

Choice 1

1. *Breaking Point* (4 AR points)

Breaking Point follows the story of Vicky Fallon, a Bluford sophomore. In this story, Vicky can't take it. Her father has lost his job. Her parents are constantly fighting, and her troubled little brother is out of control. Once an honor student, Vicky is quickly falling behind in her classes at Bluford High. Now her teachers, friends, and her new boyfriend, Martin Luna, want answers. Pressured from all sides, Vicky knows something is about to snap. But the explosion that hits her home is worse than anything she could imagine.

2. *Alice in Between* (5 AR points)

Thirteen! It's finally happening. Alice McKinley is an actual, official teenager. But the problem is, she still sort of feels like a kid. Wasn't being a teenager supposed to feel different? Turning thirteen happens overnight, but the teenager stuff takes time—and a little more patience than Alice has at the moment!

Still, being thirteen *does* have its advantages, she decides. Alice is allowed to do more exciting things, like take a trip to Chicago with her two best friends. And when she takes a good look at all the relationship problems her older brother has, she realizes that in-between can sometimes be the perfect place.

Choice 2

1. *Bridge to Terabithia* (5 AR points)

Jess Aaron's greatest ambition is to be the fastest runner in the fifth grade. He's been practicing all summer and can't wait to see his classmates' faces when he beats them all. But on the first day of school, a new kid, a new girl, boldly crosses over to the boy's side of the playground and outruns everyone.

That's not a very promising beginning for a friendship, but Jess and Leslie Burke become inseparable. It doesn't matter to Jess that Leslie dresses funny, or that her family has a lot of money — but no TV. Leslie has imagination. Together, she and Jess create Terabithia, a magical kingdom in the woods where the two of them reign as king and queen, and their imaginations set the only limits. Then one morning a terrible tragedy occurs. Only when Jess is able to come to grips with this tragedy does he finally understand the strength and courage Leslie has given him.

2. *Tuck Everlasting* (4 AR points)

Doomed to—or blessed with—eternal life after drinking from a magic spring, the Tuck family wanders about trying to live as inconspicuously and comfortably as they can. When ten-year-old Winnie Foster stumbles on their secret, the Tucks take her home and explain why living forever at one age is less a blessing than it might seem. Complications arise when a stranger who wants to market the spring water for a fortune follows Winnie.

Choice 3

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (10 AR points)

Set in Mississippi at the height of the Depression, this is the story of one family's struggle to maintain their integrity, pride, and independence in the face of racism and social injustice. And it is also Cassie's story—Cassie Logan, an independent girl who discovers over the course of an important year why having land of their own is so crucial to the Logan family, even as she learns to draw strength from her own sense of dignity and self-respect.

Choice 4

Dacey's Song (11 AR points)

The four Tillerman children finally have a home at their grandmother's rundown farm on the Maryland shore. It's what Dacey has dreamed of for her three younger siblings, but after watching over the others for so long, it's hard to let go. Who is Dacey, if she's no longer the caretaker for her family?

Dacey finds herself in new friends, in a growing relationship with her grandmother, and in the satisfaction of refinishing the old boat she found in the barn. Then, as Dacey experiences the trials and pleasures of making a new life, the past comes back with devastating force, and Dacey learns just how necessary -- and painful -- letting go can be.

Choice 5

The Book Thief (18 AR points)

It's just a small story really, about among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist-fighter, and quite a lot of thievery. . . .

Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist--books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau.

This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul.