

HASL N RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2023
Grades 7 and 8

All book summaries are provided by the publisher or written by committee members.

Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.

Alexander, Kwame. ***The Crossover***. Houghton Mifflin, 2014. Twins Josh and Jordan, both of whom love basketball, begin to grow apart in adolescence at the same time as their father, a former basketball star, begins to experience health issues. *Novel in verse. Sports fiction. Newbery Medal 2015. Series.*

Anderson, John David. ***Posted***. Walden Pond Press, 2017. Eighth graders thwart a phone ban at their school with a creative use of post-it notes, until the messaging gets harmful and a group of outsider teens take a stand to promote inclusiveness and kindness. *Realistic Fiction.*

Anderson, M. T. ***The Assassination of Brangwain Spurge***. Candlewick, 2018. This is a collaboration between Anderson and Eugene Yelchin about an inept and unlikely pair, an elf and a goblin, in which the stiff and snobby historian elf is catapulted into the goblin kingdom as a spy/unknowing assassin, and is hosted by a goblin archivist, who is anxious for cultural exchanges. *Fantasy.*

Anthony, Lawrence. ***The Elephant Whisperer: My Life with the Herd in the African Wild (Young Readers' Edition)***. Holt, 2017. Lawrence Anthony reflects on his decision to accept a group of hard-to-manage wild elephants onto his South African game reserve in an effort to ensure their survival. *Nonfiction.*

Asimov, Isaac. ***The Stars, Like Dust***. First published 1951. At the death of his father, Biron Farrill becomes involved in the plot to rebel against the Tyranni who have conquered many worlds. *Classic science fiction/mystery. Series.*

Berry, Julie. ***Lovely War***. Viking, 2019. The Greek goddess Aphrodite recounts two tales of tragic love during WWI at the height of World War II. She seeks to answer the age-old question: 'Why are Love and War eternally drawn to one another?' but her quest for a conclusion that will satisfy her jealous husband uncovers a multi-threaded tale of prejudice, trauma, and music revealing that War is no match for the power of Love. *The audiobook version is highly recommended. Mythology/magical realism.*

Bowen, Fred. ***Hardcourt: Stories from 75 Years of the National Basketball Association***. McElderry Books, 2022. This basketball history presents an exciting overview of the players that made NBA basketball such a success and includes a brief history of the origins of the game and its evolution. Action-packed, attractive art accompanies the text. *Nonfiction.*

Bowling, Dusti. ***Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus***. Sterling, 2017. New friends, a mystery, and a lot of humor help Aven, thirteen, adjust to middle school and life at a dying western theme park, where her being born armless presents many challenges. *Mystery. Series.*

HAI SLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2023
Grades 7 and 8

- Brody, Jessica. ***A Week of Mondays***. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016. Sixteen-year-old Ellison Sparks keeps reliving that terrible Monday when her boyfriend, Tristan, breaks up with her; and no matter how hard she tries, she cannot seem to set things right. *Romance*.
- Culbertson, Kim. ***The Wonder of Us***. Point, 2017. Riya and Abby were best friends in their small California town, but Riya and her family moved to Berlin for Riya's junior year, and it was hard to stay in touch. Now that the year has passed, Riya proposes that they take a two-week Grand Tour and travel around Europe to reconnect--but they have both been hiding secrets, and those secrets threaten to push them apart forever. *Realistic fiction*.
- Dee, Barbara. ***Maybe He Just Likes You***. Aladdin, 2019. Mila isn't sure if the boys at school asking her for hugs are just flirting like her friend says, but it doesn't seem that way and makes her uncomfortable. When the boys won't leave her alone, Mila needs to find a solution before things get even worse. *Realistic fiction*.
- Donnelly, Jennifer. ***Stepsister***. Scholastic, 2019. Ella's stepsister Isabelle is deemed ugly, wicked, and doomed to a life of misery, until she decides to take action to change her fate. *Classic retelling/fantasy*.
- Elliott, David. ***The Seventh Raven***. Clarion, 2021. A gripping retelling of the Grimms' fairy tale of seven brothers transformed into ravens and a young sister determined to find the brothers and break the spell. Told in verse, the rhythm of the storytelling takes on a haunting mood. *Novel in verse. Fantasy*.
- Esplin, J.L. ***96 Miles***. Tom Doherty, 2020. Brothers John and Stewart find themselves on their own in a desert with no food or water after a massive blackout creates a crisis that tests their determination to survive. *Adventure/survival*.
- Fleming, Candace. ***Crash from Outer Space: Unraveling the Mystery of Flying Saucers, Alien Beings, and Roswell***. Scholastic, 2022. A strange explosion and scattered debris in the desert outside Roswell, New Mexico leads to a series of UFO stories that escalate into conspiracy tales of government secrecy. *Nonfiction*.
- Freedman, Russell. ***Vietnam: A History of the War***. Holiday House, 2016. The author offers a presentation of American involvement in the Vietnam War with a good selection of primary source photos and quotes from public officials as well as diary accounts and viewpoints of veterans of the war. *Nonfiction*.
- Freeman, Megan E. ***Alone***. Aladdin, 2021. When she decides to have a secret sleepover, twelve-year-old Maddie is accidentally left behind when her whole town is evacuated, leaving her to fend for herself in a world without any other human beings. *Novel in verse. Adventure/survival*.
- Gerber, Alyson. ***Braced***. Arthur A. Levine, 2017. Rachel's plans to start as a forward on her school's soccer team become endangered when she learns that scoliosis, a spinal condition, requires her to wear a back brace; however, friends and family rally to support her as she rises to the challenge to lead a full life on the field and at school. *Realistic fiction*.

HAI SLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2023
Grades 7 and 8

- Hale, Shannon. ***Friends Forever***. First Second, 2021. Based on the author's own experiences as an 8th grader, this graphic novel shows the stress of trying to be a "perfect" teenager and the path to self-acceptance and focusing on one's strengths. *Graphic memoir. Trilogy.*
- Halpern, Jake, and Peter Kujawinski. ***Nightfall***. Putnam's, 2015. On a distant island where day and night exist on fourteen-year cycles and the islanders migrate south each sunset, three children get left behind and must find a way off the island before the Night finds them. *Supernatural/adventure.*
- Henkes, Kevin. ***Sweeping Up the Heart***. Greenwillow, 2019. Amelia's vacation looks bleak with her dad insisting they stay home over spring break instead of traveling. As boredom looms, she turns to the clay studio in town where she meets a boy named Casey who has a campaign going to keep his divorcing parents together. *Contemporary historical fiction.*
- Henry, April. ***The Girl I Used to Be***. Holt, 2016. Fourteen years ago, everyone believed Olivia's mother had been killed by her father, but recently his remains were found in the same woody area where her mother died. Who killed them? Olivia means to find out. *Mystery/thriller.*
- Higuera, Donna Barba. ***The Last Cuentista***. Levine Querido, 2021. When destruction of Earth by a comet is imminent, Petra Peña and her scientist parents, along with other selected humans, escape via starship. After being put in stasis, they expect to be cared for by volunteer monitors until their arrival on habitable Sagan in 380 years, but things do not go as planned. *Science fiction. Newbery Medal 2022, Pura Belpré Author Award Winner 2022.*
- Hood, Susan. ***Alias Anna: A True Story of Outwitting the Nazis***. HarperCollins, 2022. The true story of how young Ukrainian Jewish piano prodigies Zhanna and her sister Frina outplayed their pursuers while hiding in plain sight during the Holocaust. *Novel in verse. Biography.*
- Howard, Tim. ***The Keeper: The Unguarded Story of Tim Howard (Young Readers' Edition)***. Harper, 2015. Tim Howard's uplifting memoir about how he grew from being a hyperactive kid from New Jersey with Tourette syndrome to becoming one of the world's premier soccer goalkeepers. *Memoir.*
- Hutton, Keely. ***Secret Soldiers***. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019. It is the height of WWI, and although teenager Thomas Sullivan isn't old enough to enlist as a soldier, he finds himself participating in a secret mission in the brutal trenches of the Western Front, all the while seeking his brother who is missing in action. *Historical fiction.*
- Jarrow, Gail. ***Blood and Germs: The Civil War Battle Against Wounds and Disease***. Calkins Creek, 2020. Would you want to be a Civil War surgeon? Before modern medicine, injuries during the war were a grisly, life-and-death matter. Read about the heroes, leaders, and technology of the time in this colorful and surprising nonfiction title. *Nonfiction.*

HAI SLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2023
Grades 7 and 8

- Jarrow, Gail. ***Spooked! How a Radio Broadcast and The War of the Worlds Sparked the 1938 Invasion of America***. Calkins Creek, 2018. Orson Welles led a group of talented performers in a 1938 radio production of *The War of the Worlds*, which created a panic across the nation. The story of this faked “alien invasion” is a fascinating mix of theater, history, and psychology. *Nonfiction*.
- Johnson, Steven. ***How We Got to Now: Six Innovations that Made the Modern World***. Viking, 2018. This fun survey describes how innovations, such as air conditioning and eye-glasses, evolved over time; these stories provide an appreciation of how ideas build upon each other. *Nonfiction*.
- Kean, Sam. ***The Disappearing Spoon: And Other True Tales of Madness, Love, and the History of the World from the Periodic Table of the Elements***. Little, Brown, 2019. In an amazing collection of stories surrounding the periodic elements, readers will see how art, society, and history have been influenced by the marvels of elements in our world. *Nonfiction*.
- Kelly, Scott. ***Endurance: My Year in Space and How I Got There***. Crown, 2018. Ever wonder what it is like to live in space? NASA astronaut, Scott Kelly details his journey from problem student to fighter pilot, Space Shuttle commander, and year-long inhabitant of the International Space Station. *Memoir*.
- Khoury, Jessica. ***Kalahari***. Razorbill, 2015. Five teens must try to survive in the Kalahari Desert with limited supplies while evading mercenaries and a strange silver lion. *Science fiction/adventure*.
- Klass, David. ***Losers Take All: A Novel***. Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2015. At a sports-crazy New Jersey high school where all kids must play on a team, a group of rebels start a soccer team designed to undermine the jock culture of the school. *Sports fiction*.
- Landman, Tanya. ***Hell and High Water***. Candlewick, 2017. In 1750s London, young Caleb’s life is upended when his father is accused of theft and shipped to America as a laborer; meanwhile, Caleb journeys to a rough seafaring town to live with his father’s estranged sister, and he begins to discover murderous plots and a smuggling operation. *Mystery/historical fiction*.
- Langeland, Deirdre. ***Meltdown: Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Disaster in Fukushima***. Roaring Brook, 2021. It is March 11, 2011, and the fourth largest earthquake ever measured creates a tsunami that not only hits northeast Japan, but results in the meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, one of the worst nuclear disasters on record. *Nonfiction*.
- Larsen, Mylisa. ***Playing through the Turnaround***. Clarion, 2022. Can a handful of jazz band students take a stand to help save student clubs and enrichment classes that are threatened by school budget cuts? *Realistic fiction*.
- Lee, Stacey. ***The Downstairs Girl***. Putnam’s, 2019. Jo is a Chinese girl living during the 1890s in Atlanta, a time in which the fight for women’s rights is on the rise while

HAI SLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2023
Grades 7 and 8

segregation laws are also beginning to restrict the rights of Blacks and Asians. Jo masks her identity to become a popular and controversial “advice columnist” for the local paper, and she becomes immersed in the fight for rights. *Historical fiction.*

Messner, Kate. ***Tracking Pythons: The Quest to Catch an Invasive Predator and Save an Ecosystem.*** Millbrook, 2020. Wade through south Florida with scientists dedicated to finding and controlling the Burmese python population, an invasive species from Southeast Asia. This nonfiction title is full of photos and fascinating facts for snake and nature lovers as well as the just plain curious. *Nonfiction.*

Muhammad, Ibtihaj. ***Proud: Living My American Dream.*** Little, Brown, 2018. The inspiring and critically acclaimed all-American story of faith, family, hard work, and perseverance by Olympic fencer, activist, and one of *Time Magazine's* "100 Most Influential People," Ibtihaj Muhammad. *Memoir.*

Neri, G. ***Polo Cowboy.*** Candlewick, 2021. Cole gets a job as a stable hand for a polo team at an elite military academy and begins to see an opportunity for himself at the academy but can Cole navigate the prejudice of the polo players and use his skills as a horseman to win a scholarship? *Realistic fiction. Standalone sequel.*

Nunn, Malla. ***When the Ground is Hard.*** Putnam's, 2019. At Swaziland's Keziah Christian Academy, where the wealth and color of one's father determines one's station, once-popular Adele bonds with poor Lottie over a book and a series of disasters. *Historical fiction.*

Odhiambo, Eucabeth A. ***Auma's Long Run.*** Carolrhoda Books, 2017. When AIDS devastates thirteen-year-old Auma's village in Kenya during the 1980s, Auma must choose between staying to help her family and working toward a track scholarship that will take her away from home. *Historical fiction.*

Oliver, Mary. ***Dog Songs: Thirty-five Dog Songs and One Essay.*** Penguin, 2013. A collection of poems and one essay about dogs and their relationships with their owners. *Poetry.*

Oppel, Kenneth. ***Bloom: The Overflow.*** Alfred A. Knopf, 2020. Anaya, Petra, and Seth race to save their family, friends, and island community against a mysterious, deadly plant invasion only to discover that part of the mystery lies deep within themselves. *Science fiction/thriller. Trilogy.*

Paulsen, Gary. ***Gone to the Woods: Surviving a Lost Childhood.*** Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021. In this riveting and inspiring memoir, the author of *Hatchet* and other wilderness survival stories tells his own true-life survival story beginning at age five and continuing through young adulthood. *Memoir.*

Priest, Cherie. ***I Am Princess X.*** Arthur A. Levine, 2015. Years after writing stories about a superheroine character she created with a best friend who died in a tragic car accident, sixteen-year-old May is shocked to see stickers, patches, and graffiti images of the superheroine appearing around Seattle. *Mystery/thriller.*

HAI SLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2023
Grades 7 and 8

Reynolds, Jason. **Long Way Down**. Atheneum, 2017. Fifteen-year-old Will faces questions of morality and justice as he considers murdering the man who shot his brother in this powerful, gripping novel-in-verse that takes place in sixty crucial seconds. *Novel in verse. Realistic fiction.*

Reynolds, Jason, and Ibram X. Kendi. **Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You**. Little, Brown, 2020. Preeminent author Jason Reynolds provides an exploration of what it means to be antiracist in this fast-paced, conversational nonfiction title. *Nonfiction.*

Reynolds, Justin A. **Miles Morales Shock Waves: A Spider-Man Graphic Novel**. Graphix, 2021. Except for having special powers such as turning invisible and shooting webs from his wrists, Miles is a normal kid juggling typical teenage problems; but when an earthquake hits his mother's hometown in Puerto Rico and a classmate's father disappears, Miles must kick things into high gear. *Graphic novel. Superheroes. Series.*

Rhodes, Jewell Parker. **Black Brother, Black Brother**. Little, Brown, 2020. Biracial Donte and his brother attend Middlefield Prep, and Donte presents as black while his brother Trey presents as white. Their school experiences couldn't be more different, especially when Donte gets unjustly arrested. *Realistic fiction.*

Roberts, Barbara Carroll. **Nikki on the Line**. Little, Brown, 2019. Middle schooler Nikki's passion is basketball, and she dreams of making the cut for a competitive club team. However, her non-sporty mom, the secret about her dad, changing friendships, and a new guy on the scene add up to things not going quite the way she planned. *Sports fiction.*

Sanderson, Brandon. **Skyward**. Delacorte, 2018. Branded as the daughter of a coward after her father abandons his team and is killed in battle, young Spensa sets her sights on claiming the stars by becoming a pilot and seeking retribution for her father's death by taking on their age-old enemy, the Krell. *Science fiction. Trilogy and novellas.*

Sandler, Martin W. **1919: The Year That Changed America**. Bloomsbury, 2019. Sandler shows the many shockwaves hitting the country in 1919: the end of World War I and the resulting race riots, The Great Molasses Flood, the Red Scare, labor unrest, and the temperance movement all made great changes in American society. He compares those trends with what is happening now to show how history affects the current situation. *Nonfiction.*

Sandler, Martin W. **The Whydah: A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked, and Found**. Candlewick, 2017. Set sail on the pirate ship Whydah, doomed to sink off the coast of Cape Cod in 1717 with its treasure aboard and Black Sam Bellamy at the helm. Not found until 1984, its artifacts have shed much light on the life of pirates. *Nonfiction.*

Sands, Kevin. **The Blackthorn Key**. Aladdin, 2015. In 1665 London, fourteen-year-old Christopher Rowe, apprentice to an apothecary, and his best friend Tom try to

H AISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2023
Grades 7 and 8

uncover the truth behind a mysterious cult, following a trail of puzzles, codes, pranks, and danger toward an unearthly secret with the power to tear the world apart. *Fantasy. Series.*

Schwab, V.E. ***Gallant***. Greenwillow, 2022. Olivia Prior has grown up in Merilance School for Girls with no past except for her one treasure, her mother's journal so when a letter arrives inviting her to come home to ruinous manor, Gallant, she seizes the chance to find out about her family. *Dark fantasy.*

Sepetys, Ruta. ***I Must Betray You***. Philomel, 2022. 17-year-old Cristian Florescu, is forced to spy on an American ambassador's teenage son but how does one survive in a Romanian society that is surrounded by suspicion and treachery? *Historical fiction.*

Sheinkin, Steve. ***Bomb, Graphic Novel: The Race to Build and Steal the World's Most Dangerous Weapon***. Roaring Brook, 2023. Combining historic facts with the pacing of a thriller, this graphic novel adapts Sheinkin's award-winning book Bomb using three storylines--spies, sabotage, and scientific breakthroughs--leading up to the historic creation of the atomic bomb in Los Alamos, New Mexico. *Graphic novel. Nonfiction.*

Sheinkin, Steve. ***Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team***. Roaring Brook, 2017. Tells the fascinating story of the beginning of American collegiate football and the role that coach Pop Warner, football great Jim Thorpe, and the legendary Carlisle Indian Industrial School contributed to the development of the sport. *Nonfiction.*

Soontornvat, Christina. ***All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team***. Candlewick, 2020. This gripping narrative of the 2018 Thai boys' rescue combines the technical details of the rescue operation with the inspiring human efforts to save these boys. *Nonfiction. Newbery Honor Book 2021.*

Spooner, Meagan. ***Sherwood***. HarperTeen, 2019. When Lady Marian learns that her betrothed, Robin of Locksley, has perished in the Crusades, she is faced with an uncertain future and finds herself caught between helping Will Scarlet, a fugitive, and keeping one step ahead of Sir Guy, the arm of the law. "The lady becomes the legend" is the perfect tagline for this reimagined classic. *Classic retelling/adventure.*

Springer, Nancy. ***Enola Holmes and the Black Barouche***. Wednesday Books, 2021. The witty, independent, and clever Enola Holmes jumps on a case with her older brother Sherlock Holmes when Flossie, the wife of the Earl of Dunhynch, is suspiciously reported dead. *Mystery. Series.*

Stead, Rebecca. ***Goodbye, Stranger***. Wendy Lamb, 2015. As Bridge makes her way through seventh grade on Manhattan's Upper West Side with her best friends, curvaceous Em, crusader Tab, and a curious new friend - or more than friend - Sherm, she finds the answer she has been seeking since she barely survived an accident at age eight: "What is my purpose?" *Realistic fiction.*

H AISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2023
Grades 7 and 8

- Stevenson, Robert Louis. ***Treasure Island***. First published 1883. A classic pirate story reproduced in movies and TV shows more than any other, *Treasure Island* tells the tale of the quest for treasure by Jim Hawkins and pirate Long John Silver. The book introduces the now infamous pirate song "Fifteen men on the dead man's chest--Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!" *Classic/adventure*.
- Stroud, Jonathan. ***The Amulet of Samarkand***. Hyperion, 2003. This story is set in present-day London where Nathaniel, a young magician's apprentice, calls up the djinni Bartimaeus to steal the Amulet of Samarkand from another magician, and they both get caught up in a vast conspiracy of treason and murder. *Fantasy Series*.
- Sundquist, Josh. ***Love and First Sight***. Little, Brown, 2017. When Will decides to have surgery that can potentially restore his vision, he finds that those he cares about may be keeping secrets. *Romance*.
- Thomas, Sherry. ***The Magnolia Sword: A Ballad of Mulan***. Tu Books, 2019. This new telling of the Mulan story will captivate readers with scenes of sword duels and martial arts. Mulan, a young girl disguised as a boy, joins forces with a warrior team to search out a traitorous plot and prevent invading armies from overthrowing the Chinese royal empire. *Folklore/adventure*.
- Thompson, Holly. ***Orchards***. Ember, 2011. Sent to Japan for the summer after an eighth-grade classmate's suicide, half-Japanese, half-Jewish Kana Goldberg tries to fit in with relatives she barely knows and reflects on the guilt she feels over the tragedy back home. *Novel in verse. Realistic fiction*.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. ***The Hobbit, or, There and Back Again***. First published 1937. Bilbo Baggins, a respectable, well-to-do hobbit, lives comfortably in his hobbit-hole until the day the wandering wizard Gandalf chooses him to take part in an adventure from which he may never return. *Classic fantasy. Series*.
- Vail, Rachel. ***Well, That Was Awkward***. Viking, 2017. Gracie has forgotten how to breathe, move, or do anything when confronted with A. J. who is suddenly so good looking! Then to top things off her best friend Sienna wants Gracie to compose texts to send to A. J. as if it was from her... but the replies are weirdly unlike A. J. *Romance*.
- Warga, Jasmine. ***Other Words for Home***. Balzar + Bray, 2019. Jude and her mother flee Syria as violence erupts in neighboring towns. As Jude tries to navigate a new home, school, and friendships, she discovers an inner courage as she becomes her own person. *Novel in verse. Contemporary historical fiction. Newbery Honor, 2020*.
- Watson, Renée. ***Piecing Me Together***. Bloomsbury, 2017. Tired of being singled out at her mostly white private school as someone who needs support, high school junior Jade would rather participate in the school's amazing Study Abroad program than join Women to Women, a mentorship program for at-risk girls. *Realistic fiction. Coretta Scott King Award 2018*.

HASL N RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2023
Grades 7 and 8

- Wein, Elizabeth. ***The Enigma Game***. Little, Brown, 2020. A small community in Scotland rallies in World War II when a young girl, Louisa, finds an Enigma machine. The descriptions of the air battles between German Messerschmitt planes and the ill-equipped English bombers will keep readers on the edge of their seats. *Historical fiction/adventure*.
- Wilson, Kip. ***White Rose***. Versify, 2019. Based on true events, this novel in verse tells the compelling story of Sophie Scholl, an activist in World War II Nazi Germany who refused to be a bystander and instead risked everything to stand up against injustice. *Novel in verse. Historical fiction*.
- Wolk, Lauren. ***Wolf Hollow: A Novel***. Dutton, 2016. Twelve-year-old Annabelle must learn to stand up for what is right in the face of a manipulative and violent new bully who targets people Annabelle cares about, including a homeless World War I veteran. *Historical fiction*.
- Wolkenstein, M. Evan. ***Turtle Boy***. Delacorte, 2020. Seventh-grader Will's Bar Mitzvah community service project, visiting an incurably ill older boy in the hospital, leads to a friendship that is life-changing for both them and those around them. *Realistic fiction*.
- Yelchin, Eugene. ***Spy Runner***. Holt, 2019. Spy intrigue, FBI agents, Cold War paranoia, some blurry photos, and a sprinkling of wicked wit make this story a unique mystery. *Mystery*.
- Ziegler, Jennifer. ***Worser***. Holiday House, 2022. Worser's life is turned upside down after his mother has a stroke, but the awkward, word-loving twelve-year-old finds glimmers of hope when he discovers friends who share his love of wordplay and books. *Realistic fiction*.

HASLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2023
Grades 7 and 8

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