

*Carroll, L., & Tenniel, J. (2016). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (Wisehouse Classics - Original 1865 Edition with the Complete Illustrations by Sir John Tenniel)* (2016 ed.). Wisehouse Classics.

“Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” is a fantasy fiction novel by Lewis Carroll, widely acclaimed for the fantastique world developed within. The story follows a young girl, Alice, who falls into a rabbit hole leading her into a strange and magical land, Wonderland. Alice meets a variety of creatures who bring her into their riddles; the white rabbit, Cheshire cat, a blue caterpillar, and the Knave of Hearts, to name a few. Alice attends a “mad tea party” and is accused by the Queen to have stolen tarts. As the Queen’s orders Alice’s execution, Alice suddenly wakes beneath a tree to realize it had all been a dream. This story possesses an eeriness and mystique mood, intriguing young readers as they mature. This novel is suited to be independent or group-aloud reading, for 7th or 8th grade students. The characters of Wonderland may be analyzed for their unique qualities. The situations Alice finds herself in as a moral discussion. “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland,” is valuable in promoting imaginative and investigative dialogue amongst students.

*Polette, N. (1997). *Bridge to Terabithia*. Thomas Y. Crowell Co.

“Bridge to Terabithia” is a fictional novel about two schoolmates, Jesse and Leslie, and their time together as friends. Leslie and her family move into Jesse’s neighborhood during the children’s fifth grade year. The two quickly become friends as Leslie’s outgoingness leads way for Jesse’s more quiet and contemplative nature. The two spend majority of their time in the forest, naming themselves the “King and Queen of Terabithia”, the imaginary land within the woods. Jesse’s character faces change as Leslie brings him “out of his shell”. In a shock accident, Leslie faces a head injury and drowns while Jesse is at a museum. The novel tackles emotion, friendship, death and depression. This work would be ideal for independent reading. The literature could be introduced through discussion or activities regarding emotional awareness. Friendship is another fundamental theme of this novel. “Bridge to Terabithia” can be utilized within and outside of the classroom to promote emotional awareness and intelligence by exhibiting a storyline of youths in an emotional storyline.

Gemeinhart, D. (2019). *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise*. Henry Holt and Company.

“The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise” is a fictional story of a father and daughter who have travelled across the country living in a school bus. Coyote’s mother and two sisters passed away in a car accident five years prior. Since that time, her dad, Rodeo has taken the duo on the road. Upon hearing a park in their hometown is being demolished, where Coyote buried a memory box with her mom, she decides to trick her father into returning. The duo pick-up strangers along the way, with a lesson to learn from each. Coyote’s story is about the importance of the journey, not just the destination. This book could be read independently or aloud by a

teacher, ideally for sixth grade students. An art activity involving individual's memories or a show-and-tell of valuable items would be a great set-up for this reading.

*Rawls, W. (1961). *Where The Red Fern Grows*. Doubleday & Company.

“Where The Red Fern Grows” is an American fiction novel, following the story of a young boy named Billy and his two redbone coonhounds, Little Ann and Old Dan. Billy lives in the Ozark Mountains with his family, and quickly becomes recognized alongside his dogs for their hunting abilities. After winning a championship hunt, Old Dan passes away from a mountain lion attack. Little Ann soon follows. This novel is a great example to discuss symbolism. “Where the Red Fern Grows” should be independent reading for ages eleven to thirteen. To set-up the literature in class, a presentation on symbolism would be necessary in having readers analyze the text. In understanding so, students may discuss symbols from the story such as the red fern, and the ghost coon.

*Barnhill, K. R. (2016). *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*. Chapel Hill, NC.

“The Girl Who Drank the Moon” is a fairytale, fantasy fiction novel about a young girl, Luna, who is raised by a witch. Luna was sent to the forest as a baby, as a sacrifice from the town to the witch of the woods. Xan, the witch, is generously kind and raises Luna, as she has done with every sacrificed child before. Luna develops magical powers upon drinking the moonlight. When a young man from the village seeks to kill Xan, Luna must stop his crime. She must find a way to spread good word and save her caregiver. This story would be best suited for 7th or 8th grade students, as independent or read aloud by the teacher. This story appeals to a broad audience while approaching sensitive subjects such as the consequences of censorship while leaving a moral lesson on finding commonalities and working together. A lesson about censorship, such as in literature or movies will help students to understand this concept prior to reading.

Babbitt, N. (1975). *Tuck Everlasting*. Scholastic Corporation.

“Tuck Everlasting” is a fantasy and romance, coming of age novel. Winnie Foster comes across a teenage boy, Jesse, in the woods drinking from a spring. He tells her the water grants immortality, that he is actually 104 years old. The two become quick friends, and Winnie is whisked away into Jesse's world. She learns his family is being chased, to exploit and monetize their means of immortality. During Winnie's time with the Tucker family, she is presented with troubles upon loyalty, love, the nature of life, and the significances choices. Does she drink from the well and live forever with Jesse? Or does she age through the cycle of life? This novel brings about many moral questions. Prompting a student-based discussion would be a great introduction to this reading. An opening question could be “Would you want to live forever?” This novel is ideal for young individuals as the story provokes difficult questions and concepts. Students should read this text alone but encouraged to discuss ideas with peers.

*Lowry, L. (1989). *Number The Stars*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

“Number the Stars” is an historical fiction novel that follows the story of a girl, Annemarie Johansen, as her family assists in the rescue of Danish Jews during World War II. Annemarie’s friend Ellen is Jewish, and disguises her identity as Annemarie’s older sister, Lise, when her parents are deported. The family stages a funeral for an aunt that never existed as a way to hide and relocate Jews to Sweden. Annemarie is taken along as her family sacrifices their lives and safety to help others. As an introduction to World War II or Anti-Semitism this book should be read by the teacher. With this structure, the tone and mood of the reading may be set by the teacher, without being overwhelming. Students may feel comfortable and curious to ask questions about World War II as the story is from the perspective of a peers age. This book could be used as a segue into Holocaust history.

*Frank, A. (1947). *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Doubleday & Company.

“The Diary of Anne Frank” also known as, “The Diary of a Young Girl”, is an autobiography by Anne Frank, writing of her experiences as a young Jewish woman in Amsterdam during World War II. Anne and her family famously hid behind a bookcase for two years as the Nazis prosecuted Jews throughout Germany and the Netherlands. This book is best suited as independent reading for 7th and 8th grade students but requires teacher lead discussion. The Holocaust is a sensitive subject, which can be difficult for young citizens to grasp. Anne’s diary is an ideal piece of literature to introduce these histories, as she wrote these truths in her early adolescent years, close in age to middle school students. This autobiography could be utilized to introduce World War II. A discussion of the conflicting nations would be necessary prior to reading, and a literature circle may allow students to share their thoughts amongst peers.

Obama, M. (2021). *Becoming: Adapted for Young Readers*. New York: Random House Children's Books.

“Becoming” is former first lady Michelle Obama’s autobiography, a new edition has been released for young readers. Michelle writes about her life through her time in the White House and public health campaign. She recalls her childhood in Chicago, and her educational pursuits attending Princeton University and Harvard Law School. Michelle discusses her relationship with Barack, from their introduction to marriage and motherhood. As the first African-American First Lady, she takes readers through the trials of her position and balancing work with family care. This literary work is ideal for young readers as it presents recent events in the United States. It is important future voters understand the world around them, and Mrs. Obama’s autobiography does so in a delightful manner. This book would be ideal for read-aloud perhaps

for lessons in history or politics. To set up this reading, teacher may introduce the roles of Presidency, and the emerged roles of Former First ladies.

*Woodson, J. (2014). *Brown Girl Dreaming*. New York: Puffin Books.

“Brown Girl Dreaming” is a book composed of poetic storytelling which accounts the authors childhood as a young African American girl. Woodson’s character, Jackie recalls her discovery of racism and segregation as a young African American girl. This book is an eye-opening read for young students, by hearing the experience of a community member, to better understand the world around them, and be empathetic members of society today. “Brown Girl Dreaming” should be read aloud by an instructor as the format is free poetry, hearing the intended sounds and rhythms. To introduce this reading, there are many online resources directly from the author including interviews and even a read-aloud.