Desert Island Books

DON'T BE STRANDED WITHOUT ONE

2015-16 TOP 40 EDITION

MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER READING FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADES 5, 6, and 7
MS. GOLDBERG, MIDDLE SCHOOL LIBRARIAN
LAND HO: NEW FAVORITES SPOTTED!

**The Thing About Jellyfish**
Ali Benjamin

Everyone says that it was an accident... that sometimes things "just happen". But Suzy won't believe it. Ever. After her best friend dies in a drowning accident, Suzy is convinced that the true cause of the tragedy was a rare jellyfish sting. Retreating into a silent world of imagination, she crafts a plan to prove her theory--even if it means traveling the globe, alone. Suzy's achingly heartfelt journey explores life, death, the astonishing wonder of the universe... From the Publisher

**Booked**
Kwame Alexander

In this follow-up to the Newbery-winning novel THE CROSSOVER, soccer, family, love, and friendship, take center stage as twelve-year-old Nick learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams. Helping him along are his best friend and sometimes teammate Coby, and The Mac, a rapping librarian who gives Nick inspiring books to read. This electric and heartfelt novel-in-verse by poet Kwame Alexander bends and breaks as it captures all the thrills and setbacks, action and emotion of a World Cup match. From the Publisher

**Echo**
Pam Muñoz Ryan

Music, magic, and a real-life miracle meld in this [masterpiece from] Pam Munoz Ryan. Lost and alone in a forbidden forest, Otto meets three mysterious sisters and suddenly finds himself entwined in a puzzling quest involving a prophecy, a promise, and a harmonica. Decades later, Friedrich in Germany, Mike in Pennsylvania, and Ivy in California each, in turn, become interwoven when the very same harmonica lands in their lives. All the children face daunting challenges: rescuing a father, protecting a brother, holding a family together. And ultimately, pulled by the invisible thread of destiny, their suspenseful solo stories converge in an orchestral crescendo. From the Publisher

**Fuzzy Mud**
Louis Sachar

Fifth grader Tamaya Dhillwaddi and seventh grader Marshall Walsh have been walking to and from Woodridge Academy together since elementary school. But their routine is disrupted when bully Chad Hilligas challenges Marshall to a fight. To avoid the conflict, Marshall takes a shortcut home through the off-limits woods…And then they find trouble. Bigger trouble than anyone could ever have imagined. In the days and weeks that follow, the authorities and the U.S. Senate become involved, and what they uncover might affect the future of the world. From the Publisher

**The Truth About Twinkie Pie**
Kat Yeh

Take two sisters making it on their own: brainy twelve-year-old GiGi (short for Galileo Galilei, a name she never says out loud) and junior-high-dropout-turned-hairstylist DiDi (short for Delta Dawn). Add a million dollars in prize money from a national cooking contest and a move from the trailer parks of South Carolina to the Gold Coast of New York. Mix in a fancy new school, new friends and enemies, a first crush, and a generous sprinkling of family secrets.

That's the recipe for The Truth About Twinkie Pie, a voice-driven middle grade debut about the true meaning of family and friendship. From the Publisher

**Goodbye Stranger**
Rebecca Stead

This brilliant novel by Newbery Medal winner Rebecca Stead explores multiple perspectives on the bonds and limits of friendship. Bridge is an accident survivor who's wondering why she's still alive. Emily has new curves and an almost-boyfriend who wants a certain kind of picture. Tabitha sees through everybody's games--or so she tells the world. The three girls are best friends with one rule: No fighting. Can it get them through seventh grade? From the Publisher
The War That Saved My Life
Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
Nine-year-old Ada has never left her one-room apartment. Her mother is too humiliated by Ada’s twisted foot to let her outside. So when her little brother Jamie is shipped out of London to escape the war, Ada doesn’t waste a minute -- she sneaks out to join him.  

Stella by Starlight
Sharon M. Draper
Bravery battles prejudice in this Depression-era tour de force from Sharon Draper…bestselling author of Out of My Mind.

Wolf Hollow
Lauren Wolk
Growing up in the shadows cast by two world wars, Annabelle has lived a mostly quiet, steady life in her small Pennsylvania town. Until the day new student Betty Glengarry walks into her class. Betty quickly reveals herself to be cruel and manipulative, and while her bullying seems isolated at first, things quickly escalate, and reclusive World War I veteran Toby becomes a target of her attacks. While others have always seen Toby’s strangeness, Annabelle knows only kindness. She will soon need to find the courage to stand as a lone voice of justice as tensions mount [after Betty’s disappearance!]

A Night Divided
Jennifer A. Nielsen
With the rise of the Berlin Wall, twelve-year-old Gerta finds her family suddenly divided. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home...

But one day, while on her way to school, Gerta spots her father on a viewing platform on the western side, pantomiming a peculiar dance. Then, when she receives a mysterious drawing, Gerta puts two and two together and concludes that her father wants Gerta and Fritz to tunnel beneath the wall, out of East Berlin. However, if they are caught, the consequences will be deadly.

The Rock and the River
Kekla Magoon
In 1968 Chicago, it’s not easy for thirteen-year-old Sam to be the son of known civil rights activist Roland Childs. Especially when his older brother, Stick, starts keeping to himself. Then, one day, Sam finds something under Stick’s bed that changes everything: literature about the Black Panthers. Suddenly, nothing feels certain anymore. And when Dr. King is shot and killed, Sam’s father’s words are no longer enough to make him believe in change…This moving, coming-of-age story gracefully encompasses the scope of the struggle between the civil rights and black power movements through an intimate and relatable lens.

Full Cicada Moon
Marilyn Hilton
It’s 1969, and the Apollo 11 mission is getting ready to go to the moon. But for half-black, half-Japanese Mimi, moving to a predominantly white Vermont town is enough to make her feel alien. Suddenly, Mimi’s appearance is all anyone notices. She struggles to fit in with her classmates, even as she fights for her right to stand out by entering science competitions and joining Shop Class instead of Home Ec. And even though teachers and neighbors balk at her mixed-race family and her refusals to conform, Mimi’s dreams of becoming an astronaut never fade--no matter how many times she’s told no.
**The Odds of Getting Even (A Mo & Dale Mystery #3)**
*Sheila Turnage*

The trial of the century has come to Tupelo Landing, North Carolina. Mo and Dale, aka Desperado Detectives, head to court as star witnesses against Dale's daddy--confessed kidnapper Macon Johnson. In no time flat, Macon's on the run, Tupelo Landing's in lockdown, and Dale's brother's life hangs in the balance. *From the Publisher*

**Counting Thyme**
*Melanie Conklin*

Thyme loves her brother, and knows that [a new cancer treatment in New York City] could save his life—but she still wants to go home [to beautiful San Diego]. She finds herself even more mixed up when her heart feels the tug of new friends, a first crush, and even a crotchety neighbor. All Thyme can do is count the minutes…and hope time can bring both a miracle for Val and a way back home. *From the Publisher*

**Maybe a Fox**
*Kathi Appelt & Alison McGhee*

A fantastical, heartbreaking, and gorgeous tale about two sisters, a fox cub, and what happens when one of the sisters disappears forever.

Sylvie and Jules, Jules and Sylvie. Better than just sisters, better than best friends, they'd be identical twins if only they'd been born in the same year. And if only Sylvie wasn't such a fast—faster than fast—runner. But Sylvie is too fast, and when she runs to the river they're not supposed to go anywhere near to throw a wish rock just before the school bus comes on a snowy morning, she runs so fast that no one sees what happens…and no one ever sees her again. *From the Publisher*

**Raymie Nightingale**
*Kate DiCamillo*

If Raymie can win the Little Miss Central Florida Tire competition, then her father, who left town two days ago with a dental hygienist, will see Raymie's picture in the paper and (maybe) come home. But as the competition approaches, loneliness, loss, and unanswerable questions draw Raymie [and two of her competitors] into an unlikely friendship. *From the Publisher*

**The Marvels**
*Brian Selznick*

The journey begins at sea in 1766, with a boy named Billy Marvel. After surviving a shipwreck, he finds work in a London theatre. There, his family flourishes for generations as brilliant actors until 1900, when young Leontes Marvel is banished from the stage.

Nearly a century later [in 1990], runaway Joseph Jervis seeks refuge with an uncle in London. Albert Nightingale's strange, beautiful house, with its mysterious portraits and ghostly presences, leads him on a search for clues about the house…

…Two stand-alone stories--the first in nearly 400 pages of continuous pictures, the second in prose--create a beguiling narrative puzzle. *From the Publisher*
The BFG
Roald Dahl
Roald Dahl’s beloved novel hits the big screen in a major motion picture adaptation from Steven Spielberg!

The BFG is no ordinary bone-crunching giant. He is far too nice and jumbly. It’s lucky for Sophie that he is. Had she been carried off in the middle of the night by the Bloodbottler, or any of the other giants—rather than the BFG—she would have soon become breakfast. When Sophie hears that the giants are flush-bunking off to England to swollomp a few nice little chiddlers, she decides she must stop them once and for all. And the BFG is going to help her!

From the Publisher

Pax
Sara Pennypacker
Pax and Peter have been inseparable ever since Peter rescued him as a kit. But one day, the unimaginable happens: Peter’s dad enlists in the military and makes him return the fox to the wild.

At his grandfather’s house, three hundred miles away from home, Peter knows he isn’t where he should be—with Pax. He strikes out on his own despite the encroaching war, spurred by love, loyalty, and grief, to be reunited with his fox. From the Publisher

The Key to Extraordinary
Natalie Lloyd
Everyone in Emma’s family is special. Her ancestors include Revolutionary War spies, brilliant scientists, and famous musicians—every single one of which learned of their extraordinary destiny through a dream.

For Emma, her own dream can’t come soon enough. Right before her mother died, Emma promised that she’d do whatever it took to fulfill her destiny, and she doesn’t want to let her mother down. From the Publisher

Wild Robot
Peter Brown
When robot Roz opens her eyes for the first time, she discovers that she is alone on a remote, wild island. She has no idea how she got there or what her purpose is—but she knows she needs to survive. After battling a fierce storm and escaping a vicious bear attack, she realizes that her only hope for survival is to adapt to her surroundings and learn from the island’s unwelcoming animal inhabitants.

As Roz slowly befriends the animals, the island starts to feel like home—until, one day, the robot’s mysterious past comes back to haunt her. From the Publisher

The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle
Janet Fox
When her mother sends Kat and her brother and sister away from London to escape the incessant bombing, Kat believes Lady Eleanor, who rules Rookskill Castle, is harboring a Nazi spy. But when her classmates begin to vanish, one by one, Kat must uncover the truth about what the castle actually harbors—and who Lady Eleanor really is—before it's too late. From the Publisher

Aloha Adventure! (Animals Optional)
Stuart Gibbs
When someone takes aim at Rhonda Rhino, FunJungle’s pregnant (and endangered) Asian greater one-horned rhinoceros, the zoo steps up security measures in order to protect this rare animal and her baby.

But the extra security isn’t enough—one is still getting too close for comfort…. The zoo enlists Teddy for help—for once, he doesn’t have to sneak around in order to investigate—and the results are even more wacky, and even more dangerous, than ever before. From the Publisher
Getting to Know Yer Shipmates
(Because No Chapin Student is an Island)

George
Alex Gino
More than anything else, George wants to play Charlotte in her fourth-grade class's production of Charlotte's Web. The problem is, her teacher won't let her, because George is a boy. But George isn't about to let that squash her dream. With the help of her best friend, George must learn to stand up for her wish—and brave a few bullies along the way. From the Publisher

It Ain't So Awful Falafel
Firoozeh Dumas
Zomorod (Cindy) Yousefzadeh is the new kid on the block... for the fourth time. California's Newport Beach is her family's latest perch, and she's determined to shock her brainy loner persona and start afresh with a new Brady Bunch name—Cindy. It's the late 1970s, and fitting in becomes more difficult as Iran makes U.S. headlines with...the taking of American hostages. Even mood rings and puka shell necklaces can't distract Cindy from the anti-Iran sentiments that creep way too close to home. A poignant yet lighthearted middle grade debut from the author of Funny in Farsi. From the Publisher

President of the Whole 6th Grade
Sherri Winston
Brianna Justice is determined to raise enough money for the big class trip to Washington, D.C., but she's up against a lot: classmates who all pretend to be something they're not, a new nemesis determined to run her out of office, and the sinking feeling she's about to lose her two best friends. From the Publisher

My Basmati Bat Mitzvah
Paula J. Freedman
During the fall leading up to her bat mitzvah, Tara (Hindi for "star") Feinstein has a lot more than her Torah portion on her mind. Between Hebrew school and study sessions with the rabbi, there doesn't seem to be enough time to hang out with her best friend Ben-O—who might also be her boyfriend—and her other best friend, Rebecca, who's getting a little too cozy with the snotty Sheila Rosenberg. Not to mention working on her robotics project with the class clown Ryan Berger, or figuring out what to do with a priceless heirloom sari that she accidentally ruined. Amid all this drama, Tara considers how to balance her Indian and Jewish identities and what it means to have a bat mitzvah while questioning her faith. From the Publisher

Lily and Dunkin
Donna Gephart
For readers who enjoyed Wonder and Counting by 7's, award-winning author Donna Gephart crafts a compelling dual narrative about two remarkable young people: Lily, a transgender girl, and Dunkin, a boy dealing with bipolar disorder. Their powerful story will shred your heart, then stitch it back together with kindness, humor, bravery, and love. From the Publisher

Cuba 15
Nancy Osa
Violet Paz has just turned fifteen, a pivotal birthday in the eyes of her Cuban grandmother. Fifteen is the age when a girl enters womanhood, traditionally celebrating the occasion with a quinceanero. But while Violet is half Cuban, she's also half Polish, and more importantly, she feels 100% American. Except for her zany family's passion for playing dominoes, smoking cigars, and dancing to Latin music, Violet knows little about Cuban culture, nada about quinces, and only tidbits about the history of Cuba. So when Violet begrudgingly accepts Abuela's plans for a quinceanero—and as she begins to ask questions about her Cuban roots—cultures and feelings collide. From the Publisher
You Got This!
Maya S. Penn
Everyone is talking about the entrepreneur, animator, eco-designer, and girls' rights activist Maya Penn. Her TEDWomen Talk has been viewed over 1,200,000 million times (and is one of the top 15 TEDWomen Talks of all time). Now this amazing teenager has written an inspirational handbook for teens and young adults to help them discover their passions and maximize their full potential for a creative, successful life. From the Publisher

Coding Games in Scratch (DK Publishers)
Did you know that Bill Gates, cofounder of Microsoft, wrote his first computer program--a tic-tac-toe game--at age 13? Coding Games in Scratch shows how kids can start coding their own games, too, using Scratch, a popular free programming language. Written for children ages 8-12 with little to no coding experience, Coding Games in Scratch teaches important strategies for solving problems, designing projects, and communicating ideas, all while creating games to play with their friends. From the Publisher

Cloth Lullaby
Amy Novesky (Isabelle Arsenault, Illus.)
Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010) was a world-renowned modern artist noted for her sculptures made of wood, steel, stone, and cast rubber. Her most famous spider sculpture, Maman, stands more than 30 feet high. Before she became an artist, Louise Bourgeois was an apprentice in her family's tapestry shop, where her mother was a weaver of tapestries. Discover how Louise learned about form and color, and how memories of her mother and her past are stitched into all of Louise's works. From the Publisher

A Girl Called Vincent: The Life of Poet Edna St. Vincent Millay
Krystyna Poray Goddu
Raised in poverty in rural Maine, where she was often the sole caretaker of her two younger sisters, the rebellious, creative, red-haired Vincent always found time for writing, acting, singing, and playing piano. She became a sensation in young adulthood, bewitching audiences with her words, voice, and luminous appearance. She mixed with the literary figures of her time and broke many hearts. Her volumes of poetry were enormous bestsellers and audiences nationwide went wild when she recited her works onstage. A Girl Called Vincent is an eye-opening and valuable addition to any young reader's or aspiring writer's bookshelf. From the Publisher

I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives
Caitlin Alifirenka & Martin Ganda (with Liz Welch)
The true story of an all-American girl and a boy from Zimbabwe and the letter that changed both of their lives forever.

It started as an assignment. Everyone in Caitlin's class wrote to an unknown student somewhere in a distant place. Martin was lucky to even receive a pen-pal letter. There were only ten letters, and fifty kids in his class. But he was the top student, so he got the first one. That letter was the beginning of a correspondence that spanned six years and changed two lives. From the Publisher

Rise of the Rocket Girls, the Women Who Propelled Us, from Missiles to the Moon to Mars
Nathalia Holt
For the first time, Rise of the Rocket Girls tells the stories of [the] women--known as "human computers"--who broke the boundaries of both gender and science. Based on extensive research and interviews with all the living members of the team, Rise of the Rocket Girls offers a unique perspective on the role of women in science: both where we've been, and the far reaches of space to which we're heading. From the Publisher
A Mango-Shaped Space
Wendy Mass
Mia Winchell has synesthesia, the mingling of perceptions whereby a person can see sounds, smell colors, or taste shapes. Forced to reveal her condition, she must look to herself to develop an understanding and appreciation of her gift in this coming-of-age novel. From the Publisher

The Wishing Spell (Land of Stories #1)
Chris Colfer
Alex and Conner Bailey's world is about to change, in this fast-paced adventure that uniquely combines our modern day world with the enchanting realm of classic fairy tales.

The Land of Stories tells the tale of twins Alex and Conner. Through the mysterious powers of a cherished book of stories, they leave their world behind and find themselves in a foreign land full of wonder and magic where they come face-to-face with the fairy tale characters they grew up reading about. From the Publisher

Breathing Room
Marsha Hayles
Evvy Hoffmeister is thirteen years old when her family brings her to Loon Lake Sanatorium to get cured of tuberculosis (TB). Evvy is frightened by her new surroundings; the rules to abide are harsh and the nurses equally rigid. But Evvy soon falls into step with the other girls in her ward. There's Sarah, quiet but thoughtful; Pearl, who adores Hollywood glamour; and Dina, whose harshness conceals a deep strength. Together, the girls brave the difficult daily routines. Set in 1940 at a time of political unrest throughout the U.S. and Europe, this thought-provoking novel sheds light on a much-feared worldwide illness. Hundreds of thousands of people died each year of TB, and many ill children were sent away to sanatoriums to hopefully recover. From the Publisher

Fish in a Tree
Lynda Mullaly Hunt
Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the trouble maker. From the Publisher

Paper Cowboy
Kristin Levine
Though he thinks of himself as a cowboy, Tommy is really a bully. He's always playing cruel jokes on classmates or stealing from the store. But Tommy has a reason: life at home is tough. His abusive mother isn't well; in fact, she may be mentally ill, and his sister, Mary Lou, is in the hospital badly burned from doing a chore it was really Tommy's turn to do. To make amends, Tommy takes over Mary Lou's paper route. But the paper route also becomes the perfect way for Tommy to investigate his neighbor [and] frame a storeowner, Mr. McKenzie. As Mr. McKenzie's business slowly falls apart and Mary Lou doesn't seem to get any better, Tommy's mother's abuse gets worse causing Tommy's bullying to spiral out of control. From the Publisher

And just in case you've had your head in the sand, consider one of these popular books/authors:
Lauren Tarshis * Shannon Hale * Ingrid Law * Wendy Mass * James Patterson
The Apothecary Series * The Mysterious Benedict Society * The Ruby Red Trilogy
Mr. Lemoncello’s Library * The Ascendance Trilogy (False Prince)