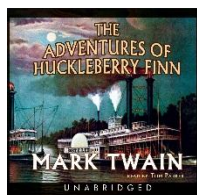


Sound Learning Audiobook Collection Lists & Samples

Use this annotated list to guide your audiobook collection development. Common Core State Standards are included for each title. Click on each title to hear an audio clip.

Grades 6-8



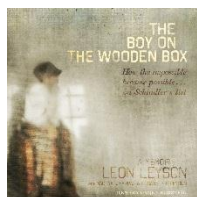
[*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*](#), written by Mark Twain, narrated by Tom Parker, Blackstone Audiobooks, 1997

Twain's classic, much debated novel of life along the Mississippi is served well by Parker's narrator-as-storyteller style. On many middle-school reading lists, but a difficult slog for numerous students, the audio format combined with an excellent production eases the way to understanding and interpretation of this wide-ranging look at greed, racism, corruption, slavery, and friendship. Parker's smooth tones and measured pace work well to untangle the many dialects and zany, dangerous escapades in the novel. This production is uncensored and the use of the "N" word is shocking. However, this offers an excellent starting place for classroom and family discussions on the power of words and the unconscionable ways that people often treat those who are different from them.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.



[*The Boy on the Wooden Box*](#), written by Leon Leyson, narrated by Danny Burstein, Simon & Schuster Audio, 2013

This autobiographical memoir recounts Leyson's childhood as the youngest member of Schindler's list. Born Leib Lezjon, he was ten years old when his family was moved to the Krakow ghetto at the outbreak of World War II. Danny Burstein's dignified and controlled narration allows younger listeners to relate to Leyson's hopeful response to the horrific events surrounding the Holocaust as well as Leyson's later life as a high school teacher in the United States. As the only memoir written by a Schindler's List child, this title makes an excellent listen-aloud companion to a comparative classroom study of other Holocaust literature or as a multimedia extension of gifted learners' exploration of Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

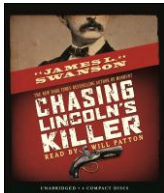
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.9

Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

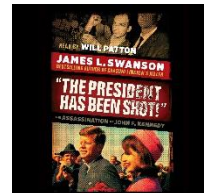
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.9

Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.



[*Chasing Lincoln's Killer*](#), written by James L. Swanson, narrated by Will Patton, Scholastic Audiobooks, 2009

[*The President Has Been Shot! The Assassination of John F. Kennedy*](#), written by James L. Swanson, narrated by Will Patton, Scholastic Audiobooks, 2013



The assassinations of Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy are explored in two audiobooks, in an attempt to make sense of seemingly senseless. These presidents, both beloved and reviled, were shot in the head by men who opposed their political views. Both were in the midst of struggles for equality. One ended slavery, one was working toward civil rights for African Americans.

Swanson's research into the circumstances surrounding these national tragedies is articulated in Patton's soft, southern lilt, making the horrific details of the killings more bearable. Students will be able to make comparisons between the two accounts of presidential assassination.

Craft and Structure:

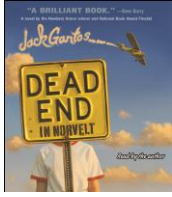
CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RI.7.5

Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of ideas.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).



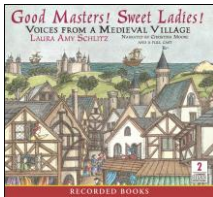
[Dead End in Norvelt](#), written and narrated by Jack Gantos, Macmillan Audio, 2011

The 2012 Newbery Medal story features the indomitable Jack Gantos, telling the “mostly” true adventures of a summer vacation that provide a funny yet meaningful listening experience. Writing obituaries as a summer penance might not seem like an engaging beginning, but Gantos lends his voice to give a nuanced performance of a young boy’s growing self-awareness. Jack’s predilection for nose bleeds is only one recurring theme in this comic, historical, coming-of-age novel. As Jack learns to appreciate the lives of his town’s recently deceased residents, some of his adventures include a homemade airplane, Girl Scout cookies, Hell’s Angels, and Eleanor Roosevelt – an odd combination, but a winning romp. Listeners will want to find out more about Norvelt, Pennsylvania where the author grew up and will definitely want to listen to the conclusion of Jack’s escapades with his eccentric neighbor in *From Norvelt to Nowhere* (Macmillan Audio, 2013).

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.



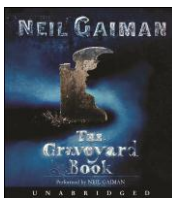
[Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village](#), written by Laura Amy Schlitz, narrated by Christina Moore and a Full Cast, Recorded Books, 2008

Superb performances and excellent production will draw in students who might otherwise find it difficult to read this 2008 Newbery Medal winner. Medieval music sets the stage for monologues that capture the intertwining cross-section of village life, from blacksmith to the heir of the manor as the various narrators “take the stage” to present a memorable play. Students can use both print and audiobook to produce their own versions of the monologues for classroom discussions of feudal society.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.



[The Graveyard Book](#), written and narrated by Neil Gaiman, HarperChildren’sAudio, 2008

Winning both the Newbery Medal (2009) and Carnegie Medal, this novel is brought to audio with a wonderful performance by the author. The setting is a cemetery, the main character is Bod (for Nobody, poor boy). Bod’s parents and sister have been murdered, and the “residents” of the graveyard are raising him – certainly not a

fortuitous beginning, but Gaiman is a master storyteller, and Bod’s tale, the chilling mystery (the murderer is still looking for him), the ghosts and ghouls who care for him, and a satisfying conclusion will entice listeners throughout. The true meaning of family and friendship is the central theme, and Bod’s predicament, though extreme, is familiar. Add eerie background music, well-crafted language, the author’s compelling voice, and an engaged audience is a certainty.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).



Jazz, written by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Christopher Myers, narrated by James “D-Train” Williams and Vaneese Thomas, Live Oak Media, 2007

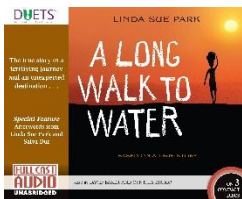
Winner of the inaugural (2008) Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production, this splendid audiobook combines painting, poetry and music into a mesmerizing whole. The production begins with the authentic illustrations by Christopher Myers (2006 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Award), adds the lyrical words of Walter Dean Myers, and ends with an original musical score to create a thoroughly enjoyable audio experience. The readings of the two narrators expand the effect of the poetry and the jazz music immerses listeners, enabling them to hear the nuances and emotions of the story (and reflexively move to the beat!). Each poem has a separate track, and the glossary is read, so that students may easily listen and learn about favorites multiple times.

Opportunities to extend learning include various poetry units, a study of the history of jazz, and learning more about illustration as a means to heighten the narrative of a story.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.7

Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).



A Long Walk to Water, written by Linda Sue Park, narrated by David Baker and Cynthia Bishop, Full Cast Audio Duets, 2013

The terrors of South Sudan are highlighted by the plight of two children living years apart. David Baker's ability to replicate the cadence and intonation of young Salva's speech gives heartrending immediacy to the boy's awful predicament—caught in the crosshairs of a dreadful war that forces him to suffer gunmen, dehydration, and the death of friends and family as he makes his way to a refugee camp. Cynthia Bishop quietly portrays Nya, a young Sudanese girl who, 10 years after Salva's

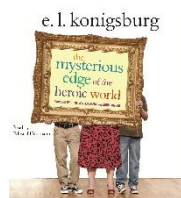
ordeal, still struggles each day to carry enough water back to her village so her family can survive. The author's note and Salva's own words at the end will give further understanding to the difficulties faced by other young people around the world in their efforts to survive.

After listening to this audiobook, students can research the situation in South Sudan to determine how well the author succeeded in conveying the stories of Salva and Nya.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.3

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).



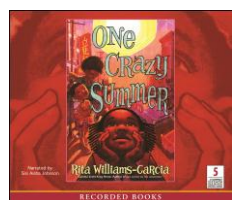
[The Mysterious Edge of the Heroic World](#), written by E.L. Konigsburg, narrated by Edward Herrmann, Simon & Schuster Audio, library edition Recorded Books, 2007

Herrmann's distinct voicing and deliberate pacing allows the focus to be placed squarely on the eccentric, poignant characters in this tale of mystery and yearning. Precocious sixth-grader Amedeo Kaplan eagerly accepts the offer to help catalog the belongings of his peculiar neighbor, Mrs. Zender, a former opera star now on her way to a retirement home. More than anything, Deo wants to discover something spectacular and Mrs. Zender's hoard may just yield his heart's desire. Nazi brutality, degenerate art, and friendship combine with intelligent prose and a flawless production to create a remarkable listening experience. To further their understanding of this complex story and Deo's relationship to art, students can research the work of artist Amedeo Modigliani and the attack on what the Nazi's termed degenerate art in the years leading up to and including World War II.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS-ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6

Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.



[One Crazy Summer](#), written by Rita Williams-Garcia, narrated by SiSi Aisha Johnson, Recorded Books, 2010

Listeners spend a tumultuous summer in Oakland, California, with 11-year-old Delphine, her two younger sisters, and the mother who abandoned them seven years earlier. When their father and grandmother send them on a plane from Brooklyn, New York, the girls dream of beaches and Disneyland. Instead, they discover their mother does not want them and they are shuffled off daily to a Black Panther community center where they learn, for the first time, about African Americans struggling against racism and injustice. Johnson's unvoiced reading portrays the large cast of characters through subtle changes of inflection and pacing, allowing the spotlight to shine on Delphine—through whose eyes the story unfolds—and her growing awareness of who she is and her role in society. Winner of the

2010 Coretta Scott King Author Award, a 2010 Newbery Honor Book, and a 2010 Audies finalist for Distinguished Achievement in Production.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.