

Novelist's Must Reads  
October's Selected Genre: *Mystery*

Title: Mystery Must-Reads

**Document Type:** Recommended Reads

**Fiction/Nonfiction:** Fiction

**Description:** These mysteries are guaranteed to keep you up at night, furiously turning the pages to put the pieces of the puzzle together, though some might leave you hanging.

**Reading Level:** Teens

**Min./Max. Grade Level:** 7-12

**1. Down the Rabbit Hole**

Author: Abrahams, Peter  
Publisher: Laura Geringer Books,  
Pub Date: c2005.  
Lexile: 680  
Teens  
ISBN: 0060737018

**Summary:** Like her idol Sherlock Holmes, eighth grader Ingrid Levin-Hill uses her intellect to solve a murder case in her home town of Echo Falls.

**2. Perfect Shot, The**

Author: Alphin, Elaine Marie  
Publisher: Carolrhoda Books,  
Pub Date: 2005.  
Lexile: 990  
Teens  
ISBN: 1575058626

**Summary:** Brian uses basketball to block out memories of his girlfriend and her family who were gunned down a year ago, but the upcoming murder trial and a high school history assignment force him to face the past and decide how far he should go to see justice served. Includes facts about miscarriages of justice in American history.

**3. Desert Crossing** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Broach, Elise  
Publisher: Henry Holt,  
Pub Date: 2006.  
Lexile: 520  
Teens  
ISBN: 0805077626

**Summary:** A summer trip across the New Mexico desert turns nightmarish for fourteen-year-old Lucy, her older brother Jamie, and his best friend Kit, as they become involved in the suspicious death of a young girl.

**4. Road of the Dead, The** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Brooks, Kevin  
Publisher: Chicken House,  
Pub Date: 2006.  
Lexile: 700  
Teens  
ISBN: 0439786231

**Summary:** Two brothers, sons of an incarcerated gypsy, leave London and travel to an isolated and desolate village, in search of the brutal killer of their sister.

**5. Tenderness**

Author: Cormier, Robert  
Publisher: Delacorte Press,  
Pub Date: copyright 1997.  
Lexile: 960  
Teens  
ISBN: 0385322860

**Summary:** A psychological thriller told from the points of view of a teenage serial killer and the runaway girl who fallen in love with him.

## 6. Killing Mr. Griffin

Author: Duncan, Lois  
Publisher: Little, Brown,  
Pub Date: 1978.  
Lexile: 720  
Teens  
ISBN: 0316195499

**Summary:** A teenager casually suggests playing a cruel trick on the English teacher, but did he intend it to end with murder?

## 7. Last shot (in AJHS Library)

Author: Feinstein, John  
Publisher: Knopf :  
Pub Date: 2005.  
Lexile: 760  
Teens  
ISBN: 0375831681

**Summary:** After winning a basketball reporting contest, eighth graders Stevie and Susan Carol are sent to cover the Final Four tournament, where they discover that a talented player is being blackmailed into throwing the final game.

## 8. Christopher Killer, The

Author: Ferguson, Alane  
Publisher: Viking/Sleuth,  
Pub Date: 2006.  
Lexile: 800  
Teens  
ISBN: 0670060089

**Summary:** On the payroll as an assistant to her coroner father, seventeen-year-old Cameryn Mahoney uses her knowledge of forensic medicine to catch the killer of a friend while putting herself in terrible danger.

## 9. Dead Girls Don't Write Letters

Author: Giles, Gail  
Publisher: Roaring Brook Press,  
Pub Date: c2003.  
Lexile: 550  
Teens  
ISBN: 0761328130

**Summary:** Fourteen-year-old Sunny is stunned when a total stranger shows up at her house posing as her older sister Jazz, who supposedly died out of town in a fire months earlier.

## 10. Lulu Dark Can See Through Walls

Author: Madison, Bennett  
Publisher: Razorbill,  
Pub Date: 2005  
Teens  
ISBN: 1595140107

**Summary:** When someone steals her purse and her identity, high-school junior and reluctant girl sleuth Lulu Dark investigates.

## 11. Acceleration

Author: McNamee, Graham  
Publisher: Wendy Lamb Books,  
Pub Date: 2003.  
Lexile: 670  
Teens  
ISBN: 0385731191

**Summary:** Stuck working in the Lost and Found of the Toronto Transit Authority for the summer, seventeen-year-old Duncan finds the diary of a serial killer and sets out to stop him.

## 12. Kiki Strike

Author: Miller, Kirsten  
Publisher: Bloomsbury Children's Books :  
Pub Date: 2006.

Lexile: 890  
Older Kids  
ISBN: 1582349606

**Summary:** Life becomes more interesting for Ananka Fishbein when, at the age of twelve, she discovers an underground room in the park across from her New York City apartment and meets a mysterious girl called Kiki Strike who claims that she, too, wants to explore the subterranean world.

### 13. **Who are you?** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Nixon, Joan Lowery  
Publisher: Delacorte Press,  
Pub Date: copyright 1999.  
Lexile: 600  
Teens  
ISBN: 0385325665

**Summary:** A teenage girl discovers that a wounded artist has been keeping a file on her.

### 14. **Body of Christopher Creed, The**

Author: Plum-Ucci, Carol  
Publisher: Harcourt,  
Pub Date: copyright 2000.  
Lexile: 720  
Teens  
ISBN: 0152023887

**Summary:** Torey Adams, a high school junior with a seemingly perfect life, struggles with doubts and questions surrounding the mysterious disappearance of the class outcast.

### 15. **Fake ID**

Author: Sorrells, Walter  
Publisher: Dutton Children's Books,  
Pub Date: 2005.  
Lexile: 650  
Teens  
ISBN: 0525475141

**Summary:** After a lifetime of moving and assuming new identities, sixteen-year-old Chass begins to piece together the disturbing past that haunts her and her mother and which involves a mysterious tape, a deceased popular singer, and the secrets of several people in a small Alabama town.

### 16. **Killer's cousin, The**

Author: Werlin, Nancy  
Publisher: Delacorte Press,  
Pub Date: 1998.  
Lexile: 600  
Teens  
ISBN: 038532560

**Summary:** After being acquitted of murder, seventeen-year-old David goes to stay with relatives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he finds himself forced to face his past as he learns more about his strange young cousin Lily.

### 17. **So Yesterday**

Author: Westerfeld, Scott  
Publisher: Razorbill,  
Pub Date: 2004.  
Lexile: 770  
Teens  
ISBN: 159514000X

**Summary:** Hunter Braque, a New York City teenager who is paid by corporations to spot what is "cool," combines his analytical skills with girlfriend Jen's creative talents to find a missing person and thwart a conspiracy directed at the heart of consumer culture.

Title: Teen Detectives  
Document Type: Recommended Reads  
Fiction/Nonfiction: Fiction

**1. Chasing Vermeer** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Balliett, Blue  
Publisher: Scholastic  
Press,  
Pub Date: 2004.  
Lexile: 770  
Teens  
ISBN: 0439372941

**Summary:** When seemingly unrelated and strange events start to happen and a precious Vermeer painting disappears, eleven-year-olds Petra and Calder combine their talents to solve an international art scandal.

**2. Compass in the Blood**

Author: Coles, William E.  
Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers,  
Pub Date: 2001.  
Popularity:  
Fiction  
Teens  
ISBN: 0689831811

**Summary:** While working with a Pittsburgh television journalist on a project to uncover the truth about the 1902 Katherine Soffel scandal, college student Dee Armstrong learns about different types of betrayal.

**3. Terrorist, The** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Cooney, Caroline B.  
Publisher: Scholastic Press  
Pub Date: copyright 1997  
Lexile: 710  
Teens  
ISBN: 0590228536

**Summary:** Sixteen-year-old Laura, an American living in London, tries to find the person responsible for the death of her younger brother Billy, who has been killed by a terrorist bomb.

**4. Vanishing Chip, The**

Author: Delaney, Mark  
Publisher: Peachtree,  
Pub Date: copyright 1998.  
Lexile: 700  
Teens  
ISBN: 1561451762

**Summary:** When Mattie's grandfather becomes a suspect in the theft of a valuable computer chip, Peter, Byte, Jake, and Mattie, four high school students who consider themselves misfits, pool their talents to try to discover who really stole the chip and how.

**5. Chelsey and the Green-Haired Kid**

Author: Gorman, Carol  
Publisher: Houghton Mifflin,  
Pub Date: 1987.  
Lexile: 700  
Teens

**Summary:** Convinced that the fatal accident she witnessed at the basketball game was not accidental, thirteen-year-old Chelsey, a paraplegic, and her unusual friend, Jack, join forces to prove it was a deliberate murder.

**6. Ghost in the Tokaido Inn, The** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Hoobler, Dorothy  
Publisher: Philomel Books,  
Pub Date: copyright 1999.  
Lexile: 740  
Teens  
ISBN: 039923330X

**Summary:** While attempting to solve the mystery of a stolen jewel, Seikei, a merchant's son who longs to be a samurai, joins a group of kabuki actors in eighteenth-century Japan.

**7. Stormbreaker** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Horowitz, Anthony  
Publisher: Philomel Books,  
Pub Date: 2001.  
Lexile: 670  
Teens  
ISBN: 0399236201

**Summary:** After the death of the uncle who had been his guardian, fourteen-year-old Alex Rider is coerced to continue his uncle's dangerous work for Britain's intelligence agency, MI6.

**8. Lulu Dark Can See Through Walls**

Author: Madison, Bennett  
Publisher: Razorbill,  
Pub Date: 2005.  
Teens  
ISBN: 1595140107

**Summary:** When someone steals her purse and her identity, high-school junior and reluctant girl sleuth Lulu Dark investigates.

**9. Vandemark Mummy, The**

Author: Voigt, Cynthia  
Publisher: Atheneum,  
Pub Date: 1991.  
Teens

**Summary:** When their father is made responsible for a college's collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts, twelve-year-old Phineas and his older sister Althea try to find out why the collection is the target of thieves, especially when the mummy disappears.

**10. Undertaker's Gone Bananas, The**

Author: Zindel, Paul  
Publisher: Harper,  
Pub Date: copyright 1978.  
Teens

**Summary:** Two teenagers think a neighbor, an undertaker, has murdered his wife, but can't convince anyone else.

**Title: Historical Mysteries**

**Document Type:** Recommended Reads

**Fiction/Nonfiction:** Fiction

**1. Tale of Hill Top Farm, The**

Author: Albert, Susan Wittig  
Publisher: Berkley Prime Crime,  
Pub Date: 2004.  
Teens  
ISBN: 0425196348

**Summary:** After purchasing a farm in the Lake District of England, an animal lover attempts to befriend her fellow villagers, while her animal companions solve a baffling mystery, in a mystery tale inspired by the life of Beatrix Potter.

**2. Stones**

Author: Bell, William  
Publisher: Doubleday Canada,  
Pub Date: c2001.  
Teens  
ISBN: 038565829X

**Summary:** Garnet Havelock's mundane high school life becomes increasingly complicated as he and his new girlfriend, Raphaella Skye, investigate a decades-old crime, an abandoned African Methodist church and a strange haunting all of which expose some difficult truths about historical and contemporary hatred and tolerance.

**3. Second Sight Blackwood**

Author: Blackwood, Gary L.

Publisher: Dutton Children's Books,

Pub Date: 2005.

Teens

ISBN: 0525474811

**Summary:** In Washington, D.C., during the last days of the Civil War, a teenage boy who performs in a mind reading act befriends a clairvoyant girl whose frightening visions foreshadow an assassination plot.

#### 4. **Playmaker, The**

Author: Cheaney, J. B.

Publisher: A. A. Knopf,

Pub Date: copyright 2000.

Teens

ISBN: 037580577X

**Summary:** While working as an apprentice in a London theater company in 1597, fourteen-year-old Richard uncovers a mystery involving the disappearance of his father and a traitorous plot to overthrow Queen Elizabeth.

#### 5. **Shadows on the Sea** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Harlow, Joan Hiatt

Publisher: Margaret K. McElderry Books,

Pub Date: c2003.

Lexile: 670

Popularity:

Fiction

Teens

ISBN: 0689849265

**Summary:** In 1942, fourteen-year-old Jill goes to stay with her grandmother on the coast of Maine, where she is introduced to the often gossipy nature of small-town life, and discovers that the war is closer than she thought.

#### 6. **Minister's Daughter, The**

Author: Hearn, Julie

Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers,

Pub Date: 2005.

Lexile: 860

Teens

ISBN: 0689876904

**Summary:** In 1645 in England, the daughters of the town minister successfully accuse a local healer and her granddaughter of witchcraft to conceal an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, but years later during the 1692 Salem trials their lie has unexpected repercussions.

#### 7. **Killing in Plymouth Colony, A**

Author: Hurst, Carol Otis

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Co.,

Pub Date: 2003.

Teens

ISBN: 0618275975

**Summary:** In Plymouth Colony in the 1630s, John continually disappoints his father, Governor William Bradford, during a difficult time as the colony faces its first murder and subsequent trial.

#### 8. **Star of Kazan, The** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Ibbotson, Eva

Publisher: Dutton Children's Books,

Pub Date: 2004.

Lexile: 880

Teens

ISBN: 0525473475

**Summary:** After twelve-year-old Annika, a foundling living in late nineteenth-century Vienna, inherits a trunk of costume jewelry, a woman claiming to be her aristocratic mother arrives and takes her to live in a strangely decrepit mansion in Germany.

#### 9. **Seventh knot, The**

Author: Karr, Kathleen

Publisher: Cavendish Children's Books,

Pub Date: 2003.

Teens

ISBN: 0761451358

**Summary:** Two brothers touring Europe in the 19th century become embroiled in a mystery involving Albrecht Durer's knot woodcuts and a secret German society when they go in search of their uncle's enigmatic missing valet.

**10. Wreckers, The** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Lawrence, Iain

Publisher: Delacorte Press,

Pub Date: c1998.

Lexile: 640

Teens

ISBN: 0385325355

**Summary:** Shipwrecked after a vicious storm, fourteen-year-old John Spencer attempts to save his father and himself while also dealing with an evil secret about the English coastal town where they are stranded.

**11. Black Duck** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Lisle, Janet Taylor

Publisher: Philomel Books,

Pub Date: 2006.

Lexile: 790

Teens

ISBN: 0399239634

**Summary:** Years afterwards, Ruben Hart tells the story of how, in 1929 Newport, Rhode Island, his family and his best friend's family were caught up in the violent competition among groups trying to control the local rum-smuggling trade.

**12. Circle of time, A**

Author: Montes, Marisa

Publisher: Harcourt,

Pub Date: 2002

Lexile: 650

Teens

ISBN: 0152026266

**Summary:** In 1996, a fourteen-year-old girl in a coma is forced back in time by a girl who died in 1906, and who needs help in righting a series of terrible wrongs.

**13. Operation Red Jericho**

Author: Mowll, Joshua

Publisher: Candlewick Press,

Pub Date: 2005.

Lexile: 850

Teens

ISBN: 0763626341

**Summary:** The posthumous papers of Rebecca MacKenzie document her adventures, along with her brother Doug, in 1920s China as the teenaged siblings are sent to live aboard their uncle's ship where they become involved in the dangerous activities of a mysterious secret society called the Honourable Guild of Specialists.

**14. Death and the Arrow**

Author: Priestley, Chris

Publisher: A.A. Knopf,

Pub Date: c2003.

Teens

ISBN: 0375824669

**Summary:** After his friend Will, a pickpocket in London in 1715, is murdered as part of a series of mysterious deaths, fifteen-year-old Tom Marlowe asks his friend Dr. Harker to help find the killer.

**15. Ruby in the Smoke, The** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Pullman, Philip

Publisher: A. A. Knopf,

Pub Date: 1985.

Lexile: 750

Teens

ISBN: 039488826X

**Summary:** In nineteenth-century London, sixteen-year-old Sally Lockhart, a recent orphan, becomes involved in a deadly search for a mys-

terious ruby.

### 16. Tin Princess, The

Author: Pullman, Philip  
Publisher: A.A.Knopf,  
Pub Date: copyright 1994  
Teens  
ISBN: 067984757X

**Summary:** In 1882 sixteen-year-old Becky applies for a tutoring job in London and becomes embroiled in assassination, intrigue, and dangerous politics in the small European kingdom of Razkavia.

### 17. Mimus

Author: Thal, Lilli  
Publisher: Annick Press,  
Pub Date: 2005.  
Lexile: 900  
Teens  
ISBN: 1550379259

**Summary:** Tricked by the enemy, the King of Moltavia is imprisoned along with his son, Prince Florin, who must find a way save himself, his father, and his kingdom after he is forced into an apprenticeship with the court jester, Mimus.

### 18. Montmorency

Author: Updale, Eleanor  
Publisher: Orchard Books,  
Pub Date: 2004, c2003.  
Teens  
ISBN: 0439580358

**Summary:** In Victorian London, after his life is saved by a young physician, a thief utilizes the knowledge he gains in prison and from the scientific lectures he attends as the physician's case study exhibit to create a new, highly successful, double life for himself.

#### Title: Suspense

**Document Type:** Recommended Reads

**Fiction/Nonfiction:** Fiction

### 1. Lucas

Author: Brooks, Kevin  
Publisher: Chicken House/Scholastic,  
Pub Date: 2003.  
Lexile: 670  
Teens  
ISBN: 0439456983

**Summary:** On an isolated English island, fifteen-year-old Caitlin McCann makes the painful journey from adolescence to adulthood through her experiences with a mysterious boy, whose presence has an unsettling effect on the island's inhabitants.

### 2. Someone is Hiding on Alcatraz Island

Author: Bunting, Eve  
Publisher: Clarion Books,  
Pub Date: copyright 1984.  
Lexile: 630  
Teens

**Summary:** When he offends the toughest gang in his San Francisco School, Danny tries to elude them by going to Alcatraz only to find himself and a Park Service employee trapped by the gang in an old prison cell block.

### 3. Wish List, The

Author: Colfer, Eoin  
Publisher: Miramax Books/Hyperion Books for Children,  
Pub Date: 2003, c2000.  
Lexile: 520

Teens

ISBN: 0786818638

**Summary:** Forced out of her home by her stepfather after her mother's death, Meg Finn becomes a wanderer, until an attempted robbery goes wrong, leaving Meg's spirit in limbo, where she becomes involved in a battle between good and evil.

#### 4. **Code Orange** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Cooney, Caroline B.

Publisher: Delacorte Press,

Pub Date: 2005.

Lexile: 850

Teens

ISBN: 0385732597

**Summary:** While conducting research for a school paper on smallpox, Mitty finds an envelope containing 100-year-old smallpox scabs and fears that he has infected himself and all of New York City.

#### 5. **Tightrope**

Author: Cross, Gillian

Publisher: Holiday House,

Pub Date: 1999.

Lexile: 550

Teens

ISBN: 0823415120

**Summary:** When she begins receiving bizarre threatening messages from someone who seems to know her every move, fourteen-year-old Ashley, after seeking help from the neighborhood tough guy, comes to realize that she alone can end the stalker's reign of terror.

#### 6. **Daughters of Eve**

Author: Duncan, Lois

Publisher: Little, Brown,

Pub Date: c1979.

Lexile: 760

Teens

ISBN: 0316195502

**Summary:** A high school teacher uses the guise of feminist philosophy to manipulate the lives of a group of girls with chilling results.

#### 7. **I Know What You Did Last Summer** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Duncan, Lois

Publisher: Little,

Pub Date: 1973.

Lexile: 760

Teens

ISBN: 0316195464

**Summary:** Four teenagers who have desperately tried to conceal their responsibility for a hit-and-run accident are pursued by a mystery person seeking revenge.

#### 8. **Fat Man, The**

Author: Gee, Maurice

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers,

Pub Date: 1997, copyright 1994.

Teens

ISBN: 0689811829

**Summary:** In 1933, Herbert Muskie returns to his rundown hometown of Loomis, New Zealand, and uses a combination of cunning and psychological threats to take control of the lives of twelve-year-old Colin Potter and his family as part of a plan to get even for the mistreatment he suffered as a schoolboy.

#### 9. **Escape From Memory** (in AJHS Library)

Author: Haddix, Margaret Peterson

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers,

Pub Date: 2003.

Lexile: 630

Teens

ISBN: 0689854218

**Summary:** Allowing herself to be hypnotized, fifteen-year-old Kira reveals memories of another time and place that may eventually cost her and

her mother their lives.

#### 10. **Young Unicorns, The**

Author: L'Engle, Madeleine

Publisher: Farrar,

Pub Date: copyright 1968.

Teens

**Summary:** A seventeen-year-old boy, former member of a tough New York gang, a blind and talented twelve-year-old musician, the Austin family, and Canon Tallis are among the key characters who become involved in a frightening and evil scheme relying on the ability of a refined laser to give complete power over people's minds.

#### 11. **Jude**

Author: Morgenroth, Kate

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers,

Pub Date: c2004.

Lexile: 800

Teens

ISBN: 0689864795

**Summary:** Still reeling from his drug-dealing father's murder, moving in with the wealthy mother he never knew, and transferring to a private school, fifteen-year-old Jude is tricked into pleading guilty to a crime he did not commit.

#### 12. **Boy Who Couldn't Die, The**

Author: Sleator, William

Publisher: Amulet Books,

Pub Date: 2004.

Teens

ISBN: 0810948249

**Summary:** When his best friend dies in a plane crash, sixteen-year-old Ken has a ritual performed that will make him invulnerable, but soon learns that he had good reason to be suspicious of the woman he paid to lock his soul away.

#### 13. **Inside Out**

Author: Trueman, Terry

Publisher: HarperTempest,

Pub Date: c2003.

Lexile: 710

Teens

ISBN: 0066239621

**Summary:** A sixteen-year-old with schizophrenia is caught up in the events surrounding an attempted robbery by two other teens who eventually hold him hostage.

#### 14. **Boy in the Burning House, The**

Author: Wynne-Jones, Tim

Publisher: Melanie Kroupa Books/Farrar Straus Giroux

Pub Date: 2001

Lexile: 650

Teens

ISBN: 0374309302

**Summary:** Trying to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance from their rural Canadian community, fourteen-year-old Jim gets help from the disturbed Ruth Rose, who suspects her stepfather, a local pastor.

You can find **Novelist** at [www.amboy.net](http://www.amboy.net), click on Amboy High School link, go to AHS New Library Website, and then click on Databases.

You will never beat Agatha Christie (AJHS has 1 book), Joan Lowry Nixon (AJHS has 34 books) and Lois Duncan (AJHS has 2 books) they are fantastic writers of mystery books. The Fire-Us Trilogy by Jennifer Armstrong is a highly recommended mystery trilogy. The Westing Game is another book by Ellen Raskin that we have at AJHS Library.

Branching out of mysteries a bit... Lloyd Alexander (AJHS has 5 books), Robin McKinley (AJHS has 3 books), Madeline L'Engle (AJHS has 7 books), Nancy Farmer (AJHS has 4 books), T.A. Baron and Susan Cooper (AJHS has 5 books) are notable authors of great reads.