

Ms. Nichols' Reading Class
Summer Reading List
For students starting the 2009-2010 school year in the Cougars group

Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli

Orphaned as an infant, Jerry Magee is raised by his aunt and uncle until he runs away at age eight. He finds his way to Two Mills, Pennsylvania, where the legend of "Maniac" Magee begins after he beats two of the best sports stars in the town. Maniac really wants to find a home, and despite all his problems, he learns a lot about himself and others through his adventures. Jerry Spinelli is a very popular, funny and well-read author; check him out!

Cirque Du Freak by Darren Shan (or any of the books from this series)

In the tradition of Stephen King, *Cirque Du Freak* is the frightening story of a young boy whose visit to a mysterious freak show leads him on a journey into a dark world of vampires. Filled with grotesque creatures, murderous vampires, and a petrifying ending, *Cirque Du Freak* will chill, thrill, and leave you wanting more!

*Not for the faint of heart!

The Watsons Go to Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis

Kenny's family is known in Flint, Michigan, as the Weird Watsons, for lots of good reasons. Younger sister Joetta has been led to believe she has to be overdressed in the winter because Southern folks (their mother is from Alabama) freeze solid and have to be picked up by the city garbage trucks. Kenny, the narrator, does well in school and tries to meet his hard-working parents' expectations. After a string of trouble, Mr. and Mrs. Watson decide that tough guy, older brother Byron, must be removed from the bad influences of the city and his gang. They feel that a summer with his tiny, strict grandmother would help. Soon the whole family is packed up, ready to make the drive from Flint, Michigan, straight into one of the most chilling moments in America's history: the burning of the Sixteenth Avenue Baptist Church. Both funny and sad, this award-winning book has been read and loved by many.

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry

The evacuation of Jews from Nazi-held Denmark is one of the great untold stories of World War II. On September 29, 1943, word got out in Denmark that Jews were to be detained and then sent to the death camps. Within hours the Danish resistance, population and police arranged a small boat to herd 7,000 Jews to Sweden. Lois Lowry fictionalizes a true-story account to bring this courageous tale to life. She brings the experience to life through the eyes of 10-year-old Annemarie Johanesen, whose family harbors her best friend, Ellen Rosen, on the eve of the round-up and helps smuggle Ellen's family out of the country. Brave Ellen fights with her family, but will they all make it to safety? Read the book and find out!

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card (or any of the books in the series)

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 parents, his cruel 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. Yet growing up in an artificial community of young soldiers, Ender suffers greatly from loneliness, pressure from teachers and a fear of the alien invaders. Back on Earth, Peter and Valentine forge an intellectual alliance and attempt to change the course of history. Even students who don't like science fiction will enjoy this!!

Crispin by Avi

After being declared a "wolf's head" by his manor's corrupt steward for a crime he didn't commit (meaning that anyone can kill him like a common animal--*and* collect a reward), this timid boy has to flee a tiny village that's the only world he's ever known. But before our hero escapes, Avi makes sure that we're thoroughly briefed on the injustices of feudalism--the countless taxes cottars must pay, the constant violence, the inability of a flawed church to protect its parishioners, etc. Avi then folds in the book's central mystery just as the boy is leaving: "Asta's son," as he's always been known, learns from the village priest that his Christian name is Crispin, and that his parents' origins--and fates--might be more perplexing than he ever imagined. Fans of fantasy and historical fiction will LOVE this book, or any of Avi's 50+ novels!