

The Perfect Book for Every Type of Reluctant Reader I See in Middle School by Lucas Maxwell

There is a book out there for everyone!



Love Teach on April 16, 2016



I love [reluctant readers](#). Finding the right book for them is like waiting for the long, skinny brick in a game of Tetris when you have the perfect spot for it and then BOOM!!! You did it!!

(Does anyone know what I'm talking about?)

Anyway, you won't be able to turn all your students into the type of readers who read so much they forget to eat, but with some work, you can find a book that even your students who are staunchly opposed to reading will want to pick up.

Here are my go-tos for the main types of reluctant readers I encounter.

1) The "I Would Rather Be Gaming" Reluctant Reader

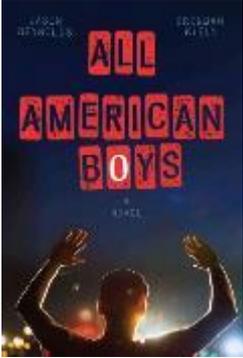
When I find out that I have a reluctant reader who likes video games, I lower my voice and tell them, "I know the best. Book. Ever." And then I give them a copy of *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline. And then a few weeks later they come up to me and say, "Well video games are still better, but that book was pretty awesome. Is there a sequel?" And then I smile because I know it means I actually won. Also a good sell: this book is being made into a movie soon (directed by Spielberg!)



Other titles: [The Halo series](#) (various authors), *Armada* by Ernest Cline

2) The “Reading is Too Mainstream, Man!” Reluctant Reader

Sometimes, all it takes to get a kid to read is to hand him a book privately and say, “You know, there’s some content in this one that not many of your peers could handle, but I think you’re mature enough.” *All-American Boys* is an award-winning, harrowing story by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely that delves into issues of race, police brutality, and violence. It’s as captivating as it is culturally relevant, and definitely not make your reluctant reader feel like they’re following the crowd.



Other titles: *Dumplin’* by Julie Murphy, *The Magicians* by Lev Grossman (like a darker Harry Potter), *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie,

3) The “I’d Rather Be Texting My Significant Other” Reluctant Reader

For the romantic at heart, there are plenty of great YA titles that center on relationships but don’t follow the “having a boyfriend/girlfriend gave my life meaning and solved all my problems!” plot line that drives me nuts. *Eleanor & Park* by Rainbow Rowell is a beautiful, tender story with characters you’ll want to simultaneously adopt and befriend (well, your students will probably just want to befriend).



Other titles: *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli, *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Saenz, *Looking for Alaska* by John Green

4) The “I Don’t Like to Hold Anything In My Hands Except Sports Objects” Reluctant Reader

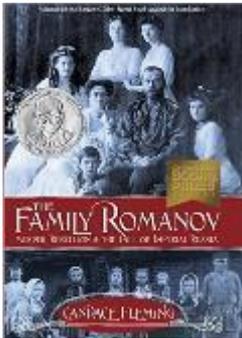
Pretty sure I just revealed how out of touch with sports I am by using the phrase “sports objects,” but luckily I’m better at recommending books than I am at athletic lingo. *The Running Dream* by Wendelin Van Draanen and *Peak* by Roland Smith are two fantastic books about running and mountain-climbing, respectively.



Other titles: *Grace, Gold, and Glory: My Leap of Faith* by Gaby Douglas, *Crash* by Jerry Spinelli, *Friday Night Lights* by H.G. Bissinger

5) The “Why Should I Have to Read About People and Places That Don’t Exist?” Reluctant Reader

This type of reluctant reader would rather know real stories, and luckily there are plenty out there. *The Family Romanov* by Candace Fleming is a story so crazy, it reads like fiction. When you approach your reader, say, “Do you know about the Romanovs? What happened to them was so crazy, but I probably shouldn’t talk about it with other kids around...” They’ll ask what happened, and that’s when you tell them they’ll just have to read it.



Other titles: *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai, *The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore, *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien (fictionalized but based on real events), *Night* by Elie Wiesel

6) The “Reading is too hard” Reluctant Reader

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Steven Chbosky is an older book but is my go-to pick for a reluctant reader who can handle mature content. I hate the idea of handing a struggling reader a copy of a book that’s obviously for a much younger reader set, but *Perks* solves that issue beautifully. The language is simplistic but also lovely, and the narrator is so honest and likeable that any reader will be able to connect. Ugh. I cry if I think about this book for too long. It’s just the best.



Other titles: *The Pregnancy Project* by Gaby Rodriguez (nonfiction), *Counting by Sevens* by Holly Goldberg Sloan

What are your favorite reluctant reader recommendations?

[The Perfect Book for Every Type of Reluctant Reader in Middle School](#) Lucas Maxwell