

Staff Picks



Frontier and Pioneer Life

Chapter book stories for children about pioneers of the American frontier.

Compiled by: Children's Services



Addie Across the Prairie

Laurie Lawlor (Juvenile Fiction -- J La)

Unhappy to leave her home and friends, Addie reluctantly accompanies her family to the Dakota Territory and slowly begins to adjust to life on the prairie. Lexile Measure 820. (See also Addie's Dakota Winter, Addie's Long Summer, George on his Own)



Blackwater Ben

William Durbin (Juvenile Fiction -- J Du)

In the winter of 1898, a seventh-grade boy drops out of school to work with his father, the cook at Blackwater Logging Camp in Minnesota.



Cabin on Trouble Creek

Jean Van Leeuwen (Juvenile Fiction -- J Va)

In 1803 in Ohio, two young brothers are left to finish the log cabin and guard the land while their father goes back to Pennsylvania to fetch their mother and younger siblings. Lexile Measure 660.



Caddie Woodlawn

Carol Ryrie Brink (Juvenile Classics - J Brink)

Chronicles the adventures of eleven-year-old Caddie growing up with her six brothers and sisters on the Wisconsin frontier in the mid-nineteenth century. Lexile Measure 890.



Charlotte's Rose

A.E. Cannon (Juvenile Fiction -- J Ca)

As a twelve-year-old Welsh immigrant carries a motherless baby along the Mormon Trail in 1856, she comes to love the baby as her own and fear the day the baby's father will reclaim her. Lexile Measure 680.



Hard Gold : The Colorado Gold Rush of 1859, A Tale of the Old West

Avi (Juvenile Fiction -- J Avi)

Determined to find his nineteen-year-old uncle and best friend, Jesse, who left for Colorado to find enough gold to pay the mortgage and save the family's Iowa farm, twelve-year-old Early Whittcomb signs on to work his way west on a wagon train heading for the gold fields near Pike's Peak in 1858. Lexile Measure 740.



Hattie Big Sky

Kirby Larson (Juvenile Fiction -- J Larson)

After inheriting her uncle's homesteading claim in Montana, sixteen-year-old orphan Hattie Brooks travels from Iowa in 1917 to make a home for herself and encounters some unexpected problems related to the war being fought in Europe. Lexile Measure 700.



Journey to Nowhere

Mary Jane Auch (Juvenile Fiction -- J Au)

In 1815, while traveling by covered wagon to settle in the wilderness of western New York, eleven-year-old Mem is accidentally left behind and has to find ways to survive in the forest until reunited with her family. Lexile Measure 770.



May B. : A Novel-in-Verse

Caroline Starr Rose (Juvenile Fiction -- J Rose)

When a failed wheat crop nearly bankrupts the Betterly family, Pa pulls twelve-year-old May from school and hires her out to a couple new to the Kansas frontier. Lexile Measure 680.



Mr. Tucket

Gary Paulsen (Juvenile Fiction -- J Paulsen)

In 1848, while on a wagon train headed for Oregon, fourteen-year-old Francis Tucket is kidnapped by Pawnee Indians and then falls in with a one-armed trapper who teaches him how to live in the wild. Lexile Measure 830. (See also Call Me Francis Tucket, Tucket's Ride, Tucket's Gold, Tucket's Home)



Our Only May Amelia

Jennifer L. Holm (Juvenile Fiction -- J Ho)

As the only girl in a Finnish American family of seven brothers, May Amelia Jackson resents being expected to act like a lady while growing up in Washington state in 1899. Lexile Measure 900. (See also The Trouble with May Amelia)



Prairie Songs

Pam Conrad (Juvenile Fiction -- J Con)

Louisa's life in a loving pioneer family on the Nebraska prairie is altered by the arrival of a new doctor and his beautiful, tragically frail wife. Lexile Measure 780.



Sarah, Plain and Tall

Patricia MacLachlan (Juvenile Fiction -- J MacLach)

Series: MacLachlan, Patricia. Sarah, plain and tall ; 1.

When their father invites a mail-order bride to come live with them in their prairie home, Caleb and Anna are captivated by their new mother and hope that she will stay. Lexile Measure 560. (See also Skylark, Caleb's Story, More Perfect than the Moon, Grandfather's Dance)



The Ballad of Lucy Whipple

Karen Cushman (Juvenile Fiction -- J Cu)

In 1849, twelve-year-old California Morning Whipple, who renames herself Lucy, is distraught when her mother moves the family from Massachusetts to a rough California mining town. Lexile Measure 1030.



The Boy Who Saved Cleveland : Based on a True Story

James Cross Giblin (Juvenile Fiction -- J Gi)

During a malaria epidemic in late eighteenth-century Cleveland, Ohio, ten-year-old Seth Doan surprises his family, his neighbors, and himself by having the strength to carry and grind enough corn to feed everyone. Lexile Measure 740.



The Courage of Sarah Noble

Alice Dalgliesh (Juvenile Classics - J Da)

Remembering her mother's words, an eight-year-old girl finds courage to go alone with her father to build a new home in the Connecticut wilderness and to stay with the Indians when her father goes back to bring the rest of the family. Lexile Measure 610.



The Matchlock Gun

Walter D. Edmonds (Juvenile Classics - J Ed)

In 1756, during the French and Indian War in upper New York state, ten-year-old Edward is determined to protect his home and family with the ancient, and much too heavy, Spanish gun that his father had given him before leaving home to fight the enemy. Lexile Measure 860.



The Sign of the Beaver

Elizabeth George Speare (Juvenile Fiction -- J Sp)

Left alone to guard the family's wilderness home in eighteenth-century Maine, a boy is hard-pressed to survive until local Indians teach him their skills. Lexile Measure 770.



Worth

A. LaFaye (Juvenile Fiction -- J La)

After breaking his leg, eleven-year-old Nate feels useless because he cannot work on the family farm in nineteenth-century Nebraska, and he feels even worse when his father brings home an orphan boy to help with the chores. Lexile Measure 830.
