Recommended Reading


**Fiction featuring child characters**
2. *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros- set in Chicago; easy-to-read with short chapters
3. *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery- a timeless classic by a famous French author
4. *Holes* by Louis Sachar-young kids find an adventure after digging holes for punishment
5. *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan-deals with Mexican immigration
6. *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel- two young people learn to appreciate life from an old man
7. *Frannie and Zooey* by J.D. Salinger- the story of a young brother and sister
8. *Superfudge* by Judy Blume-a young boy’s adventures and troubles; a very funny book
10. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl- the inspiration of two different movies,(Johnny Depp)
11. *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl-a small orphan boy has many magical adventures
13. *Wringer* by Jerry Spinelli-a story of young boys and peer pressure
14. *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson-a sweet story about a friendship
15. *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton-a story of friendship, murder, gangs and social status
16. *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck-a Mexican folktale about a poor fisherman and a pearl
17. *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O’Dell-a 12-year-old girl survives on an island
18. *Maniac McGee* by Jerry Spinelli-deals with homelessness, racism, athletics and fearlessness

**Fiction featuring animal characters**
19. *Animal Farm* by George Orwell- a political satire starring farm animals
20. *Charlotte’s Web* by E.B. White-simple, beautiful and sad story starring animals
21. *Mrs. Fishy and the Rats of NIMH* by Robert C. O’Brien a mother mouse attempts to move her family

**Moderate Difficulty, Extreme Popularity (Novels/ Fictitious Series):**
22. *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins-a girl fights to save her family and her country (3 books)
23. *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer-Team Edward or Team Jacob, who will win Bella’s heart? (4 books)
24. *Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis-four siblings travel to a magical world called Narnia (7 books)
25. *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling- you might have heard of this magical boy (7 books)
26. *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* by Rick Riordan- a good way to learn about mythology (5 books)
27. *A Series of Unfortunate Events of Lemony Snicket* by Brett Helquist-3 kids with bad luck (13 books)
29. *The Dark is Rising* by Susan Cooper-an 11-year-old battles evil forces (5 books)

**Detective series**
30. *Nancy Drew* by Carolyn Keene-a classic series about a talented, young female detective (175 books)
31. *Hardy Boys* by Franklin W. Dixon-a classic series about two young detective brothers (100s of books)

**Moderate-to-Challenging (Fiction/ Novels):**
32. *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee-deals with racism in America; a great book
33. *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger-the quintessential coming-of age novel
34. *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak-Death is the narrator of this story of German family in WWII.
35. *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald- deals with wealth and status
36. *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck- a rural family’s struggle in Midwestern America
37. *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker- empowering story of a poor black girl in the U.S. South
38. *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck-a story of two brothers in desperate times

**Science Fiction/ Fantasy novels**
39. *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* by Jules Verne-Captain Nemo takes on a monster
40. *Zombie Survival Guide* by Max Brooks-humorous instructions on how to survive a zombie attack
41. *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury's-studies the role of books/ knowledge in society
42. *1984* by George Orwell- a scary vision of the future, invented the term “Big Brother”
43. *The Giver* by Lois Lowry- a “perfect” world with no war, poverty, crime, suffering, etc
Detective/ Mystery novels
44. *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie—a classic murder mystery on a train
45. *The Big Sleep* by Raymond Chandler—a crime novel featuring Philip Marlow set in Los Angeles, CA

“Other” novels
46. *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom—an old man teaches us how to die; a true story
47. *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel—a boy and a tiger on a boat in the middle of the ocean
48. *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott—the story of four sisters
49. *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles—the story of two college friends
50. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon—an Autistic boy tries to solve the mystery of who killed his dog

Non-Fiction Books
51. *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell—“how little things can make a big difference”
52. *Freakanomics* by Steven Levitt—an economist looks at the world from a different perspective
53. *The Art of Travel* by Alain de Botton—essays about why people should travel
54. *The Prophet* by Khalil Jabron—poetic/philosophic essays on love, children, work, joy, sorrow, etc.
55. *The Singularity Is Near* by Ray Kurzweil—a discussion of technology, science, and the future
56. *Intellectual Devotional* by David S. Kidder—one page per topic; information about everything

Short Stories:
57. *The Best American Short Stories* Edited by Katrina Kenison—an annual series featuring different writers
58. *The Elephant Vanishes* by Haruki Murakami—a famous Japanese author writes about loss and loneliness
59. *Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allen Poe*—scary poems and stories by an American master
60. *The Umbrella Man and Other Stories* by Roald Dahl—twisted short stories, very dark humor
61. *Hills like White Elephants & The Snows of Kilimanjaro* by Ernest Hemingway—America’s master
62. *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lariri—stories of Indians/Indian-Americans by John’s favorite writer
63. *The Lone Ranger & Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* by Sherman Alexie—Native American short stories

Graphic Novels:
64. *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi—a story of a young girl growing up during the Iranian revolution
65. *Pyongyang: A Journey into North Korea* by Guy Delisle—a Canadian author spends a year in N. Korea
66. *The Watchmen* by Alan Moore—when superheroes go bad...
67. *Maus* by Art Spiegelman—a story about Nazis and Jews in WWII; Pulitzer Prize winner
68. *Blankets* by Craig Thompson—a tale of growing up, romance, brotherly love, and the origins of faith
69. *Habibi* by Craig Thompson—a story of love and the common heritage of Christianity and Islam
70. *Petrograd* by Phil Gelatt and Tyler Crook—the conspiracy behind the murder of Gregorii Rasputin
71. *Shortcomings* by Adrian Tomine—a couple’s relationship is put to the test with unexpected consequences
72. *Sentences: The Life of MF Grimm* by Percy Carey—a life in the dangerous hip-hop industry

Top 5 Books Recommended by Teachers & Staff
1. The House on Mango Street (#2)
2. The Little Prince (#3)
3. To Kill a Mockingbird (#32)
4. Harry Potter series (1-7) (#25)
5. The Book Thief (#34)

Authors NOT on This List That You Might Enjoy
A. John Grisham (legal)
B. Agatha Christie (crime)
C. Stephen King (horror)
D. Tom Clancy (spies, government)
E. David Sedaris (comedy)

How to Get These Books:

1. Get a library card. Bring TWO IDs (your passport and one more) AND proof of address to a Chicago public library or a suburban (Oak Park) library
   a. Proof of address can be a cell phone, electricity etc. bill or just a letter that has been sent through the mail. You can even mail an empty letter to yourself!
   b. The closest library to Kaplan is the Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State St.

2. Download a book on a tablet computer (iPad, Amazon Kindle, Barnes & Noble Nook, etc.) or cell phone


4. Visit a bookstore, like:
   a. Barnes & Noble (new books) 1 E. Jackson (between State and Wabash) or
   b. Powell’s Bookstore (used books) 2850 N. Lincoln Avenue (Red/Brown Line Diversey stop)