

Maine Student Book Award

A joint project of: Maine Library Association, Maine Association of School Libraries, and
Maine Literacy Council

2016-2017 Reading List (2015 copyright)

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

Bailey, Linda. *Seven Dead Pirates*. Tundra Books. Fantasy/Humorous. Gr.4+. 296 pgs. Good read aloud. Lewis realizes his new bedroom — a secluded tower in his dead uncle's mansion by the sea — houses seven ghostly roommates who need his help. The 200-year-old haunts team up with this selectively mute 12-year-old to reclaim their pirate ship from a local museum. The motley crew's escapades are hilarious and daring. ISBN: 978-1-77049-815-0.

Barry, Dave. *The Worst Class Trip Ever*. Disney/Hyperion. Humorous. Gr.4+. 214 pgs. Good read aloud. Eighth graders, on their way to Washington DC, notice two suspicious passengers. Are they plotting to bomb the White House? Kidnappings, a big snake, a hot girl who is described as "basically a Navy SEAL," an angry cab driver, and not-so-sharp chaperones, make this an unforgettable trip. ISBN: 978-1-48470-849-1. (audio available)

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Terrible Typhoid Mary: A True Story of the Deadliest Cook in America*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Nonfiction. Gr.5+. 229 pgs. How did Mary Mallon, a single, immigrant servant in New York in the early 1900's become the infamous Typhoid Mary? Why was she singled out, quarantined, and tested against her will? A compelling read about disease, public health, and individual civil rights. ISBN: 978-0-544-31367-5. (audio available)

Baskin, Nora Raleigh. *Ruby on the Outside*. Simon & Schuster. Realistic fiction. Gr.4+. 163 pgs. Ruby Danes' mom has been in prison since Ruby was five. When she makes a new friend Ruby decides she needs to find out the details of her mother's crime. Will her research threaten that friendship? A glimpse into what life is like when you can only see someone you love during visiting hours. ISBN: 978-1-44248-503-7.

Bildner, Phil. *A Whole New Ball Game*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Sports fiction. Gr.4+. 239 pgs. Good read aloud. A new teacher asks students to research the grossest things they can imagine. Best friends Rip and Red, basketball players, tackle the project, while prepping for a tough season and dealing with a wheelchair-bound classmate's anger. An engaging story about autism and inclusion. ISBN: 978-0-374-30130-9.

Bond, Gwenda. *Lois Lane: Fallout*. Switch Press. Science fiction. Gr.6+. 303 pgs. A teenaged Lois Lane investigates a group of video-gaming bullies, the Warheads, at her new school. The strangely cohesive group is terrorizing a girl and there is something sinister about the high-tech video game they all play. Lois is a tough, clever heroine; and this is the fast-paced, intriguing beginning of a planned series. ISBN: 978-1-63079-005-2.

Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker. *The War That Saved My Life*. Dial Books. Historical fiction. Gr.4+. 316 pgs. Good read aloud. Ada, 9, born with a clubfoot, is beaten, nearly starved, and belittled by her mam. When the Germans begin bombing England, Ada's younger brother, Jamie, is sent to the country for safety. Ada, who has never been out of her shabby London apartment, sneaks off, too. What kind of new life can this courageous child find? ISBN: 978-0-8037-4081-5. (audio available)

Chmakova, Svetlana. *Awkward*. Yen Press. Graphic novel/Realistic fiction. Gr.4+. 210 pgs. Peppi, a new girl at Berrybrook Middle School, fights social anxiety while trying to find friends and contribute to her new-found clique, the art club. A feud starts between the art and science clubs and focuses on the only spot left at the annual school fair. Peppi's struggles with her own conscience and with friends create interesting dilemmas. ISBN: 978-0-316-38132-1.

Cuevas, Michelle. *Confessions of an Imaginary Friend: A Memoir by Jacques Papier*. Dial Books. Fantasy. Gr.4+. 168 pgs. Good read aloud. Jacques is Fleur's beloved twin brother, but everyone else utterly ignores him. Through first-person narrative readers find out, along with Jacques, the unsettling reason he is always overlooked. A charming, offbeat, sometimes hilarious, tale about imagination and friendship. ISBN: 978-0-525-42755-1. (audio available)

Foreman, Michael. *The Tortoise and the Soldier: A Story of Courage and Friendship in World War I*. Henry Holt. Historical fiction. Gr.4+. 115 pgs. Good read aloud. A tortoise found and adopted by a Royal Naval gunner during the Battle of Gallipoli, becomes the veteran's lifelong friend. A young journalist-wannabe interviews Henry Friston, the WW I veteran, about his pet tortoise, Ali Pasha, whose annual awakening signals spring in his British village. Friston not only tells the boy about his aged pet, but shares his war-time diary, photos, maps, and a realistic attitude toward war with the young interviewer. ISBN: 978-1-62779-173-1.

Gannon, Nicholas. *The Doldrums*. Greenwillow Books. Humorous. Gr.4+. 340 pgs. Can a girl with a wooden leg and two boys, one who obsesses about details, and another who is rarely allowed to leave his home, rescue grandparents who have gone missing on an iceberg in the Antarctic? Archer Helmsley, Oliver Glub, and Adelaide Belmont intend to try. This debut novel is a zany tale of endearing characters and courage, accompanied by a wealth of full-color and black-and-white illustrations. ISBN: 978-0-06-232094-0. (audio available)

Gonzalez, Christina Diaz. *Moving Target*. Scholastic Press. Adventure/Survival. Gr.5+. 248 pgs. Good read aloud. When her father takes a bullet meant for her, 12-year-old Cassie finds herself the target of assassins. She learns she is a special member of an ancient bloodline with the ability to change world events. The first in a series, this suspenseful and action-packed adventure will have readers on edge as Cassie and her two allies, Asher and Simone, negotiate tense situations. ISBN: 978-0-545-77318-8.

Graff, Lisa. *Lost in the Sun*. Philomel Books. Realistic fiction. Gr.4+. 289 pgs. A classmate dies in an accident Trent contributed to and he's convinced everyone hates him. Overwhelmed by guilt, his impulsive behavior causes trouble at home and at school. In the midst of his self-loathing, he meets Fallon, a girl with a huge facial scar. Trent's journey is sometimes funny, sometimes sad, but never dull. ISBN: 978-0-399-16406-4. (audio available)

Hahn, Mary Downing. *Took: A Ghost Story*. Clarion Books. Fantasy. Gr.4+. 264 pgs. Good read aloud. Does the witch on Brewster's Hill really kidnap a girl every 50 years to be her servant? Or are Daniel's new West Virginia classmates just trying to scare the new city kid? When his younger sister, Erica, begins hearing a voice ("Air-ric-cah, Air-ric-cah,") that no one else can hear and starts acting strangely, Daniel begins to believe in Old Auntie and Bloody Bones, her blood-thirsty, man-eating hog. ISBN: 978-0-544-55153-4.

Hale, Nathan. *The Underground Abductor*. Amulet Books. Graphic novel/Biography. Gr.4+. 125 pgs. The unique life of Harriet Tubman, who led hundreds of slaves to freedom on the Underground Railroad in the 1800's, is chronicled in this story. It covers her harsh childhood, her bouts with narcolepsy, her strange visions, and her life-risking journeys to rescue other slaves. Told engagingly in well-researched pictures and words, this is part of an appealing series of graphic novels about American history. ISBN: 978-1-41971-536-5.

Harrold, A. F. *The Imaginary*. Bloomsbury. Fantasy. Gr.4+. 221 pgs. Amanda creates an imaginary friend, Rudge, and enjoys his company until a man claiming to be doing a survey appears at her door. Mr. Bunting, a creature with a horrifying, expanding mouth, survives on a diet of imaginary friends. Can Rudge escape Mr. Bunting? Is there a connection between imagination and memory? ISBN: 978-0-8027-3811-0.

Hilton, Marilyn. *Full Cicada Moon*. Dial Books. Poetic narrative/Historical. Gr.5+. 389 pgs. Mimi Yoshiko Oliver is the first girl of color in her 1969 Vermont school. Her father is African American; her mother, Japanese. She's a unique girl, too, for her time. An aspiring astronaut, she wants to enter the science competition and take Shop Class instead of Home Economics. The description of this one year in her life validates the power of one voice speaking out. ISBN: 978-0-525-42875-6.

Holt, K.A. *House Arrest*. Chronicle Books. Poetic narrative/Realistic. Gr.5+. 298 pgs. Timothy, age 12, tries to use a stolen credit card to pay for medical expenses for his baby brother and is sentenced to house arrest for a year. His court-ordered journal details his difficult home life — with a single mom and brother who uses a trachea tube to breathe. A sympathetic guidance counselor and a probation officer give much-needed outside help to this family under siege. Timothy's take on his situation is sometimes funny, sometimes heart-breaking. ISBN: 978-1-45213-477-2.

Hoose, Phillip M. *The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Nonfiction. Gr.6+. 198 pgs. The amazing, true story of a handful of Danish teens who sabotaged their German occupiers, often on their bicycles. The boys decided, "if the adults would not act, we would," and began stealing weapons, cutting enemy phone lines and setting German equipment on fire. Their bravery landed them in prison, but inspired a nationwide resistance movement. ISBN: 978-0-374-30022-7. (audio available)

Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *Fish in a Tree*. Nancy Paulsen Books. Realistic fiction. Gr.4+. 276 pgs. Good read aloud. Ally can't read; the letters dance and give her headaches. She's been to seven schools in seven years, always managing to hide her disability. Usually she misbehaves to keep her secret and is labeled a behavior problem. Her new teacher, Mr. Daniels, realizes she's dyslexic. Will Ally accept his help? ISBN: 978-0-399-16259-6. (audio available)!

Jamieson, Victoria. *Roller Girl*. Dial Books. Graphic novel/Realistic. Gr. 4+. 239 pgs. Astrid and her BFF Nicole part ways when Astrid signs up for Roller Derby camp and Nicole chooses ballet camp with another friend. Astrid gets plenty of bruises and scrapes while learning to hip-check and elbow. She lives through mean-girl moments, finds out failure is often a precursor to success and realizes not all friendships are permanent. ISBN: 978-0-525-42967-8.

Jones, Kelly. *Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer*. Alfred A. Knopf. Humorous. Gr.4+. 216 pgs. Future chicken farmers can pick up tips for raising chickens along with protagonist Sophie, who moves to her great-uncle Jim's farm and inherits his extraordinary chickens (with superpowers). Letters to her beloved abuelita and Uncle Jim (both dead), are used to tell this unconventional story with an interesting twist. ISBN: 978-0-385-75552-8.

Korman, Gordon. *Masterminds*. Balzer + Bray. Science fiction. Gr.4+. 323 pgs. Good read aloud. Serenity, New Mexico, seems perfect until the kids who live there discover that trying to cross the town line is paralyzing. The town factory is not really manufacturing traffic cones. What else are the town officials (and their own parents!) not telling their children? An action-packed start to a thought-provoking series. ISBN: 978-0-06-229996-3. (audio available)

Lewis, Gill. *Moon Bear*. Atheneum. Realistic fiction. Gr.5+. 368 pgs. A grisly tale, based on authentic conditions, depicts the life of Tam, a 12-year-old Laotian boy forced to work on a bear farm in the city to support his family living in the countryside. He tends bears "milked" for their bile which is sold as a health drink. Tam resolves to save a moon bear cub from this cruelty. Can he protect the bear? What about his own dream of freedom? ISBN: 978-1-48140-094-7.

Lord, Cynthia. *A Handful of Stars*. Scholastic Press. Realistic fiction. Gr.4+. 184 pgs. Good read aloud. In the blueberry barrens in Downeast Maine, 12-year-old Lily is determined to raise money to pay for eye surgery for her beloved, elderly, blind dog. She meets Salma, a Hispanic girl from a migrant worker family, in Maine for the harvest. Salma decides to enter the Blueberry Queen pageant, as its first migrant contestant ever. The new friends grapple with prejudice and preconceived notions. ISBN: 978-0-545-70027-6. (audio available)

Marshall, Joseph III. *In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse*. Amulet Books. Historical fiction. Gr.4+. 165 pgs. Good read aloud. Jimmy McClean is three-quarters Lakota Sioux, but his light brown hair and blue eyes make him the butt of classmate's teasing. His grandfather, Nyles High Eagle, takes him on a "vision journey" to places important to the great warrior/leader Crazy Horse. Can stories about the Lakota hero inspire Jimmy to face his own enemies? ISBN: 978-1-41970-785-8.

Merritt, Kory. *The Dreadful Fate of Jonathan York: A Yarn for the Strange at Heart*. Andrews McMeel. Graphic novel. Gr. 4+. 124 pgs. When boring Jonathan York gets lost in spooky Halfrock Swamp, he needs to tell a story to pay for a safe place to spend the night. Without an entertaining tale, he will have to fend for himself in the swamp full of monstrous creatures with threatening-looking tentacles, elongated teeth, and other terrifying parts. Clever, detailed drawings and campfire-style stories-within-the-story make this creepily entertaining. ISBN: 978-1-44947-100-2.

Mlynowski, Sarah; Myracle, Lauren; and Jenkins, Emily. *Upside Down Magic*. Scholastic Press. Fantasy. Gr.4+. 196 pgs. Good read aloud. Nory's magic is out of control. She can't morph into a kitten; instead she ends up a weird, misbehaving hybrid — a beaver- or dragon-kitten. Her critical father enrolls her in a class for upside-down magic. Can she learn to manage her magic or should she even try? A promising start to a new series. ISBN: 978-0-545-80045-7. (audio available)

Nielsen, Jennifer A. *A Night Divided*. Scholastic Press. Historical fiction. Gr.4+. 317 pgs. Good read aloud. In 1961 Gerta's brother and father suddenly find themselves walled out of their neighborhood as the famous Berlin wall goes up. Gerta, her brother Fritz, and their mother, left behind, spend four years under East Berlin's repressive rule. The siblings decide to risk their lives digging a tunnel under the wall to escape. Photos from the actual wall in back matter add a chilling reality to this gripping narrative. ISBN 978-0-545-68242-8. (audio available)

Oppel, Kenneth. *The Nest*. Simon & Schuster. Horror. Gr.5+. 244 pgs. A horrifying psychological drama about a sinister wasp who offers to replace a boy's congenitally ill baby brother with "something better." Steven, who is anxious and has OCD, is stung by a wasp from a nearby hive and starts having dreams about the hive's queen. Steven's parents are preoccupied with his brother's deteriorating health, as Steven becomes more and more disturbed. Is the hive real or imagined? Can the wasps "fix" his brother? ISBN: 978-1-48143-232-0. (audio available)

Pearsall, Shelley. *The Seventh Most Important Thing*. Alfred A. Knopf. Realistic fiction. Gr.4+. 278 pgs. A 13-year-old mourning his father's death, throws a brick at an elderly man collecting junk. Arthur faces juvenile detention until the Junk Man himself lobbies for the boy to do community service instead. Arthur ends up rummaging through the neighborhood trash to find "important things" for a bizarre project. Inspired by the work of American folk artist, James Hampton. ISBN: 978-0-553-49729-8. (audio available)

Resau, Laura. *The Lightning Queen*. Scholastic Press. Historical fiction. Gr.5+. 323 pgs. A beautifully written tale of two cultures — Mixtec and Romany — meeting on the Hill of Dust in Mexico in the 1950's. Teo, struggling with a broken family, meets Esma, who sings beautifully and calls herself the Gypsy Queen of Lightning. The two are told they will be lifelong friends and eventually save one another's lives. Their intertwined destinies expose prejudice and celebrate enduring friendship amid subplots of paralyzing grief and the importance of dreams. ISBN: 978-0-545-80084-6. (audio available)

Rodkey, Geoff. *The Tapper Twins Go to War (with each other)*. Little, Brown and Company. Humorous. Gr.4+. 219 pgs. Twins Claudia and Reese are feuding big time. Probably started by a “stolen” toaster pastry, their quarrel escalates to involve name-calling, rotten fish, mortification by Internet, and attempted digital destruction. This is a LOL story told with screenshots, e-mails, game chat logs, and hilarious text messages between their parents. Will revenge live up to its initial appeal? A sequel is out and two additional twin books are in the works. ISBN: 978-0-316-29779-0. (audio available)

Ross, Joel N. *The Fog Diver*. Harper. Science fiction. Gr.4+. 328 pgs. Imagine a fog covering most of the earth. It causes a fatal fog sickness in humans, forcing them to live in the skies. In this unusual setting, four young slum kids work on a salvage airship with a diver — Chess — who recovers relics from Earth to trade for food. But evil Lord Kadoc is trying to find and enslave Chess. This rousing adventure, complete with comical allusions to humanity’s past, is the start of a new action-packed series. A sequel is already available. ISBN: 978-0-06-235293-4.

Rundell, Katherine. *The Wolf Wilder*. Simon & Schuster. Historical fiction. Gr.5+. 231 pgs. Good read aloud. As Russian aristocrats tire of their pet wolves, they send them to wolf wilders, like Feo and her mother, who retrain them to live in the wild. When a Russian general declares war on the animals and sends Feo’s mother to prison, Feo sets out to rescue her. With three wolves and a teenage army deserter she manages to assemble an army of children. The downtrodden find the courage to stand up for themselves in this gritty adventure with a fairy-tale feel. ISBN: 978-1-48141-942-0.

Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Echo*. Scholastic Press. Historical. Gr.4+. 585 pgs. A prophecy about a magic harmonica ties together the fates of three children: Friedrich in Germany, Mike in Pennsylvania, and Ivy in California. One wants to rescue his Jewish sympathizing father from Dachau; another struggles to keep his family together during the Depression; and the third works to bring three diverse families together as the U.S. fights World War II. Music inspires these three resourceful individuals as they fight against injustice and bigotry. ISBN: 978-0-439-87402-1. (audio available)

Sachar, Louis. *Fuzzy Mud*. Delacorte Press. Science fiction. Gr.4+. 181 pgs. Good read aloud. During a fight with an older bully, fifth grader Tamaya flings some mysterious-looking mud at Chad. A terrible rash appears on her throwing hand and Chad goes missing. In alternating chapters the Senate is conducting secret hearings about a newly created inexpensive fuel alternative that has escaped a lab and is doubling its population every 36 minutes — uh oh! This unsettling story of misguided science stresses the importance of telling the truth. ISBN: 978-0-375-99129-5. (audio available)

Sands, Kevin. *The Blackthorn Key*. Aladdin. Adventure/Survival. Gr.4+. 371 pgs. A combination of chemistry, history, codes and puzzles are featured in this suspenseful debut novel set in London in 1665. It begins as apothecaries in the city are being murdered. When Christopher Rowe (a 14-year-old orphan) finds his kindly master is the latest victim, he and his extremely loyal best friend, Tom, set out to find the killers. Well-researched historical detail adds to the intrigue. ISBN: 978-1-48144-651-8. (audio available)

Silvey, Anita. *Untamed: The Wild Life of Jane Goodall*. National Geographic. Biography. Gr.4+. 96 pgs. With a foreword by Jane herself, this is a comprehensive look at her life: her childhood fascination with animals; her patient, ground-breaking work observing chimpanzee behavior in the wild; and her efforts to reform the use of chimps in research labs. Photographs of her with chimpanzees give readers a glimpse of her devotion to these appealing subjects. ISBN: 978-1-42631-518-3.

Tavares, Matt. *Growing Up Pedro*. Candlewick Press. Biography. Gr.4+. Unpaged. Good read aloud. A picture book look at Pedro Martinez, pitcher for the Boston Red Sox World Series championship team, and the older brother he idolized. The boys are shown growing up in the Dominican Republic where they practice pitching by throwing rocks at mango trees and, later as their dreams of playing together in the major leagues come true. ISBN: 978-0-7636-6824-2.

Vaught, Susan. *Footer Davis Might Be Probably Is Crazy*. Simon & Schuster. Mystery. Gr.5+. 229 pgs. After an elderly neighbor is shot and his farm burns, his grandchildren go missing. Footer, 11, a would-be journalist, and her best friend, Peavine, who has cerebral palsy and wants to be a detective, decide to investigate. Footer’s mom has bipolar disorder and when Footer begins hallucinating about the recent fire she wonders if she has inherited the problem. A compelling mystery told by quirky, endearing characters. ISBN: 978-1-48142-276-5.

Wiechman, Kathy Cannon. *Like a River: A Civil War Novel*. Calkins Creek. Historical. Gr.6+. 336 pgs. Leander, 15, sneaks off to war, accidentally wounds himself and lands in a Georgia hospital. He meets Paul, another underage Union soldier whose father is dying. This debut novel weaves together the compelling personal stories of two soldiers, each with a secret. Plenty of historical details — life in Andersonville Prison, the explosion of the steamboat Sultana, the Battle of Atlanta, the threats of scurvy, smallpox, and starvation — offer a realistic look at the Civil War. ISBN: 978-1-62979-209-5.

For more information about the Maine Student Book Award, please visit:
www.mainestudentbookaward.org

