Easier Reading: High Rock Summer 2020
All books are also on the longer list. Verse novels, graphic novels, and shorter books.

Be Yourself: Realistic Fiction

In *Booked*, twelve year old Nick lives for soccer. His life off the field is more complicated. His linguistics professor father wants him to memorize words from his dictionary, his mother is leaving to pursue her dream job, and a couple of bullies pay too much attention to him. The rapping librarian with a Mohawk is a help, and readers will be interested to check out the books he recommends. (Verse novel. Good for sports fans although perhaps not technically an easy read)

Brosgol, Vera. *Be Prepared.* (PB 2018)
Vera wants to go to summer camp, and she is excited that there is one her family can afford: Russian camp. At last, a place where she might fit in. If only it were as easy as she wished! A graphic novel about friendship. (less text, graphic novel)

A verse novel about the year Garvey learns to follow his passions. His father likes sports; Garvey prefers reading, astronomy, and eating junk food. When his friend convinces him to join chorus, he gets a chance to be truly good at something. A verse novel.
(a short book, verse novel - lots of white space)

Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *One for the Murphys* (PB 2013)
Casey knows how to be tough. She does not know how to be a member of a loving family. When she joins the Murphy family as their foster daughter, she learns that she too deserves kindness in her life.
(Straightforward plot, popular book)

Astrid thinks the perfect summer will be attending Roller Derby camp with her best friend Nicole. Instead, Nicole chooses to attend ballet camp, and skating is much harder than Astrid had anticipated. A graphic novel about friendships and perseverance.
(Graphic novel, similar to *Smile*)
Kehret, Peg. *Stolen Children* (PB 2010)
The babysitting class Amy takes does not tell her what to do if the child she is watching is kidnapped and the kidnappers take her along.
(Exciting plot, shorter book)

A bag of Legos and the chance to build his city become the path to healing after Lolly’s brother is murdered. Urban setting, diverse characters, adults who want to help Lolly. Winner of many awards this winter.
(Although the book is longer, the vocabulary isn’t difficult)

James Grimm wants to be the funniest standup comedian. The problem? He is in a wheelchair and can not stand up. The secret to his past unfolds gradually as he works toward his dream of becoming a comedian. Good for graduates of the Wimpy Kid series.
(Large print with pictures to break up text)

*Frazzled #2: Ordinary Mishaps and Inevitable Catastrophes* (2017)
*Frazzled #3: Minor Incidents and Absolute Uncertainties* (2019):
Abby Wu isn't sure about middle school. She knows about being in the middle; she is a middle child, and she hates riding in the middle seat in the car. Why would middle school be any better than the other middles? Her only favorite class is lunch. With pages similar in format to Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Abby describes how she finds her way in middle school.
(Not full pages of text, line drawings, similar to Diary of a Wimpy Kid)

Moon is everything Christine isn't. She's confident, impulsive, artistic…and though they both grew up in the same Chinese-American suburb, Moon is somehow unlike anyone Christine has ever known. But after Moon moves in next door, these unlikely friends are soon best friends, sharing their favorite music videos and painting their toenails when Christine's strict parents aren't around.
(graphic novel)
Warga, Jasmine. *Other Words for Home* (2019)
Jude and her pregnant mother flee Syria for the safety of her uncle’s home in the United States. Adjusting to a new country is difficult, as is missing her father and brothers who are still in Syria. A verse novel. Newbery Honor Book. (Verse novel, shorter book)

**Become a Community: Realistic Fiction**

Bauer, Joan. *Close to Famous* (PB 2012)
Cooking is the key to becoming part of a community, Foster McFee has learned. Foster can memorize a recipe, but she is not able to read; she dreads starting a new school. Will the reclusive movie star who is hiding in town really be able to help her? (Main character has a reading disability but many other skills, straightforward plot)

Buyea, Rob. *Because of Mr. Terupt* (PB 2011) Sequel *Mr. Terupt Falls Again* (PB 2013) *Saving Mr. Terupt*
The new teacher figures out the class quickly and gently encourages the students to be themselves. When he is hurt in an accident, the class must find a way to continue without him. Told from the perspective of seven of the students. (Popular book, compelling characters)

Teddy Youngblood is in a coma following an incident at football camp. Told through texts, letters, newspaper articles, the cause of the injury unfolds. The reading goes quickly, the message is important. A favorite, recommended by High Rock’s reluctant readers. (Lots of white space, written in text messages, letters, less formal writing)

Holt, K. A. *Rhyme Schemer* (PB 2015)
A free verse novel about Kevin, bully turned victim, whose unique brand of poetry (created from library books) will appeal to Diary of a Wimpy Kid readers. (Short verse novel, compelling character, popular among High Rock’s self proclaimed non-readers)
Kahn, Hena. *Amina’s Voice* (PB 2018)
Amina is a Pakistani-American who loves to sing but does not want to be in the spotlight. With sixth grade brings changes in friendships and a visit from her uncle who disapproves of her piano playing. Her community must work together when there is fire at her mosque.
(Realistic fiction friendship story)

**Be Yourself: Historical Fiction**

Rose, Caroline Starr. *May B* (PB 2014)
May’s father sends her fifteen long prairie miles away to help a newly married couple with their homestead. This verse novel becomes a survival story as May is left to cope on the homestead alone.
(Verse novel, adventure story)

Thirteen year old Lora volunteers to teach people to read as part of Fidel Castro’s national literacy campaign. A short, powerful perspective on the individual efforts of one girl and the rise of communism in Cuba.
(Short and exciting book - real danger)

Yelchin, Eugene. *Breaking Stalin’s Nose* (PB 2013)
Sasha strives to be a good communist, following all of the rules of his leader, Stalin. The night before he is to become a Young Pioneer, however, his illusions shatter. A short book, and a glimpse into the lives of children in the Soviet Union.
(Shorter book, includes drawings)

**Become a Community: Historical Fiction**

Grace’s family warns her to keep quiet when she starts work as a slave in the Big House. When she rebels, they need to flee quickly. This verse novel tells of their journey to the Great Dismal Swamp, a refuge for runaway slaves.
(Verse novel - lots of white space on page)
It is D Day: June 6, 1944, on the beach of Normandy as the Allied troops and French resistance fighters join to combat the German forces. One day, many voices, different perspectives, all intent on the same mission.

(Larger print, use of white space, exciting plot)

---

**Be Yourself: Mystery and Adventure**

The famous hippo, mascot of the megazoo FunJungle, is belly up in his exhibit. How did Harry die? Teddy is convinced that Harry was murdered, and his investigation turns up intrigue and danger.

---

Scoob is in trouble. He is suspended from school which will bring even more punishment from his strict father. Grandma comes to the rescue with a road trip in a brand new motorhome. With the help of her old Green Book, they will retrace the steps she had taken with grandpa years before. But why is Grandma turning off the phone? Why are they stopping at certain places? A road trip through a history of race relations in the American South that will reveal some of the hidden mysteries of Scoob’s family.

---

**Become a Community: Mystery and Adventure**

There is a gun on the playground, and Thelonius is accused of bringing it. He has a reputation for crazy stunts, but he is not a criminal. He needs to find out where that gun came from.
Grabenstein, Chris. *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library.* (PB 2014) *Mr. Lemoncello’s Library Olympics* (2016)

Twelve lucky essay winners spend the night in the fantastic new library and then are given the challenge of finding the secret escape route. In the Library Olympics, teams from around the country compete in a contest that helps determine the true value of a library.

(Compelling plot, straightforward adventure)

**Be Yourself: Science Fiction**


Cog, short for “cognitive development,” is a robot built to learn. After an accident separates him from his creator, he wakes up in a lab where scientists are trying to dismantle him. He gathers four robot accomplices and heads off on his mission to find her. Wall-E meets *The Wild Robot.*

(Occasional pictures, straightforward adventure)

**Become a Community: Science Fiction**

Black, Jay. *Urban Outlaws* (PB 2015) In Robin Hood style, five gifted kids perform Random Acts of Kindness. They may have met their match in pursuing Proteus, an evil computer that can steal data from anywhere and wants to take over the world. Technical wizardry, fast paced action. There are now five in the series. Fans of Alex Rider will appreciate the series.

(Adventure book, High/Low designation

A group of orphans working together to make the world better - good for readers who require a steady plot and lots of action)


*Can a robot survive in the wilderness?* When robot Roz opens her eyes for the first time, she discovers that she is alone on a remote, wild island. She has no idea how she got there or what her purpose is—but she knows she needs to survive.

(Occasional pictures, white space)
Be Yourself: Fantasy

Bacon, Lee. *Joshua Dread* (PB 2013) and series

It is hard for Joshua to keep a low profile in sixth grade because he is hiding two secrets. First, his parents are super villains, and second, he seems to be developing super powers as well. Does he have to use it for evil? Good for readers looking for a funny, action packed book.  
(Adventure, fast read)


In Aster’s family, boys are shapeshifters and girls are witches. The problem is that Aster is interested in witchcraft and has no power to shape shift. First in a series. (A graphic novel.)

Become a Community: Fantasy

Applegate, Katherine. *The One and Only Bob* (sequel to *The One and Only Ivan*) 2020

Bob is back! With the help of his friends, he sets off on a journey to find his long lost sister. Be on the lookout for the movie of *The One and Only Ivan*, originally scheduled to premiere in August.  
(Similar in format to The One and Only Ivan.)


Hansel and Gretel walk through eight tales in this book. As the author frequently warns the reader, these tales are not for young children and that they should go to bed “Because this is where things start to get, well . . . awesome.”  
(Funny narrator, white space on pages, pictures, possible to miss one fairy tale but get the general gist of the story)
Biography/Memoir

Jimmy was one of the most popular kids in his class until he got chicken pox, missed the championship basketball game, and dared to convince his teacher that comic books were valuable literature. A graphic novel memoir. (Colorful graphic novel, funny)

You may have read Peg Kehret’s exciting adventure books. This book is her personal adventure of how she survived polio, a disease that paralyzed her from the neck down. It was only through hard work that she was able to walk again. (Fast read, the print is large, white space on pages)

Jamieson, Victoria and Omar Mohamed. *When Stars are Scattered* (PB 2020)
Jamieson, author of *Roller Girl*, pairs with Somali refugee Omar Mohamed to tell his story of growing up in a refugee camp in Kenya. Details of day to day life, taking care of his nonverbal brother, being hungry, and wanting a chance to have an education. (graphic novel)

Nonfiction

You see something flattened on the side of the road. Do you turn away, or do you go closer to investigate? Insights into the scientific process from a scientists who can’t pass by an opportunity to learn. (Shorter book, pictures, for kids who like nonfiction)