

# Crossroads Academy Middle School Reading List

## Adventure and Mystery

Adamson, J. *Born Free*.

The author tells the true story of raising Elsa, a lion cub, from infancy to three-year-old, teaching her along the way to hunt and kill in order to return to the wild and survive.

Creswick, P. *Robin Hood*. (illus. by N. C. Wyeth)

The adventures of Robin Hood and his merry band in Sherwood Forest.

Defoe, D. *Robinson Crusoe*.

"The granddaddy of all adventure stories" --*Books That Build Character*.

Doyle, Sir Arthur. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

Accompany the famous detective on many thrilling and puzzling mysteries.

Dumas, A. *The Three Musketeers*.

Swashbuckling adventure and courtly romance in pre-revolutionary France.

Heyerdahl, T. (1947). *Kon-Tiki*.

Five men answer adventurer Heyerdahl's call for companions to cross the Pacific on a wooden raft.

Junger, S. (1997). *The Perfect Storm*.

Uses interviews, memoirs, radio conversations, and technical research to recreate the last days of the crew of the Andrea Gail, a fishing boat that was lost in a storm off the coast of Nova Scotia in October, 1991.

King, L. *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*.

Attention Sherlock Holmes' fans! The author claims to have found a "lost manuscript" of the great detective and takes the reader sleuthing through London with Holmes and a female companion.

Krakauer, J. (1997). *Into Thin Air*.

The author relates his experience of climbing Mt. Everest during its deadliest season and examines what it is about the mountain that makes people willingly subject themselves to such risk, hardship, and expense.

Lansing, A. *Endurance*.

The true story of Sir Ernest Shackleton and his crew attempting to cross Antarctica in 1914. This story tells how the men survived shipwreck, a thousand-mile voyage in an open boat, and an overland trek to return home.

McGraw, E. (1962). *The Golden Goblet*.

A young Egyptian boy struggles to reveal a crime and reshape his own destiny.

McKinley, R. (1988). *The Outlaws of Sherwood*.

A good retelling of the classic tale. Maid Marian appears as an appealing and spirited female character. Her relationship with Robin is handled well in this story.

Pullman, P. (1987). *Ruby in the Smoke*.

In 19th-century London, 16-year-old Sally, a recent orphan, becomes involved in a deadly search for a mysterious ruby. Two other titles in the Sally Lockhart series: *Shadow in the North* and *The Tiger in the Well*.

Pyle, H. *Men of Iron*.

Young squire, Myles Falworth, becomes a knight in 15th century England. Also by this author: *The Story of King Arthur and His Knights*.

Rawicz, S. *The Long Walk*.

An unforgettable book. In 1941, the author escaped with six other prisoners from a Soviet labor camp. This is their story of struggle and survival as they traveled through Siberia, the Himalayas and the Gobi desert.

Roosenburg, H. *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*.

Firsthand account of the adventures of four political prisoners as they travel home--without food, papers, or money--to Holland from a German prison camp at the end of World War II. A masterful story of perseverance and heroism.

Stevenson, R. *Treasure Island*.

Also by this author: *Kidnapped*.

Tey, J. *Brat Farrar*.

A classic British mystery for advanced readers. The orphaned Brat Farrar is now 21 years old and bears a striking resemblance to the deceased heir to a country estate. Brat poses as the heir and engages in a delicate game of duplicity.

Ullman, J. (1955). *Banner in the Sky*.

An excellent adventure story of 16-yr. old, Rudi Matt's efforts to surpass his father's attempt to climb the unclimbable mountain, the Citadel. Based on true experiences of climbing the Matterhorn.

## **Great Life Stories (Autobiography and Biography)**

Ambrose, S. (1996). *Undaunted Courage*.

Chronicles the experiences of Meriwether Lewis, discusses the experiences of those who took part in the expedition, and tells of the leading political, scientific, and military figures involved.

Beals, M.P. *Warriors Don't Cry*.

The author was one of the nine black teenagers who integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. These students faced brutal opposition by the governor and the state National Guard. She tells about this traumatic and harrowing experience without bitterness, and reveals her courageous spirit.

Bober, N. (1991). *A Restless Spirit: The Story of Robert Frost*.

Get to know the poet who wrote many of the poems most familiar to Crossroads' middle schoolers.

(This author has several other good biography titles.)

Cleary, B. (1988). *A Girl from Yamhill*.

Follows the popular children's author from her childhood years in Oregon through high school and into young adulthood, highlighting her family life and her growing interest in writing.

Conway, J. (1989). *Road from Coorain*.

Jill Kerr Conway begins her journey that will take her far from the Australian bush of her childhood.

de Kruif, Paul. *Microbe Hunters*.

"Every chapter is one of high adventure with a scientist as the hero." This classic account of the pioneers of bacteriology reads like a thriller, with lively, vigorous writing about the lives of twelve intriguing scientists.

Filipovic, Z. (1995). *Zlata's Diary*.

The diary of a thirteen-year-old-girl living in Sarajevo, begun just before her eleventh birthday when there was still peace in her homeland.

Fradin, D. (2000). *Ida B. Wells: Mother of the Civil Rights Movement*.

Life of a former slave who helped found the NAACP and who fought for women's voting rights. Her campaign against lynching, at great personal danger, resulted in this practice virtually ending by the time of her death.

Freedman, R. (1999). *Babe Didrikson Zaharias: the Making of a Champion*.

Freedman brings his considerable talent to this biography of one of the greatest athletes of all time.

(This author has several other good biography titles.)

Gilbreth, F. B. (1948). *Cheaper By the Dozen*.

Mr. Gilbreth was an efficiency expert who practiced on his twelve children, often with humorous results.

Herriot, J. (1972). *All Creatures Great and Small*.

Humorous and poignant experiences of a veterinarian in rural England. Also: *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, *All Things Wise and Wonderful*, *The Lord God Made Them All*, and *James Herriot's Dog Stories*.

Huxley, E. *The Flame Trees of Thika*.

Elsbeth Huxley's memoir of her childhood in the Kenyan bush. "Evoking a vanished world and a harsh, beautiful land, the story presents a vivid portrait of the family's life as they build their home in East Africa."

Jiang, Ji-li. (1998). *Red Scarf Girl: A memoir of the Cultural Revolution*.

A true story by a Chinese girl who was twelve years old at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Although a loyal Young Pioneer with a red scarf around her neck, she is suspect

because of her family background. She had always considered herself the luckiest girl in the world, and now her life is filled with fear and humiliation.

Kehret, P. (1996). *Small Steps: the Year I Got Polio*.

The author describes her battle against polio when she was thirteen and her efforts to overcome its debilitating effects.

Landau, E. (2001). *Heroine of the Titanic: The Real Unsinkable Molly Brown*.

Although famous for her compassion and courage as a survivor of the Titanic in 1912, Margaret Brown was a fighter for women's rights and miners' rights before and after that event. She was one of the first women to run for Congress, but did not win the election.

Marrin, A. (2001). *George Washington and the Founding of a Nation*.

A very personal account of the life of Washington by an award-winning author.

Marrin, A. (2000). *Sitting Bull and his World*.

In this portrayal of one of the most influential Native American leaders, Marrin identifies the differences between the white and Indian cultures and relates the history of the establishment of the United States.

Meigs, C. (1934). *Invincible Louisa*.

The life of author Louisa May Alcott.

Olds, E. F. *Women of the Four Winds*.

Brings to light with lively narrative style the lives of overlooked women adventurers, explorers, and scientists.

Reich, S. (1999). *Clara Schumann: Piano Virtuoso*.

Remarkable pianist and composer Clara Schumann is profiled in this elegantly designed biography, resounding with numerous photographs and quotations from her diaries and letters.

Wong, J. S. *Fifth Chinese Daughter*.

Autobiography of Jade Snow growing up and coming of age in San Francisco's Chinatown in the 1930s. A compelling portrait of a determined, intelligent, inspiring young girl.

## Classics

Austen, J. *Pride and Prejudice*.

Elizabeth Bennett's independent mind and Darcy's snobbery engage the two characters in heroic efforts not to acknowledge their love for each other. The profound power of this story is in how these characters grow as their relationship gradually develops.

Also by this author: *Emma*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Northanger Abbey*.

Dickens, C. *Oliver Twist*.

A story filled with memorable characters and engaging plot by one of the most inspired storytellers in English literature.

Du Maurier, D. (1938) *Rebecca*.

Suspense, romance, and mystery at the Cornwall estate called Manderley. A young bride arrives at her new home and realizes that her husband's deceased first wife, Rebecca, has left a disquieting legacy.

Hunt, I. (1967). *Up a Road Slowly*.

Compelling story of a young girl coming of age when she must go live with her older aunt after her mother dies.

Kipling, R. *Just So Stories*.

Kipling's imaginative, often humorous, explanations of the origin of things. This author is an artist with words. His prose style, including made-up words, is thoroughly engaging and appropriately challenging for middle school readers.

Krumgold, J. (1959). *Onion John*.

Young Andy Rusch is best friends with Onion John, the last person on earth his father wants to see influencing his son. Also by this author, *And Now Miguel*.

Montgomery, L. M. (1935). *Anne of Green Gables*.

An orphan girl growing up on Prince Edward Island wants desperately to belong in her new home. (Series.) Also by this author: the *Emily of New Moon* series.

Ransome, A. (1930). *Swallows and Amazons*.

The Walker family and their camp on Wild Cat Island. (Series.)

Rawlings, M. (1938). *The Yearling*.

A boy living in the backwoods of Florida must decide the fate of a fawn he has lovingly raised.

Smith, D. (1948). *I Capture the Castle*.

What category for this book? "Much too individual and much too well written to be labeled at all." (Noel Perrin, *A Child's Delight*.) Adventure and romance for the inhabitants of a castle in southern England in the year 1935.

Steinbeck, J. (1949). *Of Mice and Men*.

Sustained by the hope of someday owning a farm of their own, two migrant laborers arrive to work on a ranch in central California.

White, T. H. *The Sword in the Stone*.

The lively, engaging tale of King Arthur's magical upbringing.

## **Fantasy / Science Fiction**

Adams, R. (1972). *Watership Down*.

Chronicles the adventures of a group of rabbits searching for a safe place to establish a new warren where they can live in peace.

Alexander, L. *The Prydain Chronicles*.

The mythical kingdom of Prydain is being menaced by evil warlords. Taran, the unlikely hero, is accompanied in these fast-paced adventures by a motley crew of characters, who all play an important part in the battles to save Prydain. Titles in the Prydain series: *The Book of Three*, *The Black Cauldron*, *The Castle of Llyre*, *Taran Wanderer*, *The High King*.

Also, look for the *Westmark* trilogy by this author.

Barron, T. A. *The Merlin Effect*.

A rousing tale of fantasy adventure. The 13-year-old heroine travels through time and magical space to find a horn that once belonged to the wizard Merlin. Also, other Merlin titles by this author.

Baum, L. F. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

And other Oz books: *The Marvelous Land of Oz*, *The Emerald City of Oz*, etc. Essential read-aloud books, and wonderful, imaginative literature.

Card, O. S. (1985). *Ender's Game*.

When alien attack, the fate of the world rests with the government's youngest student recruit.

Carroll, L. *Through the Looking Glass*.

Alice goes on more adventures when she climbs through the parlor mirror and finds herself part of a life-size chess game.

Christopher, J. (1967). *The Tripods Trilogy*, and prequel.

Two boys try to escape from a society in which the government controls the minds of the adults. Titles are: *When the Tripods Came* (prequel), *The White Mountains*, *City of Gold and Lead*, *Pool of Fire*.

Finney, J. *Time and Again*.

Si Morley goes on a strange journey from his 20th-century New York City apartment into the winter of 1882. The sketches and photos he brings back from his time travels are in hot demand.

Godden, R. (1947). *The Doll's House*.

The dolls in the playroom come to life and make it known that they want a house of their own.

Grahame, K. *The Wind in the Willows*.

Don't be put off by abridged or picture book editions you read of this story when you were younger. It is a timeless, well-written book, "...about friendship and loyalty, shared pleasures and shared responsibilities," --Books That Build Character.

Jacques, B. (1986). *Redwall*.

Many other titles in the series: *The Bellmaker*, *The Great Redwall Feast*, *Martin the Warrior*, *Mossflower*, *The Outcast of Redwall*, *Matimeo*, *Pearls of Lutra*, *Salamandastron*.

Lewis, C. S. (1944-46). The Space Trilogy: *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, *That Hideous Strength*.

Dramatic stories dealing with science/technology trying to usurp authority of moral tradition of the past. Also, Lewis's fantasy stories, *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

McKinley, R. (1982). *The Blue Sword*.

Harry Crewe, a Homelander orphan girl, finds herself living with the Hillfolk. She becomes a King's Rider and carries the Blue Sword, Gonturan, that no woman has wielded since the Lady Aerin herself bore it into battle.

Pullman, P. (1997). *The Golden Compass*.

Lyra's friend may be one of the kidnapped children her rescue mission hopes to save. Two other titles complete the trilogy: *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*.

Tolkien, J. R. R. (1937). *The Hobbit*.

Bilbo Baggins leaves the comfort of his hobbit home to go with the dwarves on a quest to end the dragon Smaug's reign of terror. Bilbo finds out whether he has it in him to become a hero.

Tolkien, J. R. R. (1965). *The Lord of the Ring* series.

Titles in the series: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, *The Return of the King*.

Turner, J. (1996). *The Thief*.

Fantastically set in an Ancient Greece that might have been, the thief Gen almost loses his life when he endeavors to find the mythic Hamiathe's Gift.

Twain, M. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

A 19th century mechanic suffers a blow to the head and wakes up in King Arthur's Britain. His adventures are often humorous.

Wrede, P. (1990). *Dealing With Dragons*.

Lively and humorous adventures of a nonconformist princess. (Series.)

## Historical Fiction

Anderson, L. H. (2000). *Fever 1793*.

Mattie Cook, a sixteen-year-old, learns to survive during the yellow-fever epidemic of 1793 in Philadelphia. Named a best book on many lists.

Barrett, T. (1999). *Anna of Byzantium*.

An eleventh century princess, Anna Comnena, must fight for her birthright when it seems her younger brother will take the throne.

Cleaver, Vera and Bill. (1969). *Where the Lilies Bloom*.

Set in the Appalachian Mountains, fourteen-year-old Mary Call is struggling to keep her family together, as she had promised her dying father. Nominated for a National Book Award and the recipient of several honors, this is a vivid depiction of a harsh way of life, with a strong female character.

Clement-Davies, D. (1999). *Fire Bringer*.

In a legend-like saga of old Scotland, a fawn is born who is destined to free his kind from the tyranny of the new Lord of the Herd.

Craven, M. (1973). *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*.

A young vicar, who is not yet aware that he has less than three years to live, is sent to serve in a remote Native American village in the Pacific Northwest. Reviewers have praised this depiction of the reconciliation of two cultures as "memorable, compelling, a modern classic."

Crossley-Holland, K. (2000). *The Seeing Stone*. (2002). *At the Crossing Place*.

Two of a planned trilogy which connects the vividly pictured medieval world of Arthur de Caldicot in 1199 with that of his namesake, King Arthur.

Curtis, C. P. (1995). *The Watson's Go To Birmingham*.

A black family's experience of the Civil Rights Movement in 1963.

Fast, H. (1961). *April Morning*.

Adam Cooper comes of age in the Battle of Lexington during the Revolutionary War.

Fleischman, P. (1993). *Bull Run*.

Northerners, Southerners, general, couriers, dreaming boys, and worried sisters describe the glory, the honor, the thrill, and the disillusionment of the first battle of the Civil War.

Forbes, E. (1944). *Johnny Tremain*.

Johnny starts out as an apprentice silversmith in Boston in the 1770s. He is caught up in the adventure and enthusiasm of the early years of the American Revolution.

Forester, C. S. *Beat to Quarters*.

And others in the Horatio Hornblower series. These adventures are set on ships of the British navy during the Napoleonic Wars.

Hunt, I. (1965). *Across Five Aprils*.

Powerful story of the conflicting loyalties of one family during the Civil War.

Keith, H. (1958). *Rifles for Watie*.

Sixteen-year old, Jefferson Davis Bussey can't wait to fight in the Civil War. He wants to defend the Union against Colonel Watie, leader of the Cherokee Indian rebels. He gets his chance when he is sent as a spy to infiltrate the enemy camp.

Kelly, E. (1929). *The Trumpeter of Krakow*.

A young boy's courage and bravery help save Krakow in 15th-century Poland.

Konigsburg, E. L. (1973). *A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver*.

An ingenious story of the adventures of Eleanor of Aquitaine in the Middle Ages.

Konigsburg, E. L. (1975). *The Second Mrs. Giaconda*.

How the second wife of a merchant of Milan, Mr. Giaconda, became the model for Leonardo daVinci's "Mona Lisa."

Paterson, K. (1991). *Lyddie*.

A young girl comes of age working in the Lowell Mills in the 1830s.



Paton Walsh, J. (1994). *Grace*.

After helping her father rescue the survivors of a shipwreck on the coast of England in 1838, Grace Darling finds her quiet life crumbling around her as she is unwillingly fashioned into a national hero. Based on a true story.

Propp, Vera W. (1999). *When the Soldiers Were Gone*.

Based on a true story of a small Jewish child who hid to survive the Nazi occupation of Holland and didn't know his parents when they came to get him after the war.

Rinaldi, A. (1991). *A Ride into Morning*.

The year is 1781 and patriot troops are camped in New Jersey. Feisty Mary Cooper tells the story of scarcity of supplies and other hardships of the soldiers. Other titles by this author: *Time Enough for Drums*, *The Last Silk Dress*, *Wolf by the Ears*, *Hang a Thousand Trees with Ribbons*.

Sebestyen, O. (1979) *Words by Heart*.

A young African-American girl struggles to fulfill her papa's dream of a better future for their family in the southwestern town where, in 1910, they are the only African-Americans.

Skurzynski, G. (1996). *Good-bye, Billy Radish*.

In 1917, as the United States enters World War I, 10-year-old Hank sees changes all around him in his western Pennsylvania steel mill town and feels his older Ukrainian friend drifting apart from him.

Smith, B. (1943) *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*.

A poignant story of a young woman growing up and coming of age in the first two decades of the 20th century. But this tale is so real that it resonates with readers no matter where or when they spent their childhood.

Speare, E. G. (1958). *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*.

Also recommended by this author: *The Bronze Bow*, *Calico Captive*, *The Sign of the Beaver*.

Sperry, A. *Wagons Westward*.

A gripping story of life on the Santa Fe Trail in the Southwest in the middle of the 19th century. A teenager faces daunting challenges and hardship in this often dangerous historical landscape.

Taylor, M. D. (2001). *The Land*.

A prequel to *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, this novel of the post-Civil War period follows the life of the grandfather of Cassie Logan. Other books about the Logan family are *Let the Circle Be Unbroken* and *The Road to Memphis*.

Watkins, Y. (1994). *So Far >From the Bamboo Grove*.

A fictionalized autobiography in which 11-year-old Yoko escapes from Korea to Japan with her mother and sister at the end of World War II.