



A few words about Middle School Summer Reading...

Natick's middle school Language & Literacy teachers have selected required texts to provide rich literary experiences to keep students learning and growing during the summer months. The required titles will serve as a launch to learning for students in the fall. Teachers will plan discussions and written assignments to complement these titles, so it will be important to read carefully and critically.

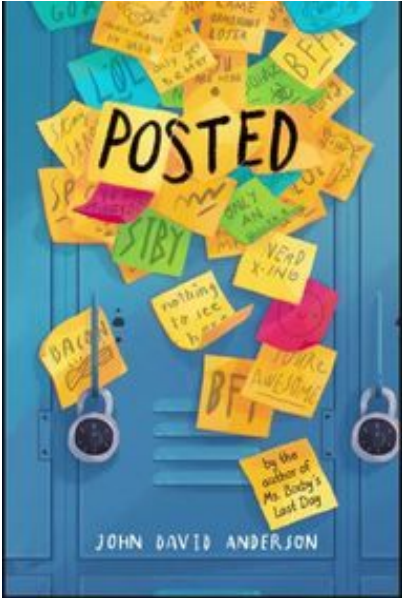
In addition to the required text for the grade level, students should read at least two other books. Visit our School Library Home pages ([KMS](#) / [WMS](#)) or the [local library](#) or book seller for recommendations!

We wish you a happy and healthy summer!

Incoming Grades 7 & 8

Posted

by John David Anderson



“I can't tell you exactly when it changed, when it spiraled out of control like a kite twisting in the wind. When it stopped being something funny and clever and became something else. Maybe there was no single moment. Maybe underneath all the squares plastered on the walls and notebooks and windows there was the same message over and over. We just ignored it because it was easier to stomach that way.

I know what you are going to say: sticks, and stones, and broken bones. But words can kick you in the gut. They wriggle underneath your skin and start to itch. They set their hooks into you and pull. Words accumulate like a cancer, and then they eat away at you until there is nothing left. And once they are let loose there really is no taking them back.”

About John David Anderson

John David Anderson is the author of several critically-acclaimed novels for young people. He lives with his patient wife and brilliant twins in Indianapolis, Indiana, right next to a State park and a Walmart. He does not wear ties. He enjoys hiking, reading, chocolate, spending time with his family, playing the piano, chocolate, putting off the dishes, watching movies, and chocolate. Those aren't his real teeth. Not all of them, anyway.

Learn more about John David Anderson and his other books on his website. Click [here](#)!

Incoming Grade 6

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus

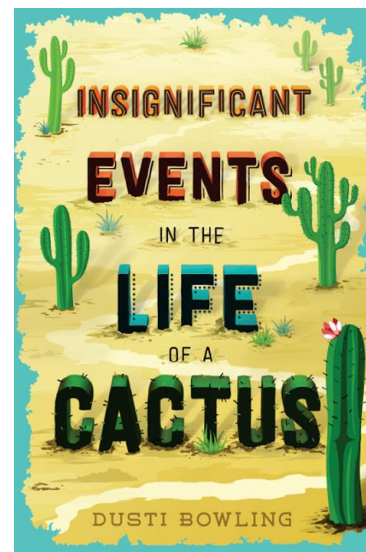
by Dusti Bowling

“Whoa! What happened to your arms?”

Aven Green gets that question a lot. She loves to tell people that she lost her arms in an alligator wrestling match, or a wildfire in Tanzania, but the truth is she was born without them. And when her parents take a job running Stagecoach Pass, a rundown western theme park in Arizona, Aven moves with them across the country knowing that she'll have to answer the question over and over again.

Her new life takes an unexpected turn when she bonds with Connor, a classmate who also feels isolated because of his own disability, and they discover a room at Stagecoach Pass that holds bigger secrets than Aven ever could have imagined.

It's hard to solve a mystery, help a friend, and face your worst fears. But Aven's about to discover she can do it all . . . even without arms.



About the Author - Dusti Bowling grew up in Scottsdale, Arizona, where, as her family will tell you, she always had her nose in a book. But it wasn't until after starting down a couple of different career paths that Dusti realized her true passion was writing. She currently lives in Carefree, Arizona with her husband, three daughters, one bobcat, a pack of coyotes, a couple of chuckwalla, several rattlesnakes, and a few herds of javelina.

Learn more about Dusti Bowling and her other books on her website. Click [here](#)!

Incoming Grade 5

Choose **one** of the following titles. (Of course, you may read both!)

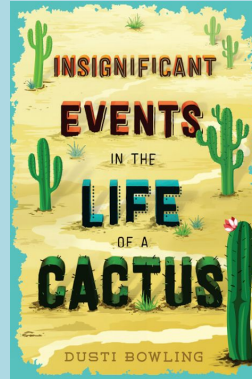
Hello Universe

by
Erin Entrada Kelly



About *Hello Universe*

The universe comes together unexpectedly when a unique set of circumstances cause four tweens to cross paths. Central to the story is Virgil, an 11-year-old Filipino American whose grandmother, Lola, helps him to come out of his shell and face the world. When Virgil and his pet guinea pig, Gulliver, end up trapped in a well in the woods at the hands of a bully, Chet, it is up to the stars to align before it's too late. Coming together like spokes on a wheel, everyone converges in the woods—Valencia, a Deaf girl on whom Virgil has a crush; Kaori, an adolescent fortune-teller and free spirit; Kaori's sister, Gen, her jump-roping apprentice; a feral dog Valencia has befriended; and a snake, which is the only thing Chet fears. Unlikely friendships are formed and heroism abounds as the group of young people try to find their way in the world. Plucky protagonists and a deftly woven story will appeal to anyone who has ever felt a bit lost in the universe. VERDICT Readers across the board will flock to this book that has something for nearly everyone—humor, bullying, self-acceptance, cross-generational relationships, and a smartly fateful ending.



Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus

by Dusti Bowling

Read about

Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus above.

About **Erin Entrada Kelly**

Erin received the 2018 Newbery Medal for *Hello, Universe*, the 2017 APALA Award for *The Land of Forgotten Girls*, and the 2016 Golden Kite Honor Award for *Blackbird Fly*.

Erin was raised in Louisiana, but now lives in the Philadelphia area. She is a professor of children's literature in the graduate fiction and publishing programs at Rosemont College, where she earned her MFA. Erin is also a short story writer. Her short fiction has been nominated for the Philippines Free Press Literary Award for Short Fiction and the Pushcart Prize. Erin has a bachelor's degree in women's studies and liberal arts from McNeese State University and an MFA in creative writing from Rosemont. Erin is mestiza and identifies as Filipina-American. Her mother is Visayan and lives in Cebu, which is why many of Erin's Filipino characters speak Cebuano rather than Tagalog.

Learn more about **Erin Entrada Kelly** on her website. Click [here](#)

