Student Independent Reading Guide

Purpose

Independent reading gives you a chance to explore books that interest you while building your reading skills. In this unit, your reading will also help you think about preserving knowledge, the role of trust in dystopian societies, and the consequences of instant gratification.

Title & Author	Genre	Lexile	Pages	Description
Scythe Neil Schusterman	Fiction	830L	460	Citra and Rowan live in a future where disease and death have been eliminated, and a group called the Scythes is responsible for population control by choosing who must die. When they are forced to compete to become Scythes themselves, they must decide what kind of people they want to be in a world where life has lost its limits.
The Marrow Thieves Cherie Dimaline	Fiction	810L	240	Frenchie is a teenager on the run in a future where Indigenous people are being captured for their bone marrow, believed to hold the power to dream, which others have lost. As he travels with a small group searching for safety, he learns the importance of memory, identity, and standing up for what's right.
The Giver Lois Lowry	Fiction	760L	256	Jonas lives in a world that seems perfect—no pain, no choices, and everything controlled—but everything changes when he's chosen to receive memories of the past.
The List Patricia Forde	Fiction	600L	372	Letta is the official wordsmith in a future society where people are only allowed to speak from a list of approved words. When she learns of a secret plan to eliminate language forever, she must decide whether to stay silent or use her voice to save the truth and imagination.
The Librarian of Aushwitz Antonio Iturbe,	Graphic Nove	900L	451	A teenage girl becomes the secret librarian in Auschwitz, risking her life to provide books and education to children imprisoned

Salvo Rubio, Loreto Aroca	l			in the concentration camp.
War Girls Tochi Onyebuchi	Fiction	790L	470	Sisters Onyii and Ify are separated by a brutal war in a futuristic Nigeria where children are trained to fight using powerful tech and artificial limbs. As they grow up on opposite sides of the conflict, both must face hard choices about love, truth, and whether a better future is still possible.
The Last Book in the Universe Rodman Philbrick	Fiction	1000L	240	In a world where people only use mindprobes for entertainment, a teenage boy is one of the rare human beings who can see life for what it really is. He is subject to random seizures that make it impossible for him to use the brain-drain tech. But what sets him apart eventually becomes his salvation.
Sanctuary Poala Mendoza and Abby Sher	Fiction	740L	320	Vali lives in a harsh future where undocumented people are tracked and captured by a powerful government force. When her family is torn apart, she must escape with her younger brother, facing danger at every turn while holding onto the hope of finding freedom and safety.
The Declaration Gemma Malley	Fiction	1030L	320	It's the year 2140 and Anna shouldn't be alive. Nor should any of the children she lives with at Grange Hall. The facility is full of kids like her, kids whose parents chose to recklessly abuse Mother Nature.
Snowglobe Soyoung Park, Joungmin Lee Comfort, trans.	Fiction	860L	373	Jeon lives in a cold, divided world where only a lucky few can escape through mysterious snowglobes that show perfect lives. When she's pulled into that hidden world, she discovers chilling truths and must choose between comfort and courage to fight for something real.
Internment Samira Ahmed	Fiction	660L	400	Layla is a teenage girl living in a future America where Muslims are taken from their homes and placed in camps by the government. Refusing to stay silent, she bravely leads a movement from inside the camp

I Am Malala (Young Readers Edition) Malala Yousafzai, Patricia McCormick	Memoir	830L	240	Malala Yousafzai was only ten years old when the Taliban took control of her region. They said girls couldn't go to school. Raised in a once-peaceful area of Pakistan transformed by terrorism, Malala was taught to stand up for what she believes. So she fought for her right to be educated.
The House of the Scorpion Nancy Farmer	Fiction	660L	432	Matteo Alacran was not born; he was harvested. His DNA came from El Patron, lord of a country called Opium—a strip of poppy fields lying between the United States and what was once called Mexico. As Matt struggles to understand his existence, he is threatened by a sinister cast of characters, including El Patron's power-hungry family.
The Knife of Never Letting Go Patrick Ness	Fiction	860L	528	Todd lives in a town where everyone can hear each other's thoughts, and there are no secrets—until he discovers a strange silence that changes everything. Forced to flee with only his dog and a mysterious girl, he uncovers dark truths about his world and must decide who he can trust to survive.

Independent Reading Questions

1. Choose a moment when a character in your text choice questions their society's values. What sparks their doubt, and what does this reveal about the dangers of blindly following authority or norms in their society?
2. In what ways is knowledge controlled, hidden, or lost in your text choice? How do characters react to this?
3. Analyze how the characters in your text choice question those in power over them. What effects do these actions have on the plot?
4. What role does technology (or lack of technology) play in your text choice? How does this affect the characters?
5. Thinking of "The Allegory of the Cave," what role does ignorance play in your text choice? How does it affect the main character, or motivate them to create change?