

**CHALLENGING CHOICES  
2009-2010**

**The Amulet of Samarkand by Jonathan Stroud**

Nathaniel, a magician's apprentice, summons up the djinni Bartimaeus and instructs him to steal the Amulet of Samarkand from the powerful magician Simon Lovelace.

**Black Duck by Janet Taylor Lisle**

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.

**Code Orange by Caroline Cooney**

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.

**Dracula by Bram Stoker**

The mysterious Transylvanian Count Dracula wreaks havoc on young businessman Jonathan Harker, his fiancée Mina, and several others. When he is revealed to be a vampire, he must be destroyed at all costs.

**Kiki Strike: Inside the Shadow City by Kirsten Miller**

Twelve-year-old Ananka Fishbein 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.

**Life as We Knew It by Susan Pfeffer**

When a meteor hits the moon, Miranda must learn to survive the unimaginable. Told in journal entries, this is the heart-pounding story of Miranda's struggle to hold on to the most important resource of all--hope--in an increasingly desperate and unfamiliar world.

**Private Peaceful by Michael Morpurgo**

When Thomas Peaceful's older brother is forced to join the British Army, Thomas decides to sign up as well, although he is only fourteen years old, to prove himself to his country, his family, his childhood love, Molly, and himself.

**Revolution is Not a Dinner Party by Ying Chang Compestine**

Starting in 1972 when she is nine years old, Ling, the daughter of two doctors, struggles to make sense of the communists' Cultural Revolution, which empties stores of food, homes of appliances deemed "bourgeois," and people of laughter.

**Runner by Carl Deuker**

Living with his alcoholic father on a broken-down sailboat on Puget Sound has been hard on seventeen-year-old Chance Taylor, but when his love of running leads to a high-paying job, he quickly learns that the money is not worth the risk.

**The Schwa Was Here by Neal Shusterman**

A Brooklyn eighth-grader nicknamed Antsy befriends the Schwa, an "invisible-ish" boy who is tired of blending into his surroundings and going unnoticed by nearly everyone.

**The Trouble Begins at 8 by Sid Fleischman**

This biography of the celebrated steamboat pilot, journalist, gold prospector, and novelist focuses on Mark Twain's early days, from his childhood in Missouri to his adventures as a young man in the Wild West.

\*\*\*To Come: Crossroads One Book Selection