

HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2025
Grade 7 and Grade 8

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

Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.

- Alkaf, Hanna. ***Queen of the Tiles***. Salaam Reads, 2022. A year after her best friend died at a Scrabble tournament, a flurry of social media posts from the dead girl's account prompts 15-year-old Najwa Bakri to investigate what happened to the "Queen of the Tiles." *Mystery, suspense*
- Allen, Crystal. ***Between Two Brothers***. Balzer + Bray, 2024. Isaiah is a 13-year-old whose strong bond with his brother, Seth, is tested when his brother (a promising athlete with a Texas A&M scholarship) is involved in a car wreck. Isaiah, his family, and the community provide hope in this heartfelt novel. *Realistic fiction*
- 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, Laurie Halse. ***Rebellion 1776***. Atheneum, 2025. Elsbeth Culpepper, a thirteen-year-old girl, works as a servant for a rambunctious family during Boston's fight for independence from the British. Abandoned by her father, she shows spirit and humor as she navigates the rising rebellion and a smallpox epidemic. *Historical 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 and unknowing assassin and is hosted by a goblin archivist, who is anxious for cultural exchanges. *Fantasy*
- Asimov, Isaac. ***The Stars, Like Dust***. First published in 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*
- Avery, Annaliese. ***The Immortal Games***. Scholastic, 2024. Consumed with anger and vowing revenge after her sister's death, Ara trains for and then is chosen to participate in the Immortal Games (a competition between the gods); she and eleven others battle to survive a series of deadly challenges. *Fantasy*
- 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 multithreaded 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*
- Bishop, Jenn. ***Free Throws, Friendship, and Other Things We Fouled Up***. Chronicle Books, 2023. Basketball player Rory has just moved to Cincinnati with her father, a Division 1 coach, when she hits it off with the rival college team's daughter, Abby. Still, their friendship is threatened when they realize their dads' rivalry goes deeper than on the court. *Sports fiction*
- 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. *Nonfiction*

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- Brashares, Ann and Ben Brashares. **Westfallen**. Simon & Schuster, 2024. In this dual-timeline novel, three kids in 1944 America connect (via radio) with three modern-day kids and inadvertently changed history, resulting in an America under Nazi control. *Science fiction, Series*
- Bruchac, Joseph. **Voices of the People**. Reycraft Books, 2022. This collection of poems dramatizes the lives of men and women who contributed to Native American and Indigenous Peoples' histories and contemporary Native American artworks provide fascinating connections to the poems. *Poetry, Historical fiction*
- Choldenko, Gennifer. **The Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman**. Alfred A. Knopf, 2024. With no one else to turn to after being left alone by his mother in their apartment for a week with his three-year-old sister Boo, middle-schooler Hank has no alternative but to ask an almost stranger for help. *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 in a desert without 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*
- 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*
- Gonzalez, Christina Diaz. **Concealed**. Scholastic, 2021. In this mystery thriller, Katrina and her family have been on the run for years. Still, with the help of a computer whiz named Parker, Katrina searches out the truth about her identity and the danger that has ensnared her family. *Mystery, science fiction*
- 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*
- Hardinge, Frances. **The Unraveller**. Amulet Books, 2023. Suspenseful with a dash of horror, this story features a youth who has the power to "unravel" curses; when he links up with a girl who was once cursed, they try to foil a devious organization's plot to gain power by controlling curses. *Dark fantasy*
- Henry, April. **Girl Forgotten**. Little, Brown, 2023. When seventeen-year-old Piper Gray starts a true crime podcast investigating a seventeen-year-old murder case, she puts her life in danger as she digs deep into the mysteries of the past. *Mystery, suspense*

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- Higuera, Donna Barba. *The Last Cuentista*. Levine Querido, 2021. When the destruction of Earth by 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.*
- Hirsch, Rebecca E. *Where Have All the Birds Gone? Nature in Crisis*. Twenty-First Century Books, 2022. The bird crisis is explained through stories of birds that became extinct as well as environmental hazards that endanger birds. *Nonfiction*
- 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*
- 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*
- 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 a conditioning and eyeglasses, evolved; these stories provide an appreciation of how ideas build upon each other. *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*
- 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*
- Korman, Gordon. *Slugfest*. Balzer + Bray, 2024. Considering he is already playing on the high school’s JV football team, 8th grader Yash can hardly believe that he’s in summer school taking a PE class; soon, he bonds with other students over their slightly wacky former home-economics teacher turned coach as they compete in a city-wide flag football tournament. *Sports, humorous 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*

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- Larson, Hope. ***Salt Magic***. Margaret Ferguson Books, 2021. Twelve-year-old Vonceil Taggart, willing to risk everything to set things right, leaves her family's Oklahoma farm in 1919, seeking the salt witch who cast a spell that turned their spring to saltwater. *Fantasy, historical fiction, 2023 Maverick Award*
- Lim, Elizabeth. ***Six Crimson Cranes***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2021. The exiled Princess Shiori must unravel the curse that turned her six brothers into cranes, and she is assisted by her spurned betrothed a capricious dragon, and a paper bird brought to life by the power of her magic. *Fantasy, Series*
- Lin, Ann Sei. ***Rebel Skies***. Tundra Books, 2024. When the airship where Kurara lives is destroyed by a dangerous creature created by Crafters who can form and control paper, her life of servitude ends, but she also learns her best friend, Haru, is not who she thought he was. *Fantasy, Series*
- Marsh, Katherine. ***The Lost Year***. Roaring Brook, 2023. Struggling with loneliness during the pandemic shutdown, 13-year-old Matthew finds an old photo of his grandmother and starts to uncover family secrets about her experiences during the Holodomor (Ukrainian famine). *Historical fiction, National Book Award Finalist*
- Meadows, Jodi. ***Bye Forever, I Guess***. Holiday House, 2024. When shy 8th grader Ingrid, who loves video games, fantasy books and her popular, anonymous social media account, stands up to a mean “frenemy,” she inadvertently starts drama at school. *Realistic fiction, romance*
- Mejia, Tehlor Kay. ***It Happened to Anna***. Delacorte, 2024. For as long as she can remember, Sadie has been haunted by a sinister ghost, so when she finds a new friend and her ghost disappears, she hopes her life will finally improve. *Horror*
- 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*
- Monsef, Kiyash. ***Once There Was***. Simon and Schuster, 2023. When Marjan’s father, a veterinarian to magical creatures, dies, Marjan must take on his caseload and help preserve the world order. *Fantasy*
- Morrison, Laurie. ***Keeping Pace***. Abrams Books, 2024. Grace and Jonah have an intense rivalry in in school and on the running trail, but is always winning always worth it? *Realistic fiction*
- 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*
- Newman, Patricia. ***Giant Rays of Hope: Protecting Manta Rays to Safeguard the Sea***. Millbrook, 2024. The magnificence of Giant Manta Rays is explored by combining fascinating science with an environmental message, showing how a single individual inspired a movement that began with educating children and the community. *Nonfiction*.
- Nott, Dan. ***Hidden Systems: Water, Electricity, the Internet, and the Secrets Behind Systems We Use Every Day***. Random House Graphic, 2023. Discover the history, development, and engineering challenges posed by society’s most essential infrastructures. *Nonfiction, graphic novel*

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- Oh, Axie. *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*. Feiwel & Friends, 2022. In this retelling of a Korean folktale, Mina is swept away to the spirit realm to awaken the sleeping sea god and save her family and homeland from deadly storms. *Fantasy*
- 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*
- Ponti, James. *The Sherlock Society*. Aladdin, 2024. Twelve-year-old Alex Sherlock and his friends spend their summer in Miami investigating the many "cold cases" their grandfather accumulated during his years as a reporter--first up, Al Capone and a buried treasure. *Mystery, Series*
- 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 an 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*
- Rundell, Katherine. *Impossible Creatures*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2024. When the creatures of the Archipelago, a haven for magical beings, start dying, Christopher and Mal must race to save both the magical creatures and their entire world. *Fantasy*
- 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, 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. *Shipwrecked! Diving for Hidden Time Capsules on the Ocean Floor*. Astra Young Readers, 2023. Three million shipwrecks lie beneath the waves, holding time capsules to human history. Explore seven wrecks and the people, technology, and marine archeology that goes into finding and recovering them. *Nonfiction*

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- Schmidt, Gary D. ***The Labors of Hercules Beal***. Clarion Books, 2023. When Hercules Beal's teacher assigns him a project to explore the Twelve Labors of the mythological Hercules in real life, the seventh grader ends up learning a lot about himself and his community. *Realistic fiction*
- 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 the ruinous manor, Gallant, she seizes the chance to find out about her family. *Dark fantasy*
- Sepetys, Ruta. ***The Bletchley Riddle***. Viking, 2024. Siblings Jakob and Lizzie find themselves at Bletchley Park, the home of WWII codebreakers working to decrypt the Nazi's Enigma cipher, where the two struggle to unravel a mystery surrounding their mother's disappearance against the backdrop of the Battle of Britain and Hitler's feared invasion. *Historical fiction*
- 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 historical 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. ***Undeclared: 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*
- 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*
- 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 sword duels and martial arts scenes. 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*
- 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*

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- 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 inner courage as she becomes her own person. *Novel in verse, contemporary, historical fiction, Newbery Honor 2020*
- 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*. Verify, 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*
- 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*
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *Remember Us*. Nancy Paulsen, 2023. The Bushwick neighborhood is known as "The Matchbox," because arsonists set fire to buildings. Sage is fighting her own "fires" – wanting to excel in basketball and torn between leaving neighborhood friends with the prospect of a fresh start by moving to a safer neighborhood. *Realistic fiction*
- Yang, Gene Luen. *Lunar New Year Love Story*. First Second, 2024. Like everyone else in her family, Val is unlucky in love and is convinced she is cursed until a chance encounter with a pair of lion dancers makes her reconsider her stance on love. *Graphic novel, romance*
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