

# MAINE STUDENT BOOK AWARD

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Maine Library Association  
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## 2011–2012 Reading List (copyright 2010 titles)

**Publisher, genre, suggested grade levels and number of pages are indicated after each title.**

Angleberger, Tom. *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda*. Amulet. Humorous fiction. Gr. 4-6. 141p. Sixth grader Tommy sets out to prove whether or not an origami Yoda finger puppet is giving out reliable advice to classmates. Can Tommy trust the sometimes sage, sometimes hilarious, “green paperwad” with his special problem? Directions for making your own origami Yoda are included!

Chapman, Fern Schumer. *Is It Night or Day?* Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Historical fiction. Gr. 6-8. 205p. The moving story of a young, Jewish girl sent to America in 1938 to live with relatives she has never met. Edith immigrates to Chicago where her aunt treats her like a servant, classmates tease her, and she struggles to adjust to a new culture while worrying constantly about the family she left behind in Nazi Germany. A compelling read.

Clements, Andrew. *We the Children (Benjamin Pratt & the Keepers of the School)*. Atheneum. Mystery. Gr. 4-6. 143p. Ben sets out to try to save his historic school from developers after a janitor gives him a mysterious coin and then dies. With his friend, Jill, he begins to unravel clues while adjusting to his parents’ separation. This is the first book in a planned series. An action-packed ending leaves unanswered questions for the next volume.

Corriveau, Art. *How I, Nicky Flynn, Finally Get a Life (and a Dog): a Novel*. Amulet. Realistic fiction/mystery. Gr. 4-8. 249p. Nicky, age 11, and his mother move to Boston after his parents divorce. One night, instead of dinner, she brings home a retired seeing-eye dog named Reggie. Nicky begins a secret search for the dog’s former owner, while struggling with his new life, including a dad who never calls or visits.

DiTerlizzi, Tony. *The Search for WondLa*. Simon & Schuster. Science fiction. Gr. 6-8. 477p. Eva Nine is raised in an underground sanctuary on the planet Orbona by a robot she calls “Muthr.” When their home is destroyed, she heads above ground for the first time, hoping to find other humans. Instead she discovers a dangerous landscape with walking trees, unusual creatures, and a hunter bent on capturing her for a museum display.

Draper, Sharon Mills. *Out of My Mind*. Atheneum. Realistic fiction. Gr. 4-8. 295p. Melody is a determined, intelligent fifth grader trapped in a body that can’t walk, talk, or feed itself. When she finally gets a computer that allows her to communicate with the world, she finds that the world isn’t ready to accept her. An authentic, eye-opening look at living with special needs written by an author whose daughter has cerebral palsy.

Erskine, Kathryn. *Mockingbird: (Mok’ing-burd)*. Philomel. Realistic fiction. Gr. 5-8. 235p. Caitlin’s beloved brother is killed in a school shooting, leaving her struggling to fill a huge void in her life. Caitlin is bright and artistic, but has Asperger’s syndrome, so dealing with emotions is especially difficult. She narrates this powerful story, as a school counselor tries to teach her to be more empathetic.

Gidwitz, Adam. *A Tale Dark & Grimm*. Dutton. Fantasy. Gr. 4-8. 256p. Hansel and Gretel, in spite of being beheaded, re-headed, hunted, dismembered, killed, and brought back to life, live happily-ever-after in this unique novel. Several lesser-known Grimm fairy tales are woven into this story starring the unfortunate, but loyal, sister and brother. The author introduces each story, and sometimes interrupts the narrative with advice for readers. An outrageous plot.

Grant, Katy. *Hide and Seek*. Peachtree. Adventure/survival fiction. Gr. 5-8. 230p. When 14-year-old Chase is geochaching (hunting for a hidden cache with small “treasures” using a GPS unit), he discovers a mysterious message in a logbook in the Arizona desert. It leads him to two younger boys and a tense, life-threatening situation.

Ignatow, Amy. *The Popularity Papers: Research for the Social Improvement and General Betterment of Lydia Goldblatt & Julie Graham-Chang*. Amulet. Humorous. Gr. 4-6. 204p. Colorful, page-by-page, cartoon-like illustrations accompany this journal written by two friends trying to find the path to popularity by recording what cool girls do. Artistic Amy writes in blue and draws most of the pictures; Julie uses a black pen. Each girl has a distinctive style. A quick, entertaining read.

Koertge, Ronald. *Shakespeare Makes the Playoffs*. Candlewick. Poetic narrative. Gr. 6-8. 170p. In this sequel to *Shakespeare Bats Cleanup*, eighth-grader, Kevin, is playing first base and beginning a new poetry journal. He resents his dad’s dating, is losing interest in his own girlfriend, and is e-mailing a new poetry-friend, Amy. While his team heads to the playoffs he experiments with a variety of verse, giving readers a chance to appreciate the same.

Lupica, Mike. *The Batboy*. Philomel. Sports fiction. Gr. 5-8. 237p. Brian, age 14, loves baseball and his new position as a batboy for the Detroit Tigers. The team has just drafted his favorite player back after a steroid scandal. Brian’s dad is an ex-major-league pitcher working as a coach in Japan. Lots of play-by-play action is sandwiched between Brian’s struggles on the diamond and with his estranged father.

MacColl, Michaela. *Prisoners in the Palace: How Victoria Became Queen With the Help of her Maid, a Reporter, and a Scoundrel: a Novel of Intrigue and Romance*. Chronicle. Historical fiction. Gr. 7-8. 367p. Liza, recently orphaned, finds a position as a maid to 17-year-old Princess Victoria. Her advisors are plotting to usurp her power and Liza becomes her only ally. Some gritty details of court life in the 1830’s are included, but amid the conspiracy and treachery, friendship and romance save the day. Entries from Victoria’s actual diaries are interspersed with the narrative.

Malone, Marianne. *The Sixty-Eight Rooms*. Random House. Fantasy. Gr. 4-7. 274p. On a class field trip to an art museum, sixth graders Ruthie and Jack find a magic key that allows them to shrink. This debut novel combines mystery and history as the children downsize and roam through the 68 miniature Thorne Rooms, an exhibit of historical dioramas housed in the Chicago Art Institute.

Mazer, Anne and Ellen Potter. *Spilling Ink: A Young Writer’s Handbook*. Flash Point/Roaring Brook. Nonfiction. Gr. 5-8. 275p. Two talented children’s authors -- Mazer (*Sister Magic* series) and Potter (*Olivia Kidney* books) -- team up to offer an encouraging how-to manual full of practical advice for young writers. The book is entertaining and accessible, with interesting samples of writing and “I Dare You” sections that suggest practice exercises for novice writers.

Mulligan, Andy. *Trash*. David Fickling. Mystery/adventure. Gr. 6-8. 232p. Two impoverished boys make their living picking trash in a garbage dump in an unidentified Third World country. One day they find something unusual that leads them on a suspense-filled mission, involving murder, a treasure map, crooked politicians, and a code to crack. A riveting story.

O’Connor, Barbara. *The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Adventure fiction. Gr. 4-6. 168p. It’s summer and Owen Jester builds a cage for his newly-acquired bullfrog and finds an amazing object that has fallen from a train. He convinces his two, girl-hating, best friends, Stumpy and Travis, to join him in an ambitious plan. Will his know-it-all neighbor, Viola, ruin everything?

Park, Linda Sue. *A Long Walk to Water: A Novel: Based on a True Story*. Clarion. Historical fiction. Gr. 4-8. 121p. Two Sudanese children grow up years apart, struggling to survive. In 1985 11-year-old Salva is forced to flee the country without his family. His tragic, difficult journey through Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya, based on the life of one of the Lost Boys of Sudan, spans 23 years. Meanwhile in 2008 Nya, an 11-year-old Sudanese girl, walks for hours each day just to fetch water for her family. These two real-life stories mesh in a heroic ending.

Paulsen, Gary. *Woods Runner*. Wendy Lamb. Historical fiction. Gr. 6-8. 164p. It's 1776 and Samuel, age 13, is a capable hunter and woodsman. One day he finds his neighbors massacred and learns that his mother and father have been taken from their Pennsylvania homestead by British forces. He sets off alone on a harrowing journey to rescue them. This candid look at the horrors of war is interspersed with factual blurbs about frontier life and the American Revolution.

Peet, Mal and Elspeth Graham. *Cloud Tea Monkeys*. Candlewick. Folklore. Gr. 4-5. 46p. In this original tale, inspired by a Himalayan legend, young Tashi befriends some wild monkeys near the tea plantation where her mother picks tea leaves. When her mother becomes ill and unable to work, the monkeys come to the girl's rescue. Vividly illustrated and beautifully written with descriptive details.

Perkins, Mitali. *Bamboo People: a Novel*. Charlesbridge. Realistic/survival fiction. Gr. 6-8. 272p. A powerful look at the realities of war through the eyes of two young soldiers. Fifteen-year-old Chiko is forced into military service by the Burmese government and eventually wounded. A young rebel named Tu Reh finds him and takes over the narrative. Initially enemies, each boy describes the brutality of war and his own suffering, fear, and hope.

Preus, Margi. *Heart of a Samurai*. Amulet. Historical fiction. Gr. 5-8. 301p. An American whaling ship rescues 14-year-old Manjiro when he is shipwrecked on an island in the Pacific in 1841. As a child the boy dreamed of becoming a samurai in Japan, but instead becomes the first Japanese to visit America. Based on a true story, this adventure examines prejudice and friendship on both sides of the Pacific.

Reeve, Philip. *Fever Crumb*. Scholastic. Science fiction. Gr. 6-8. 325p. Carnegie Medal-winner Reeve returns to the violent, bizarre future of his *Hungry Cities Chronicles* in this prequel. A teenage girl, raised by an always-rational Order of Engineers, sets out on her first job in an overcrowded, seedy London of the future. Rioting mobs, paper assassins, and invaders are on the loose, and Fever herself is being hunted down. A riveting, imaginative self-discovery tale.

Riordan, Rick. *The Red Pyramid*. Disney/Hyperion. Adventure fiction. Gr. 5-8. 516p. Dr. Julius Kane accidentally blows up the Rosetta stone, summoning five vengeful Egyptian gods into the mortal world. They entomb Kane, leaving his children, Carter and Sadie, to try to save humanity from destruction. Riordan has created another action-packed, humor-filled, fantasy/adventure based on mythology.

Rizzo, Johanna. *Oceans: Dolphins, Sharks, Penguins, and More! Meet 60 Cool Sea Creatures and Explore Their Amazing Watery World*. National Geographic. Nonfiction. Gr. 4-6. 64p. Stunning color photos of 15 types of ocean animals accompany informative text. Included is a diagram of the layers of the ocean, a map, conservation tips, and answers to questions about ocean dwellers. A great introduction to creatures that spend time in saltwater.

Scieszka, Jon, editor. *Guys Read: Funny Business*. Walden Pond. Short stories. Gr. 4-8. 268p. A collection of 10 humorous short stories, with some blood and some slapstick, written by top-notch children's fiction writers including Eoin Colfer, Jeff Kinney, Kate DiCamillo, and Jack Gantos. Stories feature an incompetent super villain, a homicidal turkey, alien body-snatchers, and more. This is the first in a series that will focus on different genres.

Scieszka, Jon and Francesco Sedita. *Spaceheadz*. Simon & Schuster. Science fiction. Gr. 4-6. 163p. A new fifth grader, Michael K., is assigned a seat next to two other, exceptionally odd, new kids who turn out to be aliens! Their mission? Convert millions of kids into SPHDZ to stop the Earth from being "turned off," with the class pet, a hamster, as mission leader. Websites extend this zany story online.

Sheth, Kashmira. *Boys Without Names*. Balzer & Bray. Realistic fiction. Gr. 5-8. 316p. After moving to Mumbai with his family to avoid starvation, Gopal is sold to a sweatshop operator and finds himself trapped in a rundown building with five other despondent boys. His storytelling talents give the boys a break from their never-ending task of making picture frames. Can they find a way to escape from their cruel owner/boss? A chilling look at child labor.

Sidman, Joyce. *Dark Emperor & Other Poems of the Night*. Houghton Mifflin. Poetry. Gr. 4-8. 29p. This set of a dozen reflective poems, in a variety of forms and rhyme schemes, celebrates nocturnal life in the forest. Scientific facts are incorporated in each poem and each creature or mushroom is further described in accompanying paragraphs. Illustrator Rick Allen adds depth with beautiful, detailed linoleum prints.

Silberberg, Alan. *Milo: Sticky Notes and Brain Freeze*. Aladdin. Realistic fiction. Gr. 5-8. 275p. Milo has moved to a new house, a new neighborhood, and a new school. He's a seventh grader challenged by math and girls, but he is also haunted by the loss he still feels from his mother's death two years ago. A profound story about his need to say goodbye.

Snyder, Laurel. *Penny Dreadful*. Random House. Realistic fiction. Gr. 4-6. 304p. Penelope Grey is a bored, city-dwelling, rich girl whose father abruptly quits his job. The family moves to Thrush Junction, Tennessee, where they have inherited a house and, as they quickly find out later, an extremely large mortgage. This "riches-to-rags" story stars a 10-year-old who loves books and wants her life to reflect the adventure and connections in her favorite stories.

Sonnenblich, Jordan. *After Ever After*. Scholastic. Realistic fiction. Gr. 6-8. 260p. Both Jeffrey and his best friend, Tad, are eighth-grade cancer survivors living with complications from chemotherapy and radiation. Tad is in a wheelchair and Jeffrey has difficulty concentrating. Hilarious and tragic, this story combines common teen issues -- testing fears, girlfriend anxieties and family discord -- with the aftermath of childhood cancer. Honest, humorous, and emotional, this sequel to *Drums, Girls & Dangerous Pie* can stand alone.

Tashjian, Janet. *My Life as a Book*. Henry Holt. Humorous. Gr. 4-6. 211p. Derek, a visual learner and "active" 12-year-old, is sentenced to Learning Camp by parents worried about his reading ability. He discovers a newspaper clipping in his attic about the drowning of a teenage girl and is determined to learn the rest of the story. In the margins, vocabulary words are illustrated with cartoons by the author's son. Perfect for reluctant readers.

Telgemeier, Raina. *Smile*. Graphix. Graphic novel. Gr. 5-8. 213p. From sixth grade through high school, Raina deals with braces, dental surgery, and a false tooth. At the same time, she is coping with teasing friends, unreciprocated crushes, and changes galore. A touching and funny autobiographical graphic memoir.

Tunnell, Michael O. *Candy Bomber: The Story of the Berlin Airlift's "Chocolate Pilot."* Charlesbridge. Biography. Gr. 4-8. 110p. Pilot Gail Halvorsen drops handkerchief parachutes filled with candy and gum to West Berlin children. It's 1948 and the Soviet Union is trying to close off the city to starve people into accepting Communist rule. Started by the pilot and some friends, candy drops soon become a USAF-sanctioned operation. There are black-and-white photos on nearly every page of this uplifting, unique Cold War story.

Vanderpool, Clare. *Moon Over Manifest*. Delacorte. Historical fiction. Gr. 5-8. 351p. Abilene Tucker is sent to Manifest, Kansas, for the summer of 1936 by her drifter dad. She finds a box of keepsakes, a letter dated 1917, and a mystery to solve. The story shifts between the Depression and WWI, involving a murder and a bootlegging organization. The residents of Manifest are unique in this cleverly woven story that uncovers secrets not only about Abilene's dad, but about the whole town.

Walsh, Pat. *The Crowfield Curse*. Chicken House. Fantasy. Gr. 5-8. 326p. A servant boy at a monastery in 1347 rescues a talking animal, a hob, and is quickly drawn into grave danger because of his good heart. Details about life in a medieval abbey provide an interesting backstory for this suspenseful, dark tale about the battle between good and evil.

Wood, Maryrose. *The Mysterious Howling (Incorrigible Children of Ashton Place: Book 1)* Balzer & Bray. Mystery. Gr. 4-6. 267p. A fifteen-year-old orphan, Miss Penelope Lumley, is hired as governess to three extraordinary children who have been raised by wolves. They growl; they chase squirrels. Her immediate task is to prepare them for Lady Constance's upcoming holiday ball. Unexplained events, ridiculous situations, and an amusing narrator add up to a winning series starter.

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