

Dear Students and Parents,

The Fulton County School System strongly believes in developing readers who read both for information and for pleasure. Books on the ***Summer Reading List*** vary in subject matter and level of difficulty. Our intent is to provide students and their parents with a wide range of authors and styles of writing in both fiction and non-fiction, and to allow students to select reading materials that match their interests.

Lexile levels are indicated for most books, and they address vocabulary and sentence structure. When vocabulary is repeated often and sentences are more simply written, a text has a lower Lexile score. Texts with less frequently-used vocabulary and with complex sentence structures have higher Lexile scores.

However, Lexile levels do not address subject matter. While a text may have a lower Lexile number, the contents could be more mature. The short descriptions with each book title should assist you in your selections.

Enjoy your summer reading.

Fulton County Schools English/Language Arts Department
Fulton County Schools Media Services Department

2009 Summer Reading List for High School Fulton County

Abel, Jessica, *Life Sucks*. (Graphic Novel , Humor)

Life as the undead sucks. At least according to Dave, who is stuck in a dead-end job as the night manager of the Last Stop convenience store that his vampire master owns. Dave, a former vegetarian, only drinks blood from the blood bank and in Blood Brew, the vampire's version of beer. Then he meets Rosa, a Goth Mexican girl whom he adores from afar. When his vampire brother, Wes, decides that he wants her as his vampire bride, Dave decides to make his move to stop him. Lexile: NA.

Anderson, M.T., *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing: Traitor to the Nation (Volumes I and II)*. (Young Adult)

The story of the events leading up to the American Revolution and the Revolution through the eyes of young Octavian Butler - a child born a rightful prince of an African nation who is being raised with the best rational classical education by a group of Enlightenment-inspired scientists, philosophers, and artists. As Octavian grows up, he learns that he is actually a slave, who was "purchased" by the lead philosopher to conduct an experiment to see if there is inherent equality or inferiority among races. As the events leading to the American Revolution swirl around him and impact the people and life he knows, Octavian must question his place in the world and what the "freedom" the revolutionary philosophers and politicians talk of means for him and other slaves. Winner of the National Book Award, Michael Pritz Honor Award, and was noted as one of the New York Times Book Review's best books of 2008.

Lexile: 1090 and 1060.

Asher, Jay, *Thirteen Reasons Why*. (Young Adult)

When Clay Jensen plays the cassette tapes he received in a mysterious package, he's surprised to hear the voice of dead classmate Hannah Baker. He's one of 13 people who receive Hannah's story, which details the circumstances that led to her suicide. Lexile: 550.

Bernier-Grand, Carman, *Frida: Viva la Vida! Long Live Life!*. (Non-Fiction)

In twenty-six original, free-verse poems the author depicts the thoughts, feelings, and life events of Mexican self-portraitist Frida Kahlo. The poems are accompanied by twenty-four full-color reproductions of Kahlo's paintings. Substantial background materials include a biographical sketch, chronology, and glossary. Lexile: NA.

Brashares, Ann, *3 Willows*. (Young Adult)

The sisterhood continues with three younger girls. Childhood friends, Polly, Jo, and Ama grow in unexpected ways over the summer before 9th grade. Lexile: 700.

Butler, Octavia E., *Kindred*. (Fantasy / Science Fiction)

When Dana, a young African-American woman, is transported back in time to slavery, her 'white' husband is the only one in this century that is witnessing her abuse from the overseers. But will the police believe that when they have to explain her missing limb? Besides, she has to go back to ensure the safety of young white Rufus on the plantation -- since he is an important ancestor of hers. Lexile: NA.

Carter, Ally, *I'd Tell You I Love You, But Then I'd Gave to Kill You*. (Young Adult)

The Gallagher Academy is an all girls school for young women where they teach advanced martial arts, chemical warfare and you get extra credit for breaking CIA codes in computer class. Sophomore Cammie Morgan, a second generation Gallagher Girl, who can speak fourteen languages and is capable of killing a man seven different ways hasn't been prepared in the most important lesson of her young life, the art of falling in love. Can a girl who can tap a boys phone, hack into his computer and track him wherever he goes, have a relationship with a regular boy? Cammie is falling in love. This could be her most dangerous mission. Will she be successful or destroy herself and her boyfriend in the process? Lexile: 1000.

Cashore, Kristin, *Graceling*. (Young Adult)

Katsa has been able to kill a man with her bare hands since she was eight--she's a Graceling, one of the rare people in her land born with an extreme skill. When she first meets Prince Po, graced with combat skills, Katsa has no hint of how her life is about to change. Lexile: 730.

Childs, Tera Lynn, *Oh.My.Gods*. (Fantasy)

When Phoebe's mom returns from Greece with a new husband and moves them to an island in the Aegean, Phoebe's plans for her senior year and track season are ancient history. And her new teammates just happen to be the teen descendants of Greek Gods. They're super smart and super beautiful with a few superpowers. Armed with only her Nikes and the will to win, Phoebe races to find her place among the gods. Lexile: 750.

Clare, Cassandra, *City of Bones*. (Young Adult)

When fifteen-year-old Clary Fray heads out to the Pandemonium Club in New York City, she hardly expects to witness a murder -- much less a murder committed by three teenagers covered with strange tattoos and brandishing bizarre weapons. Clary knows she should call the police, but it's hard to explain a murder when the body disappears into thin air and the murderers are invisible to everyone but her. Lexile: 740.

Coelho, Paulo, *The Alchemist*. (Young Adult)

The novel tells the tale of Santiago, a boy who has a dream and the courage to follow it. After listening to "the signs" the boy ventures in his personal, Ulysses-like journey of exploration and self-discovery, symbolically searching for a hidden treasure located near the pyramids in Egypt. Lexile: 910.

Cohen, Brad, *FRONT OF THE CLASS*. (Biography)

The story of a young man's struggle with Tourette Syndrome. His achievement to become a great elementary school teacher. This young man is a local school teacher. This is most fascinating to read about his struggles and attainment of his goal!
Lexile: NA.

Collins, Suzanne, *The Hunger Games*. (Science Fiction)

Kat is a 16-year-old girl living in the poorest district of Panem, the remains of what used be the United States. As part of the surrender terms of a war long ago, each district agreed to send one boy and one girl to appear in an annual televised event called, "The Hunger Games." The terrain, rules, and level of audience participation may change but one thing is constant: kill or be killed. Lexile: 810.

D'Orso, Michael, *Eagle Blue: A Team, a Tribe, and a High School Basketball Season in Arctic Alaska*. (Non Fiction)

This true story explores the tiny village of Fort Yukon, Alaska, its vanishing cultural heritage, and its relationship with mainstream American culture through its high school basketball team. Lexile: NA.

Datcher, Michael, *Raising Fences: A Black Man's Love Story*. (Young Adult)

Coming-of-age memoir of an African-American college student who is reflecting on his fatherless experience and adaptation to college life. Also retells how he survives being a smart student who is sent to schools outside his Crenshaw, ghetto-neighborhood to upscale white schools. His poetry throughout the story aids in the excitement of his retelling. Lexile: NA

de la Pena, Matt, *Mexican Whiteboy*. (Young Adult)

Danny lives in two worlds but doesn't belong anywhere. The kids at his private school never let him forget that he is half Mexican. His cousins are uneasy around him because he is too white; he doesn't speak Spanish or fit into their San Diego barrio culture. The one place Danny feels accepted is on the baseball field, where his ninety-five-mile-per-hour fastball gets everyone's attention. But Danny only wants the attention of one person: his father. Danny imagines becoming a star pitcher and making his father proud enough to return from Mexico. Despite his natural talent, Danny pitches wildly every time a big-league scout is watching, until he meets Uno, a tough street thug who offers unexpected friendship and teaches him to let his talent take control and release the hurt inside.
Lexile: 680.

Doctorow, Cory, *Little Brother*. (Suspense)

When seventeen year old Marcus is finally released by the Department of Homeland security after being wrongfully imprisoned, he discovers that his city has become a police state where every citizen is treated like a potential terrorist. He knows that no one will believe his story, which leaves him only one option: to take down the DHS himself.
Lexile: 900.

Draper, Sharon, *Copper Sun*. (Historical Fiction)

Fifteen year old Amari's tranquil life in a small African village is completely and cruelly changed when the village elders welcome neighboring tribesmen and white strangers to a festive celebration. Lexile: 820.

Due, Tananarive, *My Soul to Keep*. (Mystery / Suspence)

Powerful, horror-love story that will take you to the far-corners of the world, the comforts of your living room and into the blood, I mean, hearts of Jessica and Dawit. Lexile: NA.

Dunn, Mark, *Ella Minnow Pea*. (Young Adult)

On the fictional island of Nollop (named after Nelvin Nollop the creator of the panagram "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog."), The residents are forced to eliminate the use of letters in the alphabet as these letter tiles begin to fall off of the statue of their namesake. Ella Minnow Pea and her family, along with the rest of the island's residents, are forced to live with a limited vocabulary, no books or newspapers, and public punishments or expulsion for infractions of the council's rulings. The only hope is to create a new panagram (a sentence that uses all the letters of the alphabet) before all the letters fall off and there is no language left. Lexile: NA.

Frankl, Viktor E., *Man's Search For Meaning*. (Non-fiction)

Dr Frankl was a Jewish psychiatrist held in Nazi concentration camps for 3 years. His experiences showed the remarkable resilience of many to find meaning and purpose in the most difficult circumstances through work, love of others, or even through suffering. Lexile: NA.

Gaiman, Neil, *Stardust*. (Fantasy)

Half-blood Tristran grew up on the human side of the town, wall between England and Faerie. One day, while trying to convince the girl he "loves" to marry him he promises to get her the fallen star they see while out one night. Unfortunately, it fell far on the other side of the wall in faerie. The main character Tristran sets off through Faerie to try to find the star. But he's got some competition, as a witch-queen and her sisters want to catch the fallen star and use it to renew their youth. And, at the same time, three murderous princes set out to find the jewel that will give one of them the power to ascend their dead father's throne. Lexile: 970.

Godbersen, Anna, *The Luxe*. (Historical Fiction)

The Holland sisters are old money in 1890s New York. But since their father died, their financial circumstances have run into problems. Beautiful and prim Elizabeth agrees to marry Henry Schoonmaker to save her family, although she loves someone else. Her fake best friend and nouveau riche Penelope Hayes vows revenge because she wanted Henry for herself, and her bohemian sister Diana despairs because she realizes that Henry loves her and she loves him in return. Lexile: 990.

Griffin, Paul, *Ten Mile River*. (Young Adult)

It's about two friends who have survived jail, detention, probation, homelessness – and still care for and support each other, living in an abandoned way station on Ten Mile

River in New York. The author clearly knows his material, and has done research about the homeless and the physical locale for the novel. The two teens have difficult decisions to be made, and sometimes the boys make appropriate decisions, but mostly they don't. They are very well-developed characters – the author has a keen insight to the teen psyche, especially between two teen males. Lexile: 590.

Grogan, John, *Marley and Me*. (Non Fiction)

Marley is such an endearing dog and John Grogan paints a great picture of his wonderful personality. The first part of the book makes up for the sad ending. If you have ever loved a dog, you will enjoy reading this book Lexile: 1050.

Harazin, S. A., *Blood Brothers*. (Young Adult)

Clay's best friend Joey's golden future shatters one day when he overdoses at a party. Now he's clinging to life at the hospital where Clay works, and Clay may even be implicated in Joey's injuries. Clay will do whatever he can to find out what happened at the party, and to help Joey recover. But to survive this ordeal Clay must draw on a strength he never knew he had. Lexile: 630.

Heinlein, Robert A., *Rocket Ship Galileo*. (Fantasy)

A group of boys, encouraged by one's uncle, build an atomic-powered ship, travel to the moon and thwart a Nazi plan to dominate the Earth. They incidentally discover the remnants of an ancient civilization on the moon. Lexile: NA.

Juby, Susan, *Getting the Girl*. (Young Adult)

Meet Sherman Mack. Short, nerdy, amateur P.I. and prepared to do anything for Dini Trioli. Nobody knows who began it or when it became a tradition, but every girl at Harewood Tech fears being D-listed, a ritual that wipes her off the social map forever. When Sherman believes Dini is in danger of being D-listed, he launches a full-scale investigation to uncover who is responsible. Lexile: 680.

Klein, Lisa, *Ophelia: A Novel*. (Historical Fiction)

In this re-imagining of Shakespeare's Hamlet, it is Ophelia who takes center stage. A motherless girl, she grows up at Elsinore Castle to become the queen's most trusted lady-in-waiting. She catches the attention of Prince Hamlet, and their love blossoms in secret. But bloody deeds soon turn Denmark into a place of madness, and ultimately, Ophelia must choose between her love for Hamlet and her own life. Lexile: 860.

Kluger, Steve, *My Most Excellent Year: A Novel of Love, Mary Poppins and Fenway Park*. (Young Adult)

Meet T.C., who is valiantly attempting to get Alejandra to fall in love with him; Alejandra, who is playing hard to get and is busy trying to sashay out from under the responsibilities of being a diplomat's daughter; and T.C.'s brother Augie, who is gay and in love and everyone knows it but him. Lexile: 1030.

Kohl, Jana, *A Rare Breed of Love: The True Story of Baby and the Mission She Inspired to Help Dogs Everywhere.* (Non-Fiction)

The shocking cruelty of legal animal abuse is exposed through the story of Baby, a poodle who lost a leg after years of mistreatment at a puppy mill. Rescued by Jana Kohl, they now work together with celebrity friends and politicians (including Barack Obama and Alice Walker) to raise awareness about animal rights. Lexile: NA.

Kyle, Aryn, *The God of Animals.* (Young Adult)

When her older sister runs away to marry a rodeo cowboy, 12-year old, Alice Winston is left to bear the brunt of her family's troubles—a depressed, bedridden mother; a reticent, overworked father; and a rundown horse ranch in Desert Valley, Colorado. To make ends meet, the Winstons board the horses of rich neighbors, and as their lives become intertwined with the lives of their clients, Alice is drawn into an adult world of secrets and hard truths. She soon discovers that people—including herself—can be cruel, can lie and cheat, and every once in a while, can do something heartbreaking and selfless. Lexile: NA.

Landowne, Youme, *Pitch Black.* (Graphic Novel)

After meeting on a subway platform in New York City, Landowne and Horton share a conversation about art and life while riding uptown and downtown. Youme listens carefully as Anthony tells his story of living on the streets after being abandoned by his adoptive family. At first he stayed at a homeless shelter where he witnessed, "things no kid should ever see." He discovered a city below the city when one day the police chased him into a subway tunnel. In these dark passageways, Anthony built a makeshift home and found a canvas for his artwork. After showing Youme his life six stories below the city, the two artists begin a collaboration that ends in this beautiful, gritty biography. Both Youme and Anthony contributed text and art to the book—their black and gray watercolors are tender and raw, their words spare and poetic. Lexile: NA.

Lockhardt, E., *The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau Banks.* (Young Adult)

Named one of the best young adult novels of the year by the New York Times Book Review, this novel manages to take a typical high school drama and infuse it with wit and a surprisingly adept feminist critique. Invited into the "inner sanctum" of her prep-school clique by the attention of a senior boy, sophomore Frankie stumbles on a secret "old boy" society and decides to subvert and question the status quo. Lexile: 890.

Macaulay, David, *The Way We Work: Getting to Know the Amazing Human Body.* (Non-Fiction)

Divided into seven sections that connect related systems, the book covers cellular structure at the atomic scale, DNA, and metabolism; respiration and circulation; digestion and elimination; the nervous and endocrine systems; the immune system and fighting infections; the skeleton, musculature, and movement; and reproduction. Macaulay combines a detailed description with frequently whimsical, yet very informative, color diagrams to illustrate the body's functions. Lexile: NA.

Marchetta, Melina, *Jellicoe Road*. (Young Adult)

Haunted by the past, Taylor Markham reluctantly leads the students of the Jellicoe School in their secret territory wars against the Townies and the Cadets. Marchetta's lyrical writing evokes the Australian landscape in a suspenseful tale of raw emotion, romance, humor and tragedy. A 2009 Michael Printz Award winner. Lexile: 820.

Marr, Melissa, *Wicked Lovely*. (Fantasy)

Aislinn has always seen faeries. Powerful and dangerous, they walk hidden in mortal world. Aislinn fears their cruelty—especially if they learn of her Sight—and wishes she were as blind to their presence as other teens. Now faeries are stalking her. One of them, Keenan, who is equal parts terrifying and alluring, is trying to talk to her, asking questions Aislinn is afraid to answer. Lexile: 700.

McMann, Lisa, *Wake*. (Science Fiction)

For seventeen-year-old Janie, getting sucked into other people's dreams is getting old. She can't tell anybody about what she does -- they'd never believe her, or worse, they'd think she's a freak. So Janie lives on the fringe, cursed with an ability she doesn't want and can't control. Lexile: 530.

McNab, Andy, *Traitor*. (Suspense)

A young boy training to become a soldier finds out that his grandfather was a traitor. The grandfather is supposed to be dead but Danny finds out that he isn't. So Danny, wanting to clear his family's name wants to find his grandfather and turn him in as the traitor he is suppose to be. How can a seventeen year old find a trained spy? Lexile: NA.

McNamee, Graham, *Bone Chiller*. (Fantasy / Science Fiction)

Four high school students face off against a soul-stealing beast that has been making young people disappear from their small Ontario, Canada, town for centuries. Lexile: NA.

Moriarty, Laura, *The Rest of her Life*. (Young Adult)

Kara is a successful and popular high school senior with the typical somewhat strained relationship with her mother. In a moment of carelessness, Kara causes a fatal car accident that changes her future and the relationships within her family.

Kara and her family must somehow learn to deal the devastating consequences of her actions and find a way to reshape their futures within their family and the community. Reminiscent of a Jodi Piccoult novel--presents a complex moral dilemma, fully developed characters, and a well-paced plot. Lexile: NA.

Oppal, Kenneth, *Airborn*. (Fantasy)

Matt Cruse works as cabin boy in the Aurora: a luxury passenger ship in an alternative Victorian time where airships roll across the skies. Six months ago Matt rescued a dying man from a drifting air balloon who claimed to have seen something of great beauty. But it isn't until six months later when he meets the man's granddaughter, Kate de Vries when he is reminded of this incident. After showing him her father's logbook Matt is dubious but intent on finding what he actually saw. Plunging into action, the Aurora is attacked by

pirates and the legend himself: Kikram Szpirglas. After looting the ship, shooting a crew member the renowned pirates leave into their own ship to face a storm. The ships come into contact ripping the Aurora's Hydrium gas bags sending it into an inevitable crash.... onto an unexplored island. The mystery heightens with the finding of a suspicious 'cloud cat' matching the descriptions found in Kate's grandfather's log book. Lexile: 760.

Patterson, James, *Max*. (Mystery)

The fifth book in the Maximum Ride series finds Max and her flock enlisted to help the government solve the mystery of fish dying and ships being destroyed off the coast of Hawaii. Lexile: NA.

Picoult, Jodi, *Handle with Care*. (Young Adult)

When Charlotte and Sean O'Keefe learn about their daughter's illness, they wonder if they should have known about it sooner and begin to question what constitutes the value of even the most fragile life. Lexile: NA.

Poitier, Sidney, *The Measure of a Man*. (Biography)

This is an autobiography. He is quoted, "...as I look back at a long and complicated life, with many twists and turns, (I want to know) how well I've done at measuring up to the values I myself have set." The book explores, "...the elements of character and personal values to take his own measure--as a man, as a husband and father, and as an actor." Lexile: NA.

Pratchett, Terry, *Nation*. (Adventure)

When Mau returns home from his coming-of-age quest, he finds that a tsunami has wiped out his entire people. Also on the island is a shipwreck survivor, Ermintrude, an English miss now calling herself Daphne. Daphne does not know that she, too, is one of the last of her line. At home, in an alternate 19th-century Britain, a plague has all but destroyed the royal succession. Now her father is king and desperate to find her. Together Mau and Daphne work to rebuild some form of civilization, leading a ragtag group of other survivors who make their way to their island "nation." Lexile: 790.

Rhodes-Courter, Ashley, *Three Little Words: A Memoir*. (Young Adult)

Ashley Rhodes-Courter spent nine years of her life in fourteen different foster homes. Painful memories of being taken away from her home quickly become consumed by real-life horrors. In this inspiring, unforgettable memoir, Ashley finds the courage to succeed - and in doing so, discovers the power of her own voice. Lexile: 810.

Ruff, Mat, *Bad Monkeys*. (Fantasy)

Jane Charlotte has been arrested for murder. She says she's a member of a secret organization devoted to fighting evil. She says she's working with the Department for the Final Disposition of Irredeemable Persons—aka "Bad Monkeys." Lexile: NA.

Satrapı, Marjane, *The Complete Persepolis*. (Graphic Novel Non Fiction)

Marjane Satrapı's memoir of her childhood in Iran during the Islamic Revolution is beautifully rendered in this graphic novel series. Lexile: NA.

Sheff, David, *Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey through His Son's Addiction*. (Non Fiction)

A father's anguished account of his promising son's meth addiction and its painful impact on the entire family is honest, raw, and full of information about the realities of drug addiction. Lexile: NA.

Shepard, Sara, *Perfect: Pretty Little Liars*. (Young Adult)

Best friends Spencer, Aria, Emily, and Hanna find themselves under suspicion when the mysterious stranger named A tries to blame one of the girls for the death of their friend Alison and threatens to reveal the girls' darkest secrets. Lexile: 720.

Shusterman, Neal, *Unwind*. (Science Fiction)

In a society where unwanted teens are salvaged for their body parts, three runaways fight the system that would "unwind" them. If they can survive until their 18th birthday, they can't be harmed -- but when every piece of them, from their hands to their hearts, are wanted by a world gone mad, eighteen seems far, far away. Lexile: 740.

Sleator, William, *TEST*. (Young Adult)

The book focuses on a test that every student must take in order to graduate from high school. Corruption runs rampant in this novel, from government officials to building construction managers to the test organizers. Told from the viewpoint of a female teen and her friends, the students organize a protest against the test and the corrupt government that designed it, face the usual obstructions from their parents and teachers and administrators, get past the obstructions, face death and despair and ultimately triumph. Lexile: 750.

Sofer, Dalia, *The Septembers of Shiraz*. (Suspense)

In the aftermath of the Iranian revolution, a rare-gem dealer Isaac Amin is arrested and wrongly accused of being a spy. Terrified by his disappearance, his family must reconcile a new world of cruelty and chaos with the collapse of everything they have known. As Isaac navigates the terrors of prison, and his wife feverishly searches for him, his children struggle with the realization that their family may soon be forced to embark on a journey of incalculable danger.

Lexile: NA.

Steinberger, Aimee, *Japan Ai : A Tall Girl's Adventures In Japan*. (Graphic Novel)

Aimee's a six-foot-tall cosplaying fangirl who visits Japan, land of her favorite hobbies. There, she visits historical Kyoto, shops, dresses as a geisha, visits a hot spring, goes to Tokyo and shops some more. The cute, cartoony sketches present a travelogue by an out-of-place but observant gaijin who is keen to absorb the intricacies of a new culture.

Lexile: NA.

Takaya, Natsuki, *Fruits Basket*. (Graphic Novel)

Tohru Honda is unsinkable; when her mother dies and her grandfather denies her a place to live, the homeless high-schooler is determined to make it on her own by pitching a tent

alone in the woods. En route to her tent one day, Tohru encounters Shigure, who informs her that the tent is pitched on his family property. He's appalled by her squalid living conditions and invites her to his estate. Tohru becomes part of the household on the condition that she helps guard their family secret: when hugged by members of the opposite sex, Shigure and his family transform into animals from the Chinese zodiac calendar. Lexile: NA.

Voorhees, Coert, *The Brothers Torres*. (Young Adult)

Frankie, son of a Mexican mother and white father, lives in New Mexico. His older brother, Steve, an outstanding soccer player, is in line for college scholarships. Frankie is relegated to working in the family restaurant. When he and his best friend aren't at school, they are blowing up things with fireworks. Frankie has a crush on Rebecca and wants to take her to the homecoming dance. When Frankie gets into a fight with Rebecca's boyfriend, she eventually tells Frankie she'll go to the dance with him. Steve, who has been hanging around with local gang bangers, makes some decisions that force Frankie to decide which is more important, revenge or self-respect. Lexile: 780.

Waters, Daniel, *Generation Dead*. (Science Fiction)

All over the country, a strange phenomenon is happening. Some teenagers who die aren't staying dead. They are coming back to life, but they are no longer quite the same. Termed "living impaired" or "differently biotic," they are doing their best to fit into a society that doesn't want them. Lexile: 820.

Werlin, Nancy, *Impossible*. (Suspense)

Lucy has nine months to break an ancient curse in order to save both herself and her unborn daughter. Inspired by the ballad "Scarborough Fair," this riveting novel combines suspense, fantasy, and romance for an intensely page-turning and masterfully original tale. Lexile: 670.

Zusak, Markus, *The Book Thief*. (Historical Fiction)

Death himself narrates the World War II-era story of Liesel Meminger from the time she is taken, at age nine, to live in Molching, Germany, with a foster family in a working-class neighborhood. The child arrives having just stolen her first book, *The Gravediggers Handbook*; even though she has not yet learned how to read Her foster father uses it to lull her to sleep when she's awakened by regular nightmares about her younger brother's death. As she grows up, Liesel collects more stolen books as well as a peculiar set of friends: the boy Rudy, the Jewish refugee Max, the mayors reclusive wife (who has a whole library from which she allows Liesel to steal), and especially her foster parents. Lexile: 730.