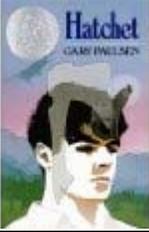
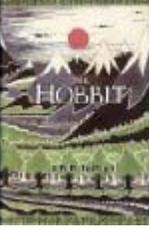
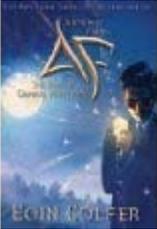
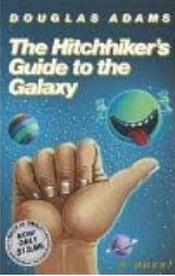
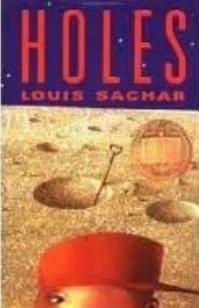
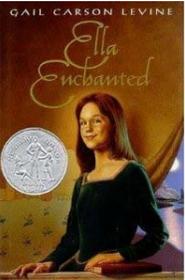
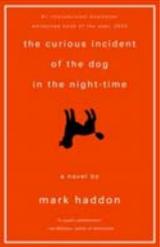
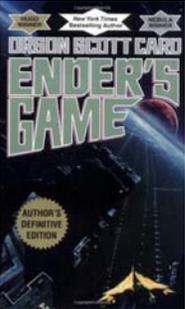
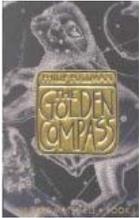
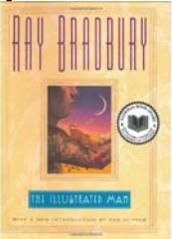


Cal-SOAP Summer Reading List-Middle School

Title	Description	Genre
<p><i>Hatchet</i>, Gary Paulsen</p> 	<p>Brian Robeson, 13, is the only passenger on a small plane flying him to visit his father in the Canadian wilderness when the pilot has a heart attack and dies. The plane drifts off course and finally crashes into a small lake. Miraculously Brian is able to swim free of the plane, arriving on a sandy tree-lined shore with only his clothing, a tattered windbreaker, and the hatchet his mother had given him as a present. The novel chronicles in gritty detail Brian's mistakes, setbacks, and small triumphs as, with the help of the hatchet, he manages to survive the 54 days alone in the wilderness.</p>	<p>Survival; Adventure</p>
<p><i>The Hobbit</i>, J.R.R Tolkien</p> 	<p>Bilbo Baggins is an upstanding member of a "little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded dwarves." Certainly this particular hobbit is the last person one would expect to see set off on a hazardous journey; indeed, when Gandalf the Grey stops by one morning, "looking for someone to share in an adventure," Baggins fervently wishes the wizard elsewhere. No such luck, however; soon 13 fortune-seeking dwarves have arrived on the hobbit's doorstep in search of a burglar, and before he can even grab his hat or an umbrella, Bilbo Baggins is swept out his door and into a dangerous adventure. The dwarves' goal is to return to their ancestral home in the Lonely Mountains and reclaim a stolen fortune from the dragon Smaug. Along the way, they and their reluctant companion meet giant spiders, hostile elves, ravening wolves--and, most perilous of all, a subterranean creature named Gollum from whom Bilbo wins a magical ring in a riddling contest.</p>	<p>Fantasy; Adventure **Challenging</p>
<p><i>Eragon</i>, Christopher Paolini</p> 	<p>Eragon, a young farm boy, finds a marvelous blue stone in a mystical mountain place. Before he can trade it for food to get his family through the hard winter, it hatches a beautiful sapphire-blue dragon, a race thought to be extinct. Eragon bonds with the dragon, and when his family is killed by the marauding Ra'zac, he discovers that he is the last of the Dragon Riders, fated to play a decisive part in the coming war between the human but hidden Varden, dwarves, elves, the diabolical Shades and their neanderthal Urgals, all pitted against and allied with each other and the evil King Galbatorix. Eragon and his dragon Saphira set out to find their role, growing in magic power and understanding of the complex political situation as they endure perilous travels and sudden battles, dire wounds, capture and escape.</p>	<p>Fantasy **Challenging only because there are a lot of names and places to keep track of</p>
<p><i>Stormbreaker</i>, Anthony Horowitz</p> 	<p>Readers will cheer for Alex Rider, the 14-year-old hero of British author Horowitz's spy thriller (the first in a projected series). When his guardian and uncle, Ian, is mysteriously killed, Alex discovers that his uncle was not the bank vice-president he purported to be, but rather a spy for the British government. Now the government wants Alex to take over his uncle's mission: investigating Sayle Enterprises, the makers of a revolutionary computer called Stormbreaker. The company's head plans to donate one to every secondary school in England, but his dealings with unfriendly countries and Ian Rider's murder have brought him under suspicion. Posing as a teenage computer whiz who's won a Stormbreaker promotional contest, Alex enters the factory and immediately finds clues from his uncle.</p>	<p>Spy; Mystery</p>

<p><i>Artemis Fowl</i>, Eoin Colfer</p> 	<p>Twelve-year-old Artemis Fowl is the most ingenious criminal mastermind in history. With two trusty sidekicks in tow, he hatches a cunning plot to divest the fairyfolk of their pot of gold. Of course, he isn't foolish enough to believe in all that "gold at the end of the rainbow" nonsense. Rather, he knows that the only way to separate the little people from their stash is to kidnap one of them and wait for the ransom to arrive. But when the time comes to put his plan into action, he doesn't count on the appearance of the extrasmall, pointy-eared Captain Holly Short of the LEPrecon (Lower Elements Police Reconnaissance) Unit--and her senior officer, Commander Root, a man (sorry, elf) who will stop at nothing to get her back.</p>	<p>Crime; Fantasy</p>
<p><i>The Lightning Thief</i>, Rick Riordan</p> 	<p>After getting expelled from yet another school for yet another clash with mythological monsters only he can see, twelve-year-old Percy Jackson is taken to Camp Half-Blood, where he finally learns the truth about his unique abilities: He is a demigod, half human, half immortal. Even more stunning: His father is the Greek god Poseidon, ruler of the sea, making Percy one of the most powerful demigods alive. There's little time to process this news. All too soon, a cryptic prophecy from the Oracle sends Percy on his first quest, a mission to the Underworld to prevent a war among the gods of Olympus.</p>	<p>Adventure; Mythology</p>  <p>Staff Favorite!</p>
<p><i>The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i>, Douglas Adams</p> 	<p>Seconds before the Earth is demolished to make way for a galactic freeway, Arthur Dent is plucked off the planet by his friend Ford Prefect, a researcher for the revised edition of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy who, for the last fifteen years, has been posing as an out-of-work actor. Together this dynamic pair begin a journey through space aided by quotes from The Hitchhiker's Guide ("A towel is about the most massively useful thing an interstellar hitchhiker can have") and a galaxy-full of fellow travelers: Zaphod Beeblebrox--the two-headed, three-armed ex-hippie and totally out-to-lunch president of the galaxy; Trillian, Zaphod's girlfriend (formally Tricia McMillan), whom Arthur tried to pick up at a cocktail party once upon a time zone and Marvin, a paranoid, brilliant, and chronically depressed robot. Where are these pens? Why are we born? Why do we die? Why do we spend so much time between wearing digital watches? For all the answers stick your thumb to the stars. And don't forget to bring a towel!</p>	<p>Sci-Fi; Comedy</p>
<p><i>Holes</i>, Louis Sachar</p> 	<p>"If you take a bad boy and make him dig a hole every day in the hot sun, it will turn him into a good boy." Such is the reigning philosophy at Camp Green Lake, a juvenile detention facility where there is no lake, and there are no happy campers. In place of what used to be "the largest lake in Texas" is now a dry, flat, sunburned wasteland, pocked with countless identical holes dug by boys improving their character. Stanley Yelnats, of palindromic name and ill-fated pedigree, has landed at Camp Green Lake because it seemed a better option than jail. Despite his innocence, Stanley is quickly enmeshed in the Camp Green Lake routine: rising before dawn to dig a hole five feet deep and five feet in diameter; learning how to get along with the boys in Group D; and fearing the warden, who paints her fingernails with rattlesnake venom. But when Stanley realizes that the boys may not just be digging to build character--that in fact the warden is seeking something specific--the plot gets as thick as the irony.</p>	<p>Adventure</p>

<p><i>Ella Enchanted</i>, Gail Carson Levine</p> 	<p>Every child longs for the day when he or she will be free from meddling parents and bossy grownups. For young Ella, this is more than a fanciful wish; it could be a matter of life or death. Placed under the spell of a blundering fairy, she has no choice but to go through life obeying each and every order--no matter what the consequences may be. "If you commanded me to cut off my own head, I'd have to do it." This imaginative retelling of the Cinderella story comes with a welcome twist. Instead of a demure heroine patiently awaiting a prince who will carry her off, this Ella is a feisty ball of fire with the courage and ambition to take matters into her own hands.</p>	<p>Fantasy; Adventure</p>
<p><i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time</i>, Mark Haddon</p> 	<p>Christopher Boone, the autistic 15-year-old narrator of this revelatory novel, relaxes by groaning and doing math problems in his head, eats red-but not yellow or brown-foods and screams when he is touched. Strange as he may seem, other people are far more of a conundrum to him, for he lacks the intuitive "theory of mind" by which most of us sense what's going on in other people's heads. When his neighbor's poodle is killed and Christopher is falsely accused of the crime, he decides that he will take a page from Sherlock Holmes (one of his favorite characters) and track down the killer. As the mystery leads him to the secrets of his parents' broken marriage and then into an odyssey to find his place in the world, he must fall back on deductive logic to navigate the emotional complexities of a social world that remains a closed book to him.</p>	<p>Mystery</p>  <p>Staff Favorite!</p>
<p><i>Ender's Game</i>, Orson Scott Card</p> 	<p>In order to develop a secure defense against a hostile alien race's next attack, government agencies breed child geniuses and train them as soldiers. A brilliant young boy, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin lives with his kind but distant parents, his sadistic brother Peter, and the person he loves more than anyone else, his sister Valentine. Peter and Valentine were candidates for the soldier-training program but didn't make the cut--young Ender is the Wiggin drafted to the orbiting Battle School for rigorous military training. Ender's skills make him a leader in school and respected in the Battle Room, where children play at mock battles in zero gravity. Yet growing up in an artificial community of young soldiers, Ender suffers greatly from isolation, rivalry from his peers, pressure from the adult teachers, and an unsettling fear of the alien invaders. His psychological battles include loneliness, fear that he is becoming like the cruel brother he remembers, and fanning the flames of devotion to his beloved sister. Is Ender the general Earth needs?</p>	<p>Sci-Fi; For Lover of <i>The Hunger Games</i> **Challenging</p>
<p><i>The Golden Compass</i>, Philip Pullman</p> 	<p>The protagonist of this complex fantasy is young Lyra Belacqua, a precocious orphan growing up within the precincts of Oxford University. But it quickly becomes clear that Lyra's Oxford is not precisely like our own--nor is her world. For one thing, people there each have a personal <i>daemon</i>, the manifestation of their soul in animal form. Lyra's carefree existence changes forever when she and her daemon, Pantalaimon, first prevent an assassination attempt against her uncle, the powerful Lord Asriel, and then overhear a secret discussion about a mysterious entity known as Dust. Soon she and Pan are swept up in a dangerous game involving disappearing children, a beautiful woman with a golden monkey daemon, a trip to the far north, and a set of allies ranging from "gyptians" to witches to an armor-clad polar bear.</p>	<p>Fantasy **Challenging</p>  <p>Staff Favorite!</p>

<p><i>The Illustrated Man</i>, Ray Bradbury</p> 	<p>A book of eighteen science fiction short stories by Ray Bradbury that explores the nature of mankind. While none of the stories has a plot or character connection with the next, a recurring theme is the conflict of the cold mechanics of technology and the psychology of people.</p>	<p>Sci-Fi **Challenging</p>
<p><i>The Hunger Games</i>, Suzanne Collins</p> 	<p>In a not-too-distant future, the United States of America has collapsed, weakened by drought, fire, famine, and war, to be replaced by Panem, a country divided into the Capitol and 12 districts. Each year, two young representatives from each district are selected by lottery to participate in The Hunger Games. Part entertainment, part brutal intimidation of the subjugated districts, the televised games are broadcasted throughout Panem as the 24 participants are forced to eliminate their competitors, literally, with all citizens required to watch. When 16-year-old Katniss's young sister, Prim, is selected as the mining district's female representative, Katniss volunteers to take her place. She and her male counterpart, Peeta, the son of the town baker who seems to have all the fighting skills of a lump of bread dough, will be pitted against bigger, stronger representatives who have trained for this their whole lives.</p>	<p>Sci-Fi  Staff Favorite!</p>
<p><i>A Wrinkle in Time</i>, Madeleine L'Engle</p> 	<p>Everyone in town thinks Meg is volatile and dull-witted and that her younger brother Charles Wallace is dumb. People are also saying that their father has run off and left their brilliant scientist mother. Spurred on by these rumors, Meg and Charles Wallace, along with their new friend Calvin, embark on a perilous quest through space to find their father. In doing so they must travel behind the shadow of an evil power that is darkening the cosmos, one planet at a time.</p>	<p>Adventure; Fantasy; Sci-Fi</p>

Other Recommendations: While the following books have not been read by the Cal-SOAP staff, they are recommended by middle school teachers and librarians and are still appropriate for students.

- Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis (Historical Fiction/Coming of Age; Male Protagonist)
- Esperanza Rises* by Pam Munoz Ryan (Historical Fiction/Coming of Age; Female Protagonist)
- Destroying Avalon* by Kate McCaffrey (**Challenging, About Cyberbullying)
- The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman (Fantasy)
- Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke (Fantasy)
- Beauty: A Retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast* by Robin McKinley (Fantasy; For Lovers of *Twilight*)
- The Maze Runner* by James Dashner (For Lovers of *The Hunger Games*)
- The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusack (Historical Fiction; Holocaust)
- Circle of Magic* or *Protector of the Small Series* by Tamora Pierce (Fantasy)