

Recommended Reading

1. *An English-English Dictionary* - the first book you should buy in Chicago. Buy one. Now.

Very Easy-to-Easy (Fiction/ Novels):

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
9. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie- a funny book with cartoons
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
12. *The Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park-a story of Korean history
13. *Wringer* by Jerry Spinelli-a story of young boys and peer pressure
14. *Bridge to Terebithia* 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. Fisby 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):

Fantasy 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 JK 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)
28. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams-a science fiction comedy (5 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):

Novels that deal with American or International History

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. **Freakonomics** 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 Hemmingway-*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. **Pyeongyang: 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
3. Buy a book on the **Internet** on a site like www.amazon.com or www.half.com
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)