

MPLS Middle Grade Policy

Nature of Collection

- Name: Middle Grade
- The Middle Grade collection is designed to make it easy to browse and locate books with particular appeal for youth ages 11 to 14. Books in this collection will have reading and interest levels common to youth in that age group.
- Collection Code: MG
- Target audience:
 - 11-14 years
 - Most titles are average reading level for students in grades 6 through 8.
- Formats collected:
 - Fiction (collection code: MG)
 - Graphic novels (collection code GN MG)
 - Audio CD (collection code CD MG)
 - Nonfiction is not collected
- Series: Selectors will attempt to keep all titles in a series in the same collection. However, if the reading and interest level of the book changes throughout the series, the titles may be divided (for example, the Alice series by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor).

Criteria for Inclusion

- Protagonists ages 12-14
- Protagonists in grades 6, 7, or 8
 - Most main characters of titles in the Middle Grade collection will be in middle school or junior high, ages 11 to 14.
 - Many Middle Grade novels have protagonists ages 11 or 12, so use caution in judging the age rating of a book with characters of these ages.
 - Main characters ages 13 or 14 often indicate books that will appeal to ages 11 to 14.
 - Some books featuring high schoolers may be more appropriate for middle school readers than for high school readers. Take this into consideration especially if the main character is a freshman or sophomore, or is 15 years old. However, many books featuring high school main characters, including 14- and 15-year-olds, are more suited to the young adult collection.
 - Books with protagonists ages 16 and older, or junior year of high school and older, are usually better suited to the Young Adult collection.
- May include characters dealing with first crushes, first relationships, and first times engaging in kissing and other mild physical contact
- Language:
 - May contain significant amounts of minor curse words and small amounts of major curse words. Collection developers will take into consideration whether strong language is used with purpose and appropriately for its context, or is used gratuitously.
 - Acceptable words: damn, crap, hell
 - Acceptable in moderation: sh*t, a**

- Use caution: slurs, curses involving God, f*ck. These words may be present in small amounts, but selectors should be prepared to justify their choice.
- May include discussions of puberty and a new awareness of self, often including growing insecurity.
- May include more intense types of bullying than that found in the Juvenile collection, including online bullying.
- Drug use
 - A main character may try drugs or have a drug problem, but the story acknowledges consequences and addresses the fact that these are not healthy habits.
 - Drugs and alcohol use by minor characters are not a major concern, as this represents a typical issue for readers of the target age group.
 - Titles in this collection should not include flippant or glorified drug use.
- May include violence, horror, and disturbing events, but not described in detail.
- Length will usually not exceed 400 pages. Fantasy titles are a common exception.

Criteria for Exclusion

- Characters ages 17 and up (books published more than ten years ago are often exceptions)
- Characters in a serious and established relationship
- Sex, including “off-screen” sex, sex in detail, and other intense physical contact
- Use of strong swear words like the f-word, or frequent use of milder swear words
- Drinking, smoking, and drug use, except when used in a discussion about addiction, or about negative consequences for middle school-age drug users
- Graphic violence or intense, disturbing content

Tools for Determining Reading Levels

- School Library Journal, which provides consistent age ratings
- Other publications and publisher age ratings may be used to supplement it.
- Selector judgment
- Selectors should take school reading assignments into account.
- Note that all the information contained in this document is intended to be used as guidelines. Selectors may make exceptions when they feel it is appropriate.

Initial JJGL and Hall collections Assembled From:

- JF and YA fiction
- JF and YA graphic novels
- JF and YA CD audio fiction

Location of JJGL and Hall collections

- To be determined as we assemble the initial collections