

# GirlFormation

## Summer Reading, Book Reviews!

After a very wet and soggy Spring, many of you are looking forward to some sunny days where you can sit outside and enjoy a riveting read! In this summer edition of GirlFormation, you can read profiles about the 20 winners of the "Girls Choice Book Awards" from New Moon magazine for girls.

Along with an image of each of the books, you will see each profile contains information from Scholastic's Book Wizard online tool. Scholastic's Book Wizard provides a

grade level range of "interest level" and grade specific reading level. Under that you will find a brief description of each book from Scholastic's site. If you visit <http://bookwizardscholastic.com>, you will find many of the books have discussion guides, questions for book talks, text excerpts and interviews with the authors.



Our hope is that you will find one or more books that pique your interest. If you snap a picture of yourself reading one of these books over summer vacation, please email us your picture, and we'll include it in an upcoming edition of GirlFormation!

**Ella Enchanted,**  
by Gail Carson Levine  
Interest Level: 3 - 5  
Grade Level Equivalent: 5.1



At birth, Ella of Frel was given the gift of obedience by a fairy. Ella soon realizes that this gift is little better than a curse, as she can't be her true self if she is constantly being ordered around by different people, and she has to obey! Independent Ella does not tamely accept her fate and embarks on a quest to

break this curse once and for all. Ella's quest to break the curse and discover her true self is both funny and poignant.

**Dragonsdale, by Salamanda Drake**  
**A Harry & Emily Adventure (Book #1)**  
Interest Level: 3 - 5  
Grade Level Equivalent: 5.4



Imagine a stable full of dragons! A place where a group of young girls are busy grooming the beautiful beasts and getting them ready for competition — with all the ups and downs, all the drama that inevitably results! Dragonsdale is such a place.

The stable is run by Cara's father, but, after a tragic dragon accident in which her mother lost her life, Cara herself is strictly forbidden to fly. Yet she cannot resist the lure of the magical fire-breathing creatures, and so in secret she trains Skydancer, her rare, wild Goldenbrow dragon, and dreams of the day when she, too, can take flight.

**Mango-Shaped Space,**  
by Wendy Mass  
Grade Level Equivalent: 4.3



Thirteen-year-old Mia Winchell appears to be a typical eighth grader. But Mia is keeping a secret from everyone who knows her: sounds, numbers and words appear in color for her. Mia has synesthesia, the mingling of perceptions whereby a person can see sounds, smell colors, or taste shapes. "A Mango-Shaped Space is a poignant, coming-of-age novel spiced with wit and humor that chronicles Mia's developing appreciation of her gift and the part it plays in her life

**Becoming Naomi Leon,**  
by Pam Muñoz Ryan  
Interest Level: 5 - 8  
Grade Level Equivalent: 5



From the Pura Belpré and Jane Addams Peace Award winning author of Esperanza Rising comes a riveting novel about family and identity, drawn from Pam Muñoz Ryan's own Mexican and Oklahoman heritages.

Naomi Soledad León Outlaw has had a lot to contend with in her young life. But according to Gram's self-prophecies, most problems can be overcome with positive thinking. Life with Gram and her little brother, Owen, is happy and peaceful until their mother reappears after seven years of being gone, stirring up all sorts of questions and challenging Naomi to discover who she really is.

## Mission

The goal of this publication is to effectively create a girls' network to:

- give Maine girls an opportunity to express themselves to other girls
- provide a way of promoting girls' events and opportunities
- inform educators, parents, and others about ways to support girls
- aid in the cross-fertilization of successful programs
- create a network of women working with and supporting each other's efforts.

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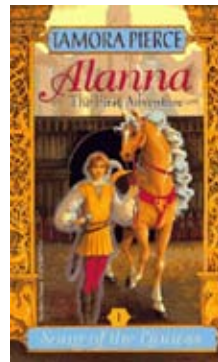
## Funder

GirlFormation is made possible through the generous funding of The Morton Foundation.

## Books in Series Reviews:

### Series: Song of the Lioness Alanna: The First Adventure

by Tamora Pierce



Interest Level: 6 - 8

Grade Level  
Equivalent: 5.7

Becoming a legend is not easy, as young Alanna of Trebond discovers when she disguises herself as a boy and begins training to be a knight. Alanna's skills and stubbornness

help her befriend Prince Jonathan but alienate his evil uncle, Duke Roger. Filled with swords and sorcery, adventure and intrigue, good and evil, this book is a rousing introduction to the intensely satisfying story of Alanna.

Number of Books in Series = 4

### Series: Sister Grimms The Fairy-Tale Detectives

by Michael Buckley

illustrated by Peter Ferguson

Interest Level: 3 - 5

Grade Level Equivalent: 4.5



In the tradition of Lemony Snicket's "Series of Unfortunate Events" and Holly Black's "The Spiderwick Chronicles" comes a new humorous mystery of fantastic circumstances, "The Sisters Grimm."

When orphaned sisters Sabrina and Daphne are sent to live with their mysterious grandmother, Relda Grimm, who lives in a strange town in New York state, known for its extraordinary number of unexplained and unusual crimes, they begin to unravel a mystery that leads to their ancestors' magical beginnings.

Sabrina and Daphne find out they are descendants of the Brothers Grimm, who were actually detectives of the magical phenomenon perpetrated by the Everafters, a parallel race of magical beings. They soon learn it is the Grimm family's legacy to keep the Everafters in line and the two sisters are the sole heirs to this challenge!

Number of Books in Series = 5

### Series: The Mother Daughter Book Club

#### The Mother Daughter Book Club

by Heather Vogel Fredrick

Interest Level: "Daughters of All Ages"

Book club is about to get a makeover. . . .

Even if Megan would rather be at the mall, Cassidy is late for hockey practice, Emma's already read every book in existence, and Jess is missing her mother too much to care, the new book club is scheduled to meet every month.



But what begins as a mom-imposed ritual of reading *Little Women* soon helps four unlikely friends

navigate the drama of middle school. From stolen journals, to secret crushes, to a fashion-fiasco first dance, these sixth-graders are up to their Wellie boots in drama. They can't help but wonder: What would Jo March do?

*The Mother-Daughter Book Club* will delight daughters of all ages in a novel about the fabulousness of fiction, family, and friendship.

Number of Books in Series = 5

## Classics:

Anne of Green Gables  
Nancy Drew series  
Matilda  
To Kill a Mockingbird  
Charlotte's Web

## Well Known Series:

Harry Potter  
Percy Jackson and the Olympians  
Twilight  
Series of Unfortunate Events

**Everything on a Waffle,**  
by Polly Horvath

Interest Level: 6 - 8

Grade Level Equivalent: 5.9

Everyone in Coal Harbour is convinced that Primrose Squarp's parents were lost at sea in a terrible storm. Everyone but Primrose. She just knows that they will come back home.

For all practical purposes, at least for the time being, Primrose is an orphan, and there's no great clamoring of prospective adopters. After realizing the impracticality of continuing to pay Miss Perfidy an hourly wage to baby-sit her, the town council is able to locate a relative, Uncle Jack, who reluctantly takes Primrose into his care. But true sanctuary can always be found at a restaurant called "The Girl in the Swing", where everything — including lasagna — is served on a waffle.

As she waits and navigates through a series of adventures, Primrose observes all sorts of human qualities in the people who come into her life: an elderly neighbor, the school guidance counselor, her wheeler-dealer uncle, a childless couple, and the always ready to listen restaurant owner, who serves everything on a waffle.

With humor and insights — and some recipes, too — Polly Horvath serves up a delicious novel.

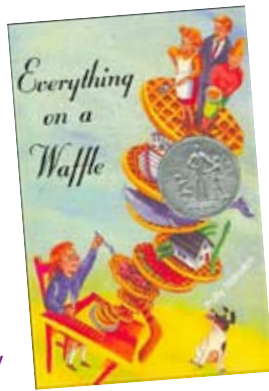
**11 Birthdays** by Wendy Mass

Interest Level: 3 - 5

Grade Level Equivalent: 3.7

It's Amanda's 11th birthday and she is super excited — after all, 11 is so different from 10. But from the start, everything goes wrong. The worst part of it all is that she and her best friend, Leo, with whom she's shared every birthday, are on the outs and this will be the first birthday they haven't shared together.

When Amanda turns in for the night, glad to have her birthday behind her, she wakes up happy for a new day. Or is it? Her birthday seems to be repeating itself. What is going on?! And how can she fix it? Only time, friendship, and a little luck will tell...



**The Tail of Emily Windsnap,**  
by Liz Kessler

Interest Level: 3 - 5

Grade Level Equivalent: 5.2

For as long as she can remember, twelve-year-old Emily Windsnap has

lived on a boat. And, oddly enough, for just as long, her mother has seemed anxious to keep her away from the water. But when Mom finally agrees to let her take swimming lessons, Emily makes a startling discovery - about her own identity, the mysterious father she's never met, and the thrilling possibilities and perils shimmering deep below the water's surface.

With a sure sense of suspense and richly imaginative details, first-time author Liz Kessler lures us into a glorious undersea world where mermaids study shipwrecks at school and Neptune rules with an iron trident — an enchanting fantasy about family secrets, loyal friendship, and the convention-defying power of love.



humor are two teens in transition. They are each learning to look beyond the surface of people, both figuring out who they are, who they want to be, and who they want to be with.

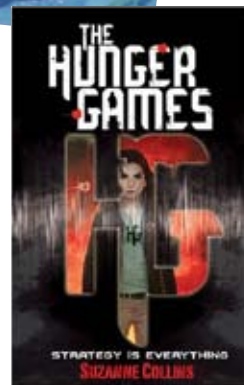
**The Hunger Games, Book 1**

Suzanne Collins

Interest Level: 6 - 8

Grade Level Equivalent: 5.3

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capital surrounded by twelve outlying districts. The Capital is harsh and cruel and keeps the other districts in line by forcing them to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight-to-the death on live TV. One boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and sixteen are selected by lottery to play. The winner brings riches and favor to his or



her district. But that is nothing compared to what the Capital wins: one more year of fearful compliance with its rules.

Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives alone with her mother

and younger sister, regards it as a death sentence when she is forced to represent her impoverished district in the Games. But Katniss has been close to dead before — and survival, for her, is second nature. Without really meaning to, she becomes a contender. But if she is to win, she will have to start making choices that weigh survival against humanity and life against love.

This adventurous science fiction novel contains admirable messages about poverty and societal attitudes, but the book should be read by an adult before due to the violent premise in the book. There are two books following "The Hunger Games", and they are "Catching Fire" and "Mockingjay".



**Flipped,**  
by Wendelin Van Draanen

Interest Level: 6 - 8

Grade Level Equivalent: 5.5

Juli Baker and Bryce Loski,

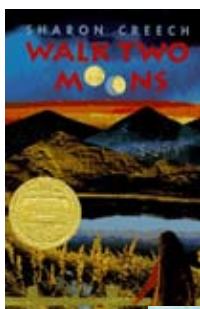
who have been neighbors since the second grade, describe their lives together as they grow from a casual friendship to a budding eighth-grade romantic relationship.

This is a classic romantic comedy of errors told in alternating chapters by two fresh, funny new voices. Wendelin Van Draanen is at her best here with a knockout cast of quirky characters and a hilarious series of misunderstandings and missed opportunities. But underlying the

**Walk Two Moons,**  
by Sharon Creech

Interest Level: 4 - 7

Grade Level Equivalent: 4.9



On a long car trip from Ohio to Idaho, 13-year-old Salamanca Tree Hiddle tells her grandparents about her friend Phoebe, who is coping with the disappearance of her mother. Beneath Phoebe's story is Sal's search for her own mother, who left one sunny morning and never returned.

**The Mysterious Benedict Society**

Trenton Lee Stewart

Interest Level: 3 - 7

Grade Level Equivalent: 6.3



*"ARE YOU A GIFTED CHILD looking for special opportunities?"*

When this peculiar ad appears in the newspaper, dozens of children enroll to take a series of mysterious, mind-bending tests. (And you, dear reader, can test your wits right alongside them.) But in the end just four very special children — two boys and two girls — will succeed. Their challenge: to go on a secret mission that only the most intelligent and resourceful children could complete. To accomplish it they will have to go undercover at the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened, where the only rule is that there are no rules.

But what they'll find in the hidden underground tunnels of the school is more than your average school supplies. As our heroes face physical and mental trials beyond their wildest imaginations, they have no choice but to turn to each other for support. But with their newfound friendship at stake, will they be able to pass the most important test of all?

Welcome to the Mysterious Benedict Society. If you're gifted, creative, or happen to know Morse Code, they could probably use your help.

This adventure book is full of mystery and suspense! If you enjoy this book, then check out these follow up books, "The

Mysterious Benedict Society and the Perilous", Book 2 and "The Mysterious Benedict Society and the Prisoner's Dilemma", Book 3

**Eleven** by Lauren Myracle

Interest Level: 3 - 5

Grade Level Equivalent: 4.0



Starting with her birthday in March, every chapter brings a new month and a new event in Winnie's life. From surviving her teenage sister's grumpy mood swings in April to dealing with prissy new rival Gail Grayson in September, there's a calendar full of the ups and downs of being eleven years old.

Especially hard for Winnie is the growing distance between herself and her best friend, Amanda, as both girls grow into different social circles. Add to that Winnie's older sister, a feisty new kitten, and a first crush, and Winnie may undergo more than one surprising change by her twelfth birthday.

The big and little moments of Winnie's year are captured with honesty and warmth, and her sharp observations and infectious enthusiasm make for hilarious storytelling. Eleven-year-olds of all ages will discover themselves in this winning young heroine on the brink of adolescence.

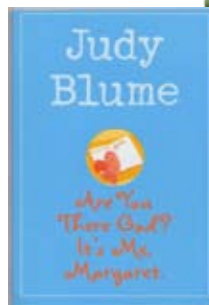
**Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret.**

by Judy Blume

Interest Level: 4 - 7

Grade Level Equivalent: 4.7

For Margaret, everything is different this year. She's just moved from New York City to the suburbs and is anxious to fit in with her new friends — Nancy, Gretchen, and Janie. When they form a secret club to talk about private subjects like boys, bras, and getting their first periods, Margaret is happy to belong. But in Farbrook, everybody joins the Y or the Jewish Community Center. Margaret doesn't



have a religion, so what's she supposed to do? Suddenly life is very confusing. Maybe it's all part of growing up, but Margaret could really use some answers.

**Isabel of the Whales** (No Image Available) by Hester Velmans

Interest Level: 6 - 8

Eleven-year-old Isabel is a "plain old" girl living in Provincetown, Massachusetts, who believes that she is destined to accomplish something special. When her fifth-grade class goes on a whale-watch field trip, something amazing happens: Dozens of different species of whales surround the boat, bumping the deck and sending Isabel flying into the ocean. Isabel is shocked to hear the whales speaking to her—she is a mermaid, they tell her, a "Chosen One" who has the ability to turn from a human into a whale and back again. She is destined to live among the whales long enough to learn their ways, and teach them about the human world.

Living among her pod is fun, at first, but Isabel has an important mission. She will change the whales' future forever, and learn a lot about herself in the process.



**The Goose Girl**  
by Shannon Hale

Interest Level: 6 - 8

Grade Level Equivalent: 6.0

Anidori-Kiladra Talianna Isilee, Crown Princess of Kildenree, spends the first years of her

life under her aunt's guidance learning to communicate with animals. As she grows up Ani develops the skills of animal speech, but is never comfortable speaking with people, so when her silver-tongued lady-in-waiting leads a mutiny during Ani's journey to be married in a foreign land, Ani is helpless and cannot persuade anyone to assist her. Becoming a goose girl for the king, Ani eventually uses her own special, nearly magical powers to find her way to her true destiny.

Shannon Hale has woven an incredible, original and magical tale of a girl who must find her own unusual talents before she can become queen of the people she has made her own.

# girl scouts of maine



*"I love volunteering for my daughter's troop. I'm always amazed at how Girl Scouting develops their confidence... it really brings out their best and I love being a part of that experience."*

*Meg, Volunteer*



## What did you do today?

Think it's a full year commitment?  
Think again.

Have a busy schedule?  
No problem.



## CAMP – EVENTS – SERIES - TRAVEL - TROOP - VIRTUAL

Share your love of nature. Camp. Hike. Bike. Canoe.



Travel with girls on trips across the state or around the world.

Partner with girls who meet regularly as a troop to share amazing experiences and make a difference in their community and the world.

Become a virtual volunteer and help bring exciting interactive activities to girls everywhere.



**As a Girl Scout volunteer,** you'll add meaningful days to girls' lives and to your own as well.

Share your personal passions and create experiences together you'll never forget.

There are endless, flexible ways to participate and we'll give you all the information and support you need.

Have high energy but limited availability? Pick your favorite topic and lead an event that will help girls unleash their potential.

Have a bit more time? Share your passion and knowledge through a series that fits your schedule.



**Make a difference in a girl's life - as a Girl Scout Volunteer!**

**Now is the time to sign up for fall!**

Contact Girl Scouts of Maine: 1-888-922-4763

# Ask Kat: a place to get answers to your questions!

**Submit confidential questions to GirlFormation and Kat will get you accurate and helpful answers and information!**



**Kathleen Hastings** is an RN and certified massage therapist who works at Penobscot Bay Medical Center. She lives with her two children, dog and cat.

**Dear Kat,** I am writing to you about my daughter she is 16, plays on the high school varsity soccer team, has an after school babysitting job, makes the honor roll every term and overall is a really great kid. However, I am becoming more and more concerned with the amount of time she spends playing video games and socializing on her lap top. At first, I thought it was just a phase, but the older she gets, the worse things get. She seems to spend more and more time connected to her Wii or DS, or checking Facebook. The other weekend things got so bad, that she opted to spend an entire beautiful weekend on Facebook, foregoing a trip with the entire family to an amusement park! I am beginning to wonder can video games, the internet and social media become an addiction. When are these games no longer games anymore? How can I tell, and where do we get help?

— Signed, Concerned Techno Mom

**Dear Concerned Techno Mom:**

For many young people, playing games on a computer, video game console, or handheld device is just a regular part of the day. Most are able to juggle the multiple demands of school, sports, work or chores, and family life. Gaming becomes an addiction when it starts to interfere with a person's relationships or their pursuit of other goals, such as

good grades or being a contributing member of a sports team. Computer and video games, allow players to behave very differently from their normal persona. A shy child can suddenly become gregarious; a passive child can become aggressive. Young people, who often feel powerless in their daily lives, suddenly have the ability to command armies, drive (and crash) cars, and wreak havoc on a virtual world with no real-life consequences. This is seductive! And when that boy or girl is already finding it a challenge in the "real world" to make friends, computer and video games offer a way to interact with others in their "virtual world," without the distress of face-to-face interactions.

Although it hasn't been given an "official" diagnosis, addiction-like

behaviors with computer, video, and Internet gaming have noticeably increased among both teenagers and adults. Many mental health professionals feel that video games are similar to gambling as an addictive process. By some estimates, as many as 10 percent of gamers exhibit addictive behavior. Like any addictive behavior, there are signs to look for if you suspect your teen might have a gaming addiction. Your teen need only exhibit two or three of these symptoms for his behavior to be considered "addictive." Here are some symptoms of game addiction - the more of these symptoms you can identify, the greater the need to get professional help:

**Preoccupation**

Someone who is addicted to computer, video, or Internet gaming often exhibits an unusual preoccupation with the

game or computer when he is away from it. The teen could seem distracted, irritable, or disinterested and may talk about the game almost constantly.

**Downplaying Computer Use**

It's common for someone with addictive, computer-related behaviors to downplay the amount of time she spends in front of the TV or computer. The person may make excuses, saying she "needs" to be online, or may outright lie.

**Lack of Control**

A person who is addicted, or at risk of becoming addicted to gaming, is unable to control the amount of time she spends on the computer. She may go online with the intent to spend 15 or 20 minutes, but will keep extending the time until several hours have passed.

**Loss of Time**

Along the same lines, a person may sit down at his computer, again with the intent to spend only a few minutes, but completely lose track of time and suddenly find that several hours have passed. It is not unusual for someone with a gaming addiction to play through the night and only realize how much time has passed when the sun begins to rise.

**Negative Impact on Other Areas of Life**

Because the person spends so much time on the computer or video game console, other areas of life are neglected. He/She may grow distant from friends and family who had previously been close. Homework may go unfinished, causing grades to slip. In more extreme cases, the teen may even neglect personal hygiene, choosing to play video games rather than taking a shower.

## Hiding From Negative or Uncomfortable Feelings or Situations

Some people become addicted to gaming because they use it to self-medicate. When confronted with situations or feelings that are uncomfortable (feeling sad, arguing with a friend, or getting a bad grade), the person may “hide” in the game as a method of avoidance.

### Defensiveness

When confronted or asked about his time spent gaming, a person may become defensive. Denial is often an indication that something is wrong, especially if the person seems unconcerned that friends and family feel neglected or left out of his life.

### Misuse of Money

Someone who is addicted to video, computer, or Internet gaming will spend a disproportionate amount of money on computer-related items. The person will seem to be continually upgrading hardware, software packages, and accessories. This becomes an even greater problem if the person spends money that should be used for bills, groceries, and other necessities.

### Mixed Feelings

As with any addiction, use of the “substance” – in this case, the video game – initially causes euphoric feelings, but that euphoria is quickly followed by guilt. Guilt may be felt either over what the person is doing while online or simply the amount of time he is spending at the computer.

Though this list is not exhaustive, it provides warning signs for parents, friends, and other family members to look for if they are concerned about someone's use of video, computer, or Internet games. This list can also be used as a self-diagnosis tool for those who believe they may have a problem.

### There also are physical symptoms that may point to addiction:

- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Sleep disturbances
- Backaches or neck aches
- Headaches
- Dry eyes
- Failure to eat regularly or neglecting personal hygiene

## Treatment Options for Video Gaming/Computer Addicts

An addiction to video games or computer games should be treated in much the same way as any other addiction. Like other addicts, gamers often are trying to escape problems in their lives. Video and computer games offer a particularly appealing escape to socially maladjusted teenagers, who find it intoxicating to become immersed in a world completely under their control. “When they play, their brains produce endorphins, giving them a high similar to that experienced by gamblers or drug addicts. Gamers’ responses to questions even mirror those of alcoholics and gamblers when asked about use,” said one addiction counselor.

But there is another very real challenge when quitting an activity that occupies all of your free time and involves pretty much everyone in your social network. Kids who are addicted to virtual reality have lost, or may never have had, the ability to comfortably communicate with people face to face. They’ve spent all of their time interacting in a virtual world and are extremely uncomfortable when dealing with real people in real time. In an online world, there is time to edit what you say. There’s also very little risk when the person you are talking with is in a different time zone, let alone a different country.

Shy or socially awkward kids are at greater risk of video game addiction than children who compete in sports or participate in group activities like after school clubs. Take away their computer or their game console and how will they spend their time? Helping them change will likely require some outside help. They need to build confidence in order to feel comfortable in the “real world.” As anyone who has quit smoking or been on a diet knows, it is much harder to quit when the object of your addiction is always in your face and when everyone you know is participating in it. It’s likely that a child addicted to computer games also has to use the computer for schoolwork. Their friends are likely all gamers as well. So how do you begin to fight the addiction?

A therapist or treatment program that specializes in adolescents would be

a first place to start. For example, a summer camp or wilderness program will get your child out of his normal environment and into a situation where he is forced to experience reality. If your teen is obsessively playing games getting them in a wilderness environment helps them clear their heads and get a new perspective on what’s important. Their time will be filled with activities that are designed to instill confidence, develop healthy passions, and foster social skills. Of course, choosing the right program, preferably one that has a therapeutic element, will be essential. Sending a socially challenged child to a rough-and-tumble military or boot camp with highly competitive activities could do more harm than good. Therapeutic boarding schools and wilderness camps for teens that specialize in treating addiction and behavioral issues may be just what your child needs to turn his life around. You can also check your local area to see if there are support groups for kids struggling to balance their online time and their school and family responsibilities. If there isn’t a support group, you can always check for a therapist who can work with your child to talk about feelings that make the internet and/or video games so appealing.

There are a couple of web sites that you and your daughter can visit together to assess the level of addiction. Try the addiction quizzes at [www.netaddiction.com](http://www.netaddiction.com) or [www.mediafamily.org](http://www.mediafamily.org). Even if you don’t actually believe your child is addicted, these tests are a good way to initiate some dialogue and get your teen thinking about how they are spending their time. Don’t forget to check out the GirlFormation book reviews for the summer. Reading is another great way to escape mentally and a much healthier addiction!

### Enjoy the Summer Outside, Kat

Bibliography  
Web site: [www.video-game-addiction.org](http://www.video-game-addiction.org).

Email your questions to Kat at [kasthastings@girlformation.com](mailto:kasthastings@girlformation.com)

# GirlFormation

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## Dear Readers,

I am writing this to you as another rainy day keeps me inside. I can't wait for the sunny days ahead! One of my favorite summer activities is reading outside, and taking in the sights and sounds of summer as I enjoy reading a new novel. This summer edition provides titles and description of the 20 books recommended by the girl readers of New Moon Magazine. We included a few more titles that didn't make the top twenty list, but are books worth reading!

As you will see in the newsletter, each profile contains a reading level and brief description provided by Scholastic's online tool, Book Wizard. This online tool allows users to search for books by title or author, and it provides a host of information about the book. It's



an amazing tool for educators and parents! Check it out!

If you snap a picture of one of our female readers enjoying one of the books from this list, please email us a

picture [csayward@girlformation.com](mailto:csayward@girlformation.com). We will include that photo in an upcoming GirlFormation edition.

Enjoy the warmth and beauty this summer!

Carrie Sayward

