Peavine to help find two kids who disappeared after a local house fire. Things become more complicated when Footer begins to exhibit some symptoms of an illness she might share with her Mom, creating a bit of a second mystery for her to unravel. Full of Southern charm, engaging characters and playful laughs, this novel is a page turner.

Connections:

- Footer wants to become a journalist. Using the facts we find in the novel, write a series of news stories that capture the events and emerging story of the search for the missing children (Doc and Cissy Abrams).
- Footer's Mom has bipolar disorder, and a major plot point in the novel concerns Footer's questions about her own mental health. Research bipolar disorder. How can we build empathy for people who experience mental illness? Create a resource that helps to teach others about mental health and bipolar disorder.

Vaught, Susan. (2015). *Footer Davis Probably is Crazy*.
New York, NY: Simon and Schuster. Lexile: 800L

Grades 6-8



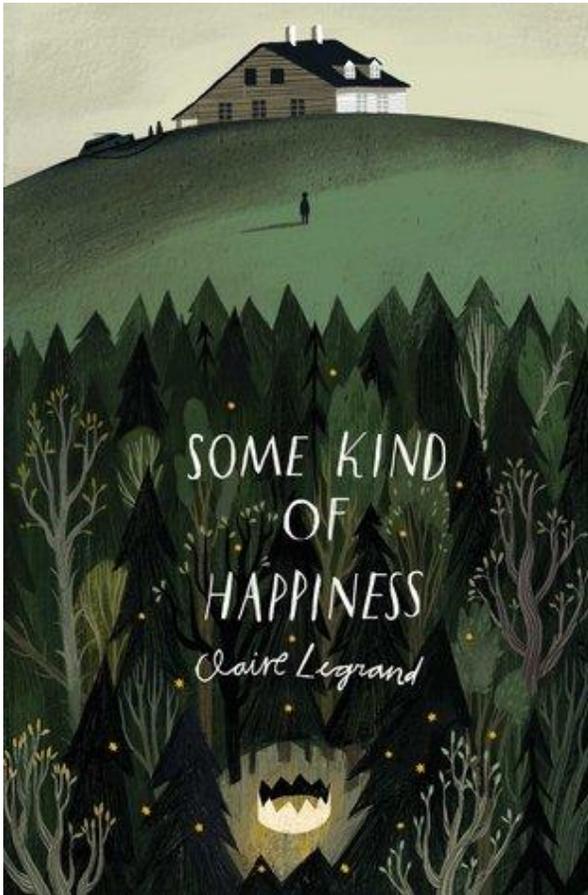
Alexander, Kwame. (2016). *Booked*. New York, NY: HMH. Lexile: 660L

Summary:

Booked is a soccer term which is a foul committed by a soccer player. Nick and Cody loves soccer and they are on different soccer teams with the hopes of both teams going to Dallas to play in a big soccer tournament. Soccer isn't the only thing going on in Nick's life. He experiences "foul" after "foul" in his life. His mother trains horses and his father is a professor who wants Nick to improve his vocabulary by reading dictionaries. School, home and friends play an important part of Nick's life, good and bad.

Connections:

- Vocabulary- Malapropism – give students malapropisms in sentences and have them locate, correct and rewrite the sentence using the correct word.
- Poetry – have students create a narrative poem about their family or a vacation.
- Writing-Using a thesaurus, give students a story with certain words selected. The student select a synonym to make the story more interesting.



Legrand, Claire. (2016). *Some Kind of Happiness*.
New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
Lexile: 580L

Summary:

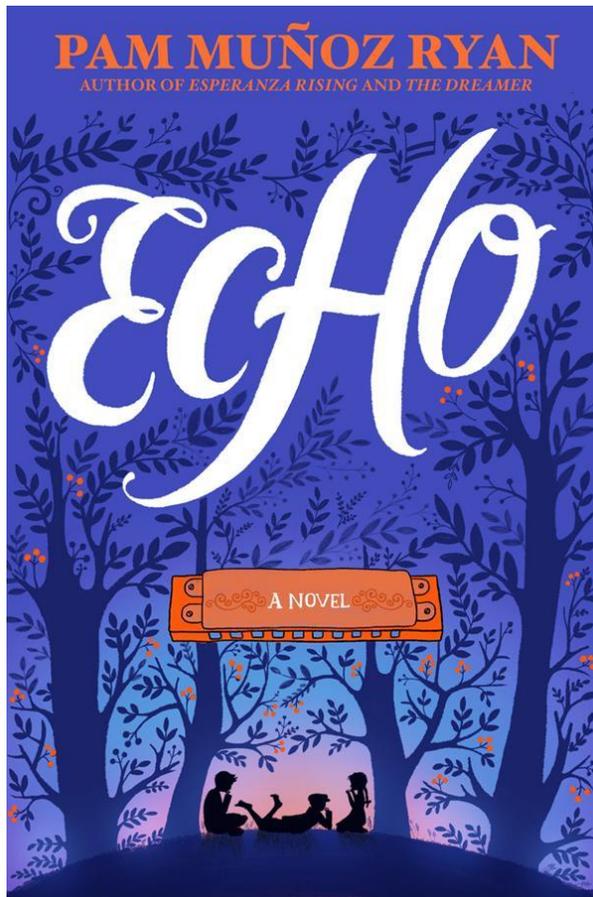
Eleven year old Finley suffers from depression and anxiety but does not know how to tell anyone. Her parents send her to her grandparents for the summer so they can work on their marriage; tricky part to that is Finley has never met her grandparents. When she arrives she enlists the help of her cousins and their forbidden neighbors to seek out her imaginary world and try to make sense of her life and all that is happening around her.

Families are full of secrets and the Harts are no different. Finley challenges the rules of her “perfect” family and as a result lies are revealed and truths are told.

Beautiful story of unconditional love and the redemption that comes from letting go of secrets and lies.

Connections:

- The matriarch of the Hart family has cancer (but will not tell the family). Research advanced multiple myeloma and the treatment and advancement in cancer treatments.
- Finley suffers from depression and anxiety. Research what options are available for her to get help.
- There is a lot of symbolism in the Everwood story (the snake, the fox, etc.) See what other examples of symbolism are in the story and write about how it relates back to the story of Finley and her family.



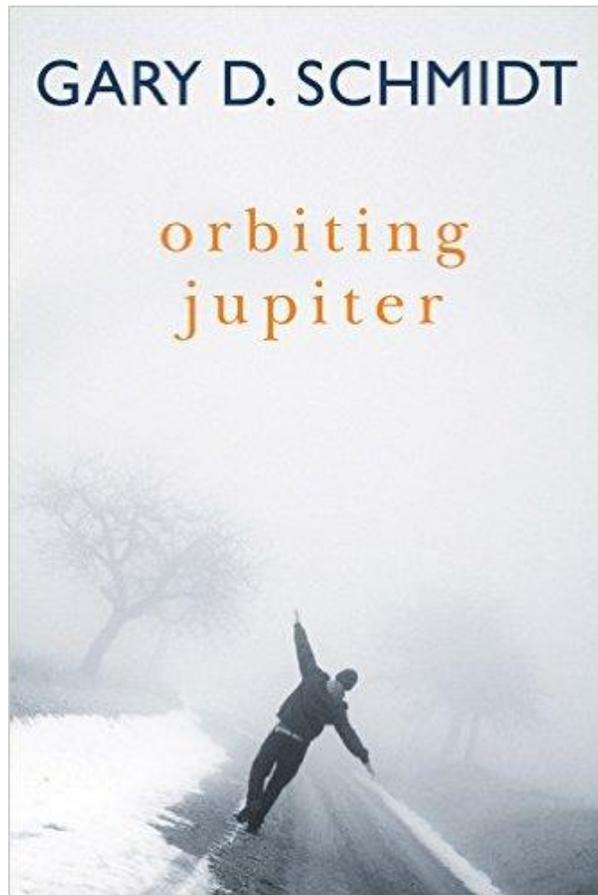
Ryan, Pam Muñoz. (2015). *Echo*. New York, NY: Scholastic. Lexile: 680L

Summary:

A magical harmonica connects three 20th century stories in which the characters face injustice. Fredirich lives during Nazi Germany. He has a health issue that Germans would find intolerable but is gifted in music. Mike and Frank are orphans during the Great Depression. The orphanage often has the older children work on farms, or they are adopted out just to work on another farm. Ivy is Mexican during War World II. Her family lives on a farm that is owned by a family taken to a Japanese internment camp. She is only allowed to attend the Mexican school. All three stories include musical talents which brings the magical harmonica into each character's life. The stories come together by bringing all the characters together in the end.

Connections:

- Writing - Each story within *Echo* leaves the reader wondering what happen to the character. Have students write their version of what happened with the characters.
- Research - Throughout the novel historical figures are mentioned. Have student complete research on someone and determine if the author kept the facts about the person as well what happened to the historical figure.



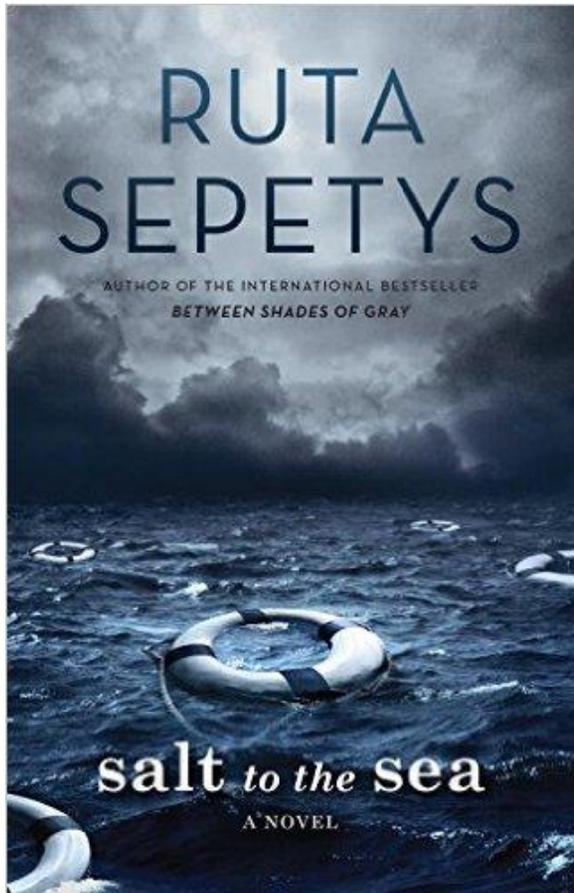
Schmidt, Gary D. (2015). *Orbiting Jupiter*. New York, NY: Clarion. Lexile: 740L

Summary:

Jupiter is Joseph Brooks favorite and holds significance beyond just being a planet, it's his hope for the future. This fourteen-year-old has just been released from prison and is sent to live with a foster family. Through the routines of family and farm life -- and the relationship with his foster brother -- Jack, Joseph learns what life is like without his abusive father around. Through the love of family, and the kindness of a librarian, Jack begins to thrive in school and sees a future in Jupiter, but then his father re-enters his life and his plans become more desperate.

Connections:

- **The Forgotten:** Do you know a kid like Joseph who tends to be dismissed by kids and adults? Analysing like one of Joseph's teachers who is able to see beyond his history, what are the student's positive assets? What difficulties has this person endured? How can you be a better support system for this student, like the foster brother Jack who says "I've got your back"?
- **Presentation of Violence:** This book has a brutal prison scene and hints at domestic family violence. The ending of the book involves an intoxicated gun-weilding father and a dangerous river. As a reference point, use the resource from Common Sense Media to facilitate a discussion, writing assignment, or debate about the effects of violence on tweens (ages 10-12). <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/violence-in-the-media/age/tweens>
- **Compare the scenes of this book to an action movie or regular television programming.** How is the use of violence used to manipulate the emotions of the reader? How is that different from viewing it? Is one worse than the other?
- **Upstanders:** How are people influenced by life's supporters? Name a person who went out on a limb in support of another person. Can be as simple as a daily journal entry or a door into the use of biographies.



Sepetys, Ruta. (2016). *Salt to the Sea*. New York, NY: Philomel. Lexile: HL560L

Summary:

It's 1945. Meet Joanna, Emilia, and Florian. They are in East Prussia running for their lives from the advancement of the Russian army. The only escape is to get to a German evacuation ship at the Baltic Sea. Told in first person, these three help one another get to the coast despite the horrors of the war that rages around them: people shot at, drown, starve, or die of injuries and sickness. The trio finally board *The Wilhelm Gustloff* -- a German luxury ship that was converted to an evacuation vessel. On January 30, 1945, three Russian torpedoes sink the ship and an estimated ten thousand refugees are lost at sea. By comparison, 1,500 souls are lost on the Titanic in 1912. The sinking of the Wilhelm Gustloff still stands as the singularly worst tragedy in maritime history.

Connections:

- The Facts: Reading the book begs the question about why a tragedy that eclipses the Titanic is so little known? Look up the facts about The Wilhelm Gustloff and its sinking to iron out why its story sleeps in history. How does the sinking of the Wilhelm Gustloff compare with the tragedy of The Titanic?
- Perspective: The story is told from four different perspectives. Explain Alfred's point of view and Nazi ideology. Why is his perspective included? What other perspectives are described in the book? For help with perspective, listen to Ruta Sepetys talk about her book: <http://rutasepetys.com/the-media/> choose Author Video for Salt to the Sea.
- Casualties of War: There are so many innocents that are affected in the tragedies presented by war. Choose a tragedy or a person from World War II who endured the gruesome war and has shared their story. Interestingly, the people in Salt to the Sea were not Jews and yet suffered, too. Is that surprising? Again, a look at the author talking about her book is helpful: <http://rutasepetys.com/the-media/> Choose Author Video for Salt to the Sea.