



Free Time Reading List 2012

Compiled by Staff of
The Children's Learning Center
and TeenSpot

Free-time reading = adventure + discovery!

Children who read six or more books during the summer strengthen their reading skills, and they can gain new skills. Younger children who can't read can learn word sounds and gain an interest in reading when someone reads aloud to them.

Readers know that good books make any subject — science, math, geography, history — fun and interesting!

Kindergarten

[*We March*](#) by Shane Evans

Simple text and powerful illustrations tell the story of a family as they prepare for and attend the 1963 March on Washington where they see Martin Luther King Jr. present his *I Have a Dream* speech.

[*Step Gently Out*](#) by Helen Frost

Brilliant close-up photographs of insects paired with poetic text evokes a sense of wonder at the natural world. Detailed notes on the insects pictured are included on the final pages.

[*Kite Day: A Bear and Mole Book*](#) by Will Hillenbrand

Cincinnati native Will Hillenbrand delivers a beautiful story of a bear and a mole who plan and build a kite together. Find out what happens when a storm disrupts the friends' kite flying adventure.

[*Lottie Paris Lives Here*](#) by Angela Johnson

Follow young Lottie as she flits through her summer day like a butterfly, playing dress up, visiting the park, eating cookies, and even getting in a little trouble.

[*Ten Little Caterpillars*](#) by Bill Martin

Children will enjoy counting caterpillars and watching the transformation into a beautiful swallowtail butterfly. The final pages identify the 10 different caterpillars and the type of moth or butterfly each becomes.

[*Lola Reads to Leo*](#) by Anna McQuinn

Lola takes her new role as older sister quite seriously and embraces the job of sharing her love of books with her brother.

[*Questions, Questions*](#) by Marcus Pfister

What causes a seed to grow? How do geese know to fly south for the winter? Colorful illustrations celebrate children's questions about the natural world.

[*Stars*](#) by Mary Lyn Ray

This book shows stars in the night sky, in the shape of star-like flowers, at the end of a magic wand, and in the explosion of fireworks. Children view a variety of stars, and readers are encouraged to find the stars in their world.

[*Rah, Rah, Radishes! A Vegetable Chant*](#) by April Pulley Sayre

Sharp photographs of vegetables from the common cabbage to the more obscure rutabaga entice children to get excited about vegetables. Includes a final page explaining the scientific difference between a vegetable and a fruit.

[*Do You Know Which Ones Will Grow?*](#) by Susan Shea

Bright illustrations and rhyming text lead children to consider the difference between things that grow and things that don't.

First Grade

[*A-b-a-b-a: a Book of Pattern Play*](#) by Brian Cleary

Cartoon cats teach children about patterns and lead them through exercises identifying patterns in letters, numbers and objects. Includes an introduction to skip counting. (non-fiction)

[*Voyage of Turtle Rex*](#) by Kurt Cyrus

Follow a sea turtle throughout its life cycle as it navigates the dangers of a prehistoric world. Fans of dinosaurs will relish this adventure in an ancient landscape.

[*Lots of Spots*](#) by Lois Ehlert

Some of the short poems in this book are serious, others are funny, but combined with the colorful collage illustrations they all will have children noticing details about the snakes, lizards, birds, and other animals depicted.

[*These Bees Count*](#) by Alison Formento

Follow Mr. Tate's class as they visit Busy Bee Farm and learn about bees from Farmer Ellen. A final note provides additional information about colony collapse disorder which is threatening bee populations.

[*Time to Eat*](#) by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page

Learn fascinating facts about animal diets and enjoy the highly textured torn and cut paper illustrations of these creatures and their meals.

[*All The Water in the World*](#) by George Ella Lyon

Follow the water cycle and consider the many ways life on the planet depends on water through the poetic text and vibrant illustrations.

[*Me...Jane*](#) by Patrick McDonnell

This picture book showing how Jane Goodall grew from a child fascinated with nature to a world-famous scientist is full of inspiration for all young scientists.

[*Trout Are Made of Trees*](#) by April Pulley Sayre

Simple text and collage shows children studying the food cycle of a stream in which leaves are eaten by algae and invertebrates, which are eventually eaten by trout. Includes several end pages detailing the trout life cycle and listing resources for further information.

[*Let's Count to 100*](#) by Masayuki Sebe

Fun illustrations encourage children to practice their skills counting birds, fish, elephant, ants, and children. Questions like "How many elephants are sleeping?" will have children counting subgroups and identifying patterns.

[*Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature*](#) by Joyce Sidman

From the spiral of a rolled up millipede to "starry arms" of galaxies, the bold scratchboard illustrations and simple text of this title highlight the many spirals that exist in nature. Includes two pages with more details about the spirals mentioned.

Second Grade

[*Fly High, Fly Guy!*](#) by Tedd Arnold

When Buzz, his parents, and his pet fly go on a road trip and get lost, Fly Guy comes to the rescue to help them find their way home.

[*The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County*](#) by Janice N. Harrington

A young farm girl tries to catch her favorite chicken, until she learns something about the hen that makes her change her ways.

[*Hansel and Gretel*](#) by Rachel Isadora

When they are left in the woods by their parents, two children find their way home despite an encounter with a wicked witch.

[*Almost Gone: The World's Rarest Animals*](#) by Steve Jenkins

Thousands of animal species have vanished in the last two centuries, and many others, like the Amur leopard, are almost gone. Read and find out about the world's most fascinating endangered animals ... before they disappear!

[*Equal Shmequal*](#) by Virginia Kroll

In order to have fun at a game of tug-of-war, forest animals balance the teams by using a see-saw.

[*Safari in South Africa*](#) by Amanda Lumry

Riley travels with his Uncle Max to check on the animal population at a South African game reserve.

[*These Hands*](#) by Margaret H. Mason

An African American man tells his grandson about a time when, despite all the wonderful things his hands could do, they could not touch bread at the Wonder Bread factory.

[*Bean Thirteen*](#) by Matthew McElligott

Two bugs, Ralph and Flora, try to divide thirteen beans so that the unlucky thirteenth bean disappears, but they soon discover that the math is not so easy.

[*The New Girl... and Me*](#) by Jacqui Robbins

Two girls become friends when Shakeeta boasts that she has a pet iguana and Mia learns how to help Shakeeta "feel at home" even when she is in school.

[*Mouse and Mole: Fine Feathered Friends*](#) by Wong Herbert Yee

When spring arrives, Mole and Mouse find a unique way to bird watch.

Third Grade

[*Nikki & Deja: Election Madness*](#) by Karen English

When Carver Elementary holds school-wide elections for the first time, third-grader Deja puts all her efforts into running for school president, ignoring her best friend Nikki's problems.

[*Hip Hop Speaks to Children: a Celebration of Poetry With a Beat*](#) edited by Nikki Giovanni

Poetry can have both a rhyme and a rhythm. Sometimes it is obvious; sometimes it is hidden. But either way, make no mistake, poetry is as vibrant and exciting as it gets.

[*Down, Down, Down: a Journey to the Bottom of the Sea*](#) by Steve Jenkins

A top-to-bottom look at the ocean, from birds and waves to thermal vents and ooze.

[*The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*](#) by William Kamkwamba

When fourteen-year-old William Kamkwamba's Malawi village was hit by a drought, everyone's crops began to fail. Persevering against the odds, William built a functioning windmill out of junkyard scraps, and thus became the local hero who harnessed the wind.

[*Winter's Tail: How One Little Dolphin Learned to Swim Again*](#) by Juliana Hatkoff

Describes the rescue and rehabilitation of a young Atlantic bottlenose dolphin who received an artificial tail after being badly injured when caught in a crab trap.

[*Akimbo and the Elephants*](#) by Alexander McCall Smith

On the African game preserve where his father works, Akimbo devises a dangerous plan to capture a ring of elephant poachers.

[*Mysteries of the Sea: How Divers Explore the Ocean Depths*](#) by Marianne Morrison
Dive deep into the unexplored mysteries of the oceans, and learn about the development and innovations of deep-sea diving.

[*Math Curse*](#) by Jon Scieszka
When the teacher tells her class that they can think of almost everything as a math problem, one student acquires a math anxiety which becomes a real curse.

[*So You Want to Be an Explorer?*](#) by Judith St. George
A witty collection of some of the best explorers the world has ever known. You know Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus, but what about Mary Kingsley, who studied cannibals in Africa, or cowboy Jim White, who, by mistake, found Carlsbad Caverns?

[*EllRay Jakes is a Rock Star*](#) by Sally Warner
Eight-year-old EllRay Jakes decides to "borrow" his father's crystals to impress his classmates, but his plan to return the crystals before his father notices goes awry.

Fourth Grade

[*Mystery Math: A First Book of Algebra*](#) by David A. Adler
Set in a creepy haunted house, readers will learn to find the unknown number of skeletons, ravens and bats by using simple addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

[*Comparing Fractions*](#) by Minta Berry
Readers will develop an understanding of fractions as numbers.

[*Gloria's Way*](#) by Ann Cameron
Gloria shares special times with her father and mother and her friends Julian, Huey, and Latisha.

[*The Magic School Bus and the Science Fair Expedition*](#) by Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen
Ms. Frizzle takes the gang on a tour through the history of science so they can get ideas for their science projects.

[*Sassy: The Dazzle Disaster Dinner Party*](#) by Sharon Draper
Sassy Simone Sanford plans a fabulous dinner party for her fourth grade class, but it turns into a recipe for disaster when her dog eats the food, her friends make a mess, and the new girl in school is missing.

[*The Space Mission Adventure*](#) by Sharon Draper
Ziggy soon discovers that real-life space travel is just as exciting as anything his active imagination can cook up. Still he can't help wondering where the mysterious shining stone he finds might have come from. . .

[*Nikki & Deja: Wedding Drama*](#) by Karen English
Ms. Shelby's students are so excited about her upcoming wedding that they start a wedding planning competition, which drives a wedge between best friends Nikki and Deja.

[*Habitats and Wildlife in Danger*](#) by Sarah LeVete
This book uses case studies to explore the causes and effects of the destruction of habitats and their wildlife and the ways in which people can reduce their impact on these homes in nature.

[*Nature Adventures*](#) by Mick Manning
Nature Adventures is a treasure trove of activities, information, observations, pictures and poetry, featuring habitats such as town and city, woodland and hedgerow, ponds and rivers, moorland and seaside.

[*The Real Lucky Charm*](#) by Charisse K. Richardson
Thinking that luck – rather than hard work – has helped her succeed on the court and at school, ten-year-old Mia panics and turns to her twin brother for help when her lucky gold basketball goes missing from her charm bracelet.

Fifth Grade

[Amazing Math Projects You Can Build Yourself](#) by Laszlo C. Bardos
Explore math through thirty-one hands-on building projects and activities.

[Riding on Duke's Train](#) by Mick Carlon
Nine-year-old Danny, an orphan, hitches a ride on a train one night in 1937 Georgia and before he knows it, he has a home in Harlem with Duke Ellington. He meets many famous musicians, tours America, and later the world with Duke Ellington's orchestra.

[What's the Big Idea? Amazing Science Questions for the Curious Kid](#) by Vicki Cobb
Provides answers to questions on motion, energy, matter, and their part in making life possible, including both scientific explanations and ideas about their further implications.

[Jim and Me](#) by Dan Gutman
Joe and his longtime enemy Bobby Fuller, use a vintage baseball card to travel in time, hoping to stop Jim Thorpe from participating in the 1912 Olympics and losing his metals.

[Letters to Missy Violet](#) by Barbara Hathaway
While her friend Missy Violet, the town midwife, is away in Florida, eleven-year-old Viney concerns herself with ailing neighbors, schoolmates, and her irrepressible cousin Charles, who feels superior because he has been to Harlem in New York City.

[Leaving Gee's Bend](#) by Irene Latham
Ludelphia Bennett, a determined, ten-year-old African-American girl in 1932 Gee's Bend, Alabama, leaves home in an effort to find medical help for her sick mother, and she recounts her ensuing adventure in a quilt she is making.

[Making the Team](#) by Stephanie Perry Moore and Derrick Moore
Ten-year-old Alec, feeling guilty when he wins a starting position on the football team but his brother doesn't, and angry and when his mother leaves town for an acting job, learns that the tough things that happen in people's lives eventually help them grow. This is the first book in the Alec London series.

[Game Day: Meet the People Who Make It Happen](#) by Kevin Sylvester
Not everyone can be an athlete, but that doesn't stop thousands of other from working in world class sporting events. Meet some of the supporting cast in major league sports.

[Saint Louis Armstrong Beach](#) by Brenda Woods
Saint is enjoying life in New Orleans, playing clarinet for the tourists in his spare time, accompanied by Shadow, a local stray dog. When Hurricane Katrina approaches, he faces unexpected challenges in trying to rescue Shadow.

[One Minute Mysteries: 65 Short Mysteries You Solve with Math!](#) by Eric Yoder
These fun mysteries are each one minute long and have a unique twist – you need to tap into your mathematical wisdom to solve them.

Sixth Grade

[Stolen into Slavery: The True Story of Solomon Northup](#) by Judith Bloom Fradin
This is the true story of Solomon Northup, a free black man from New York who was captured in Washington D.C. and sold into slavery in Louisiana. Drawing from primary source documents, including Northup's own memoir, this compelling book has a narrative that is packed with the action of Solomon's 12-year odyssey as a slave.

[The Other Half of My Heart](#) by Sundee Tucker Frazier
Twin daughters of interracial parents, eleven-year-olds Keira and Minna have very different skin tones and personalities, but it is not until their African American grandmother enters them in the Miss Black Pearl Pre-Teen competition in North Carolina that red-haired and pale-skinned Minna

realizes what life in their small town in the Pacific Northwest has been like for her more outgoing, darker-skinned sister.

[Football: The Math of the Game](#) by Shane Frederick

Explores the math of football such as the area in an entire football field, a quarterback's rating, and the longest field goal kicked in NFL history.

[Explore Asia](#) by Bobbie Kalman

Introduces children to the diverse continent of Asia-the largest continent on Earth. Full-color photographs and detailed maps highlight Asia's major regions, bodies of water, landforms, forests, steppes, and deserts.

[You Wouldn't Want to Explore with Marco Polo: A Really Long Trip You'd Rather Not Take](#) by Jacqueline Morley

This fun and interesting, interactive series is sure to enthrall young readers by making them a part of the story. Readers become the main character and can revel in the gory, dark, horrific side of life through important moments in history.

[Journey to the Bottomless Pit: the Story of Stephen Bishop & Mammoth Cave](#) by Betsy Mitchell

The thrilling setting is the focus of this novel about Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, which Mitchell shapes around the astonishing biography of Stephen Bishop, a slave who, in 1838 at the age of 17, became the cave's explorer and tourist guide.

[Carver: A Life in Poems](#) by Marilyn Nelson

This collection of poems provides a lyrical account of the life of George Washington Carver, a man born into slavery who went on to head the agricultural department at the Tuskegee Institute.

[Sir Cumference and the Viking's Map: a Math Adventure](#) by Cindy Neuschwander

Cousins Radius and Per must decode a strange numbered grid to reveal the secret of the fierce Viking warrior's X and Y axes and find the hidden treasure.

[Stars in the Shadows: The Negro League All-Star Game of 1934](#) by Charles R. Smith, Jr.

In 1934, Chicago was the setting for one of the most fascinating ballgames in history: the second annual East-West Games. Come step back in time to see the best of the best Negro League players take each other on in this All-Star Game. This exhilarating play-by-play is a tour de force: a complete imagining of the radio broadcast of that thrilling game.

[Crow](#) by Barbara Wright

In 1898, Moses Thomas's summer vacation does not go exactly as planned as he contends with family problems and the ever-changing alliances among his friends at the same time as he is exposed to the escalating tension between the African-American and white communities of Wilmington, North Carolina.

Seventh Grade

[The Secret Under My Skin](#) by Janet Elizabeth McNaughton

In the year 2368, humans exist under dire environmental conditions and one young woman, rescued from a workcamp and chosen for a special duty, uses her love of learning to discover the truth about the planet's future and her own dark past.

[The Lost Hero](#) (Heroes of Olympus, book 1) by Rick Riordan

Jason, Piper, and Leo, three students from a school for "bad kids," find themselves at Camp Half-Blood, where they learn that they are demigods and begin a quest to free Hera, who has been imprisoned by Mother Earth herself.

[Stringz](#) by Michael Wenberg

Jace has never grown accustomed to hopping from city to city to satisfy his mom's need for constant change. He relies on his musical talents and cello to escape, and, when times are desperate, earn money by busking on a street corner. He didn't earn the cash he needs on his last

street corner session, but he did earn free music lessons, an unlikely mentor, and a chance for a future he never thought possible.

[*Empty*](#) by Suzanne Weyn

When, just ten years in the future, oil supplies run out and global warming leads to devastating storms, senior high school classmates Tom, Niki, Gwen, Hector, and Brock realize that the world as they know it is ending and lead the way to a more environmentally-friendly society.

Eighth Grade

[*Journal of Curious Letters*](#) by James Dashner

Thirteen-year-old Atticus "Tick" Higginbottom begins receiving mysterious letters from around the world signed only "M.G.," and the clues contained therein lead him on a journey to the perilous 13th Reality and a confrontation with evil Mistress Jane.

[*Do the Math: Secrets Lies and Algebra*](#) by Wendy Lichtman

Tess has always loved math, and she uses mathematical concepts to help her understand things in her life, so she is dismayed to find out how much math--and life--can change in eighth grade.

[*Kiss My Math: Showing Pre-Algebra Who's Boss*](#) by Danica McKellar

The television actress and mathematics guru author of *Math Doesn't Suck* presents a pre-algebra primer for seventh- to ninth-graders, in an accessible reference that shares time-saving tricks, real-world examples, and detailed practice problems.

[*Hot X: Algebra Exposed*](#) by Danica McKellar

Actress and math genius Danica McKellar continues to shatter the "math nerd" stereotype by showing girls how to ace middle school math--and actually feel cool doing it! With Danica's trademark sass and style, this book tackles algebra: the most feared of all math classes and the most common roadblock to high school graduation. McKellar instantly puts her readers at ease, showing teenage girls--and anyone taking algebra--how to feel confident and master square roots, polynomials, quadratic equations, word problems and more, without breaking a sweat (or a nail).

[*The Unidentified*](#) by Rae Mariz

In a futuristic alternative school set in a shopping mall where video game-playing students are observed and used by corporate sponsors for market research, Katey "Kid" Dade struggles to figure out where she fits in and whether she even wants to.

Ninth Grade

[*Playground*](#) by 50 Cent, with Laura Moser

After beating up Maurice on the playground, Burton—aka Butterball—an overweight, ignored 13-year-old, is forced to see the school therapist. This simply told story is loosely based on the youth of hip-hop icon 50 Cent.

[*Zora and Me*](#) by Victoria Bond and T.R. Simon

Zora and Me is a fictionalized account of Zora Neale Hurston's childhood with her best friend Carrie, in Eatonville, Florida. Zora and her friend learn about life, death, and the differences between truth, lies, and pretending. Included are an annotated bibliography of the works of Zora Neale Hurston, a short biography of the author, and information about Eatonville, Florida.

[*Deadly*](#) by Julie Chibbaro

In the early 1900s, sixteen-year-old Prudence Galewski leaves school to take a job assisting the head epidemiologist at New York's Department of Health and Sanitation, investigating the intriguing case of "Typhoid Mary," a seemingly healthy woman who is infecting others with typhoid fever. Includes a historical note by the author.

[*All the Right Stuff*](#) by Walter Dean Meyers

The summer after his absentee father is killed in a random shooting, Paul volunteers at a Harlem soup kitchen where he listens to lessons about "the social contract" from an elderly African

American man, and mentors a seventeen-year-old unwed mother who wants to make it to college on a basketball scholarship.

Tenth Grade

[*African-American Classics*](#) by Various Authors

Twenty-three stories and poems from various late 19th- and early 20th-century African American authors are featured in this collection, and their works illustrated by contemporary African American artists. Authors like W.E.B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, and Langston Hughes are represented in this anthology.

[*Ship Breaker*](#) by Paolo Bacigalupi

In America's Gulf Coast region, where grounded oil tankers are being broken down for parts, Nailer, a teenage boy, works the light crew, scavenging for copper wiring just to make quota--and hopefully live to see another day. But when, by luck or chance, he discovers an exquisite clipper ship beached during a recent hurricane, Nailer faces the most important decision of his life: Strip the ship for all it's worth or rescue its lone survivor, a beautiful and wealthy girl who could lead him to a better life....

[*Spies of Mississippi: The True Story of the Spy Network That Tried to Destroy the Civil Rights Movement*](#) by Rick Bowers

In 1956, at the height of the civil rights era, the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission was created to counter the movement for racial integration. Bowers, a career journalist, chronicles 10 years of the commission's propaganda campaigns, bribery, and its collection of files on 87,000 citizens and organizations including freedom riders and protest marchers.

[*Pemba's Song: a Ghost Story*](#) by Tonya Hegamin

As fifteen-year-old Pemba adjusts to leaving her Brooklyn, New York, home for small-town Connecticut, a Black history researcher helps her understand the paranormal experiences drawing her into the life of a mulatto girl who was once a slave in her house.

[*Sweet, Hereafter*](#) by Angela Johnson

Sweet leaves her family and goes to live in a cabin in the woods with the quiet but understanding Curtis, to whom she feels intensely connected, just as he is called back to serve again in Iraq.

Eleventh Grade

[*King: A Comics Biography*](#) by Ho Che Anderson

An illustrated biography that examines the life of the Baptist minister and civil rights leader who championed nonviolent protest and "had a dream" of equality for all.

[*The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing*](#) by MT Anderson

Young Octavian is being raised by a group of rational philosophers known only by numbers -- but it is only after he opens a forbidden door that he learns the hideous nature of their experiments, and his own chilling role in them. Set in Revolutionary Boston, M. T. Anderson's mesmerizing novel takes place at a time when Patriots battled to win liberty while African slaves were entreated to risk their lives for a freedom they would never claim. The first of two parts, this deeply provocative novel reimagines the past as an eerie place that has startling resonance for readers today.

[*Just Another Hero*](#) by Sharon M. Draper

As Kofi, Arielle, Dana, November, and Jericho face personal challenges during their last year of high school, a misunderstood student brings a gun to class and demands to be taken seriously.

[*Moby-duck : the true story of 28,800 bath toys lost at sea and of the beachcombers, oceanographers, environmentalists, and fools, including the author, who went in search of them*](#) by Donovan Hohn

When Donovan Hohn heard of the mysterious loss of thousands of bath toys at sea, he figured he would interview a few oceanographers, talk to a few beachcombers, and read up on Arctic science and geography. But questions can be like ocean currents: wade in too far, and they carry you away.

Hohn's accidental odyssey pulls him into the secretive world of shipping conglomerates, the daring work of Arctic researchers, the lunatic risks of maverick sailors, and the shadowy world of Chinese toy factories. *Moby-Duck* is a journey into the heart of the sea and an adventure through science, myth, the global economy, and some of the worst weather imaginable.

[*Miss Peregrin's home for Peculiar Children*](#) by Ransom Riggs

Sixteen-year-old Jacob, having traveled to a remote island after a family tragedy, discovers an abandoned orphanage, and, after some investigating, he learns the children who lived there may have been dangerous and quarantined and may also still be alive.

[*Where Things Come Back*](#) by John Corey Whale

In the remarkable, bizarre, and heart-wrenching summer before Cullen Witter's senior year of high school, everything he thinks he understands about his small and painfully dull Arkansas town vanishes. His cousin overdoses; his town becomes absurdly obsessed with the alleged reappearance of an extinct woodpecker; and most troubling of all, his sensitive, gifted fifteen-year-old brother, Gabriel, suddenly and inexplicably disappears.

Twelfth Grade

[*Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*](#) by Melissa V. Harris-Perry
Dr. Harris-Perry takes an insightful look at the social perceptions of black women and the damaging myths about black womanhood. Backed with research, *Sister Citizen* delves into the social institutions that keep black women from fully realizing their identity.

[*The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope*](#) by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer

Forced to drop out of school when famine hits his village-which has no electricity or running water-a Malawi boy tinkers with scrap metal and builds a windmill that lights a few bulbs and catches the world's attention.

[*The Bone Woman: A Forensic Anthropologist's Search for Truth in the Mass Graves of Rwanda, Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo*](#) by Clea Koff

In her memoir, *The Bone Woman*, Clea Koff shares her personal journey as a forensic anthropologist. A team of forensic scientists is needed to figure out the identities of the decayed bodies from mass graves in Rwanda, Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo, and to ascertain if those people died as a result of crimes against humanity. Koff and her team had to prove how the people died and discover whether they were the casualties of civil war, revolution, or genocide.

[*Boy21*](#) by Matthew Quick

Finley, an unnaturally quiet boy who is the only white player on his high school's varsity basketball team, lives in a dismal Pennsylvania town that is ruled by the Irish mob, and when his coach asks him to mentor a troubled African American student who has transferred there from an elite private school in California, he finds that they have a lot in common in spite of their apparent differences.

[*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*](#) by Rebecca Skloot

Henrietta Lacks, a poor black woman in the 1950s, provided the world with one of the most important cells to date: the HeLa cell. This fascinating, well-paced narrative showcases the atrocities committed against the African American community in the name of science.

[*Space Chronicles: Facing the Ultimate Frontier*](#) by Neil DeGrasse Tyson

Space Chronicles is a collection of renowned astrophysicist, Neil DeGrasse Tyson's best commentary, including a new introductory essay on NASA. It is an inspirational plea for the importance of NASA and space exploration. Tyson examines the politics of space and gives the reader the sense of wonder that comes from space exploration and discovery.