Courage Requires Fortitude
Courage is risk for a reason, not risk for a thrill; courage requires I moderate my impulses and emotions. Courage leads me to consider the heroic journey in which people live for purposes bigger than themselves and their wants and needs.

Middle School
Cycle II 2015-2016
Nightjohn
Gary Paulsen
Nightjohn, an enslaved African American, risks severe punishments by teaching a young slave girl to read. This short novel is an excellent book to read aloud, provides an introduction to slavery, and depicts human rights violations. The book has a sequel titled Sarny.

Sarny
Gary Paulsen
The Civil War is over, and Sarny has been released from the shackles of slavery. This sequel to Gary Paulsen’s acclaimed novel, Nightjohn, follows Sarny as she searches for her children after the war. Hope comes from surprising places, and soon Sarny finds herself in New Orleans, working, teaching, and building her life anew.

Joey Pigza Loses Control
Jack Gantos
When Joey Pigza meets his dad, Carter, for the first time in years, he meets a grown-up version of his old hyperactive self. When his dad wants to teach him how to be a winner and how to take control of his own life, Joey is willing to do whatever his dad says, even though he fears it will do him more harm than good. The book is the sequel to Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key.

High School
Cycle IV 2015-2016
The Pearl
John Steinbeck
This intriguing story of a poor Mexican pearl diver who finds the largest pearl ever seen is a suspenseful reading experience. Steinbeck weaves an allegorical tale of greed and treachery that overwhelms the major characters. Fiction 9-12

Hatchet
Gary Paulsen
After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian survives 54 days in the wilderness, initially with only the aid of a hatchet given to him by his mother. Brian also learns to survive his parents’ divorce. The River is the sequel; Brian’s Winter is an alternate ending to the story; and Brian’s Return chronicles what happens three years after Brian’s wilderness ordeal. Realistic Fiction

Catfish and Mandala: A Two-Wheeled Voyage Through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam
Andrew Pham
This autobiographical account tells of a Vietnamese American who feels like an outsider in both America and Vietnam. After his sister commits suicide, Andrew quits his job at United Airlines and sells all his possessions. He takes off on a year-long bicycle journey through the Mexican desert, around a thousand-mile loop in Japan, and finally travels the length of Vietnam. He chronicles his five months in Vietnam searching for his own cultural identity through food, people, and customs. Narrative Nonfiction 9-12