Non-Fiction Summer Reading Suggestions

The Greatest: Muhammad Ali
Walter Dean Myers
Reading Level 6.9, Guided Reading = Z
A look at the life and times of the great boxer who was crowned Heavyweight Champion of the World three times.

Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution
Ji-Li Jiang
Reading Level 6.1, Guided Reading = Z
This autobiography details the author's experiences as a teenager during the Cultural Revolution. Jiang and her family are subjected to many problems because her grandfather was once a landlord. Memoirs of the period contain murders, suicides, mass brainwashing, cruel and unusual bullying, and injustices.

Sparky: The Life and Art of Charles Schultz
Beverly Gherman
Reading Level 6.3
A biography of Peanuts creator Charles Schulz, illustrated with photographs and selections from the comic strip featuring Charlie Brown.

Candy Bomber: The Story of the Berlin Airlift's "Chocolate Pilot"
Michael O. Tunnell
Reading Level 7.2
Describes the efforts of US Air Force Lieutenant Gail Halvorsen to aid the children in Russian-blockaded West Berlin by dropping packages filled with candy from the air. Features personal photographs, along with letters and drawings from the children of Berlin.

Bouncing Back: Dealing with the Stuff Life Throws at You
Jami L. Jones
Reading Level 6.7
Offers advice to teens on how to handle stress, discussing the importance of developing resiliency, describing strategies designed to help teens manage, or even escape their problems for short periods of time, and including personal stories in which teens tell how they dealt with difficult situations.

Liberty or Death: The Surprising Story of Runaway Slaves Who Sided with the British During the American Revolution
Margaret Whitman Blair
Reading Level 8.5
Recounts the experiences of the slaves who answered Lord Dunmore's 1775 promise that any slave who left his master and fought for the British would have their freedom.

Temple Grandin: How the Girl who Loved Cows Embraced Autism and Changed the World
Cy Montgomery
Reading Level 7.0
Examines the life and accomplishments of Temple Grandin, whose childhood diagnosis of autism and love of cows led her to revolutionize the livestock industry.

How They Croaked: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous
Georgia Bragg
Reading Level 6.8, Guided Reading = V
Shares the sometimes gruesome details of the deaths of nineteen famous historical figures, including King Tut, Pocahontas, George Washington, Edgar Allan Poe, and Marie Curie.

The Omnivore's Dilemma for Kids: The Secrets Behind what You Eat
Michael Pollan
"What's for dinner?" seemed like a simple question—until journalist and supermarket detective Michael Pollan delved behind the scenes. From fast food and big organic to small farms and old-fashioned hunting and gathering, this young readers' adaptation of Pollan's famous food-chain exploration encourages kids to consider the personal and global health implications of their food choices.

Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance
Jennifer Armstrong
Reading Level 6.5, Guided Reading = Y
Describes the events of the 1914 Shackleton Antarctic expedition when, after being trapped in a frozen sea for nine months, their ship, Endurance, was finally crushed, forcing Shackleton and his men to make a very long and perilous journey to reach inhabited land.

Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science
John Fleischman
Reading Level 7.5, Guided Reading = X
The true story of Phineas Gage, whose brain had been pierced by an iron rod in 1848, and who survived and became a case study in how the brain functions.

Air Raid--Pearl Harbor!: The Story of December 7, 1941
Theodore Taylor
Reading Level 7.6, Guided Reading = Y
Examines from both the American and Japanese points of view the political and military events leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption
Laura Hillenbrand
An unforgettable testament to the resilience of the human mind, body, and spirit, brought vividly to life by the main character Louis Zamperini.