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Sixth Grade Recommended Reading List 2020-2021 | oppl.org/kids-lists

Fiction

Alexander, Kwame. *Booked*. Twelve-year-old Nick loves soccer and hates books, but soon learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams.

Behar, Ruth. *Lucky Broken Girl*. This semi-autobiographical story about a multicultural girl's coming-of-age in the 1960s describes how Cuban-Jewish Ruthie emigrates from Castro's Cuba to New York, where a devastating accident challenges her perceptions about mortality and strength.

Blejwas, Emily. *Once You Know This*. Fifthgrader Brittany struggles to plan, or even imagine, a future away from her mother's abusive boyfriend and the poverty and crime of Chicago's West Side.

Bowles, David. *They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems*. Twelve-year-old Guero, a red-headed, freckled Mexican American border kid, discovers the joy of writing poetry, thanks to his seventh grade English teacher.

Chokshi, Roshani. *Aru Shah and the End of Time* (series). Telling fibs in order to fit in better with her wealthier peers, 12-year-old Aru Shah spends her school break at the Museum of Ancient Indian Art and Culture, where her decision to light a cursed lamp unwittingly releases an ancient demon.

Draper, Sharon M. *Stella by Starlight*. When a burning cross set by the Klan causes panic and fear in 1932 Bumblebee, North Carolina, fifth-grader Stella must face prejudice and find the strength to demand change in her segregated town.

Dumas, Firoozeh. *It Ain't So Awful, Falafel*. Eleven-year-old Zomorod, originally from Iran, tells her story of growing up in Southern California during the 1970s Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis.

Farquhar, Polly. *Itch*. Ohio sixth-grader Isaac "Itch" Fitch strives to fit in, but everything seems to be going wrong, even before a school lunch trade sends his best friend, Sydney, to the hospital.

Howard, Greg. *The Whispers*. Riley's mom has disappeared and it is up to him to ask the Whispers for help. During his journey, Riley begins to learn the truth about his mother, the Whispers, and his identity.

Keller, Tae. *The Science of Breakable Things*. Middle schooler Natalie's yearlong assignment to answer a question using the scientific process leads to truths about her mother's depression and her own cultural identity.

Kelly, Lynne. *Song for a Whale*. Twelve-year-old Iris and her grandmother, both deaf, drive from Texas to Alaska armed with Iris's plan to help Blue-55, a whale unable to communicate with other whales.

Lester, Julius. *Day of Tears*. Emma has taken care of the Butler children since Sarah and Frances's mother, Fanny, left. Emma wants to raise the girls to have good hearts, as a rift over slavery has ripped the Butler household apart. Now, to pay off debts, Pierce Butler wants to cash in his slave "assets", possibly including Emma.

LeZotte, Ann Clare. *Show Me a Sign*. It is 1805 and Mary Lambert has always felt safe among the deaf community of Chilmark on Martha's Vineyard where practically everyone communicates in a shared sign language, but recent events have shattered her life; her brother George has died, land disputes between English settlers and the Wampanoag people are becoming increasingly bitter, and a "scientist" determined to discover the origins of the islands' widespread deafness has decided she makes the perfect "live specimen"--and kidnapped her.

McManis, Charlene Willing. *Indian No More*. When Regina's Umpqua tribe is legally terminated and her family must relocate from Oregon to Los Angeles, she goes on a quest to understand her identity as an Indian despite being so far from home.

Pasternack, Sofiya. *Anya and the Dragon*. In an alternate ninth century, twelve-year-old Anya and a new friend face a Viking and a Tsar to protect the water dragon that saved her life, putting her family's home at risk.

Reynolds, Jason. *Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks*. Ten tales (one per block) about what happens after the dismissal bell rings. A wickedly funny, piercingly poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life.

Roy, Jennifer. *Playing Atari With Saddam Hussein: Based on a True Story*. For forty-two days in 1991, eleven-year-old Ali Fadhil and his family struggle to survive as Basra, Iraq, is bombed by the United States and its allies.

Sachar, Louis. *Fuzzy Mud*. Tamaya Dhilwaddi and Marshall Walsh walk to and from school together since elementary school. But their routine is disrupted when bully Chad Wilson starts a fight with Marshall. To avoid Chad, Marshall and Tamaya take a shortcut home through the off-limits woods. They are soon lost, and they find trouble. More trouble than anyone could imagine.

Schwartz, Ellen. *Heart of a Champion*. Ten-year-old Kenny is secretly practicing despite a suspected heart condition so he can spend time with his baseball star brother, until his world is shattered by his family's placement in a Japanese internment camp in the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attacks.

Shabazz, Ilyasah. *Betty Before X*. Raised as a child by her aunt, Betty, who will later marry Malcolm X, joins her mother and stepfamily in 1940s Detroit, where she learns about the civil rights movement.

Turnage, Sheila. *Three Times Lucky* (series). Washed ashore as a baby in tiny Tupelo Landing, North Carolina, Mo LoBeau, now eleven, and her best friend Dale turn detective when the amnesiac Colonel, owner of a cafe and co-parent of Mo with his cook, Miss Lana, seems implicated in a murder.

Woods, Brenda. *The Unsung Hero of Birdsong, USA*. Gabriel, twelve, gains new perspective when he becomes friends with Meriwether, a Black World War II hero who has recently returned to the unwelcoming Jim Crow South.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Harbor Me*. Six students are brought together for a week to share their hopes and fears. They soon develop a bond and understanding about themselves and their community.



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Nonfiction

Clinton, Chelsea. *It's Your World: Get Informed, Get Inspired, and Get Going!* (361.2 CLI). In a book that tackles the biggest challenges facing us today, Chelsea Clinton combines facts, charts, photographs and stories to give readers a deep understanding of the world around them--and how anyone can make a difference.

Grandin, Temple. *Calling All Minds: How to Think and Create Like an Inventor* (507.8 GRA). Delve into the science behind inventions, the steps various people took to create and improve upon ideas as they evolved, and the ways in which young inventors can continue to think about and understand what it means to tinker, to fiddle, and to innovate.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Portraits of Hispanic American Heroes* (973.046 HER). An inspiring tribute to Hispanic Americans who have made a positive impact on the world.

Larson, Margaret. *Wood Shop: Handy Skills and Creative Building Projects for Kids* (684.08 LAR). Come on, kids: Grab a hammer, step up to the workbench, and get ready to measure, saw, drill, and make cool things! Wood Shop is an exciting introduction for today's kids to an ages-old tradition: building with wood.

Latham, Irene. *Can I Touch Your Hair? Poems of Race, Mistakes, and Friendships* (811 LAT). Irene Latham, who is white, and Charles Waters, who is black, present paired poems about topics including family dinners, sports, recess, and much more.

Montgomery, Heather L. *Something Rotten: A Fresh Look at Roadkill* (591.714 MON). From biologists who use the corpses of Tasmanian devils to investigate cures for a contagious cancer, to a scientist who discovered a whole new species of bird from a single wing left behind, to a boy rebuilding animal bodies from the bones up, to a restaurant that serves up animal remnants, Heather discovers that death is just the beginning for these creatures.

Swanson, Jennifer. *Brain Games* (611.81 SWA). Your brain is mission control for the rest of your body and steers you through life. Not bad for something the size of a softball that looks like a wrinkled grey sponge! Explore the parts of the brain and how it all works, brainy news nuggets from a neuroscientist, plus fun facts and crazy challenges.

Thunberg, Greta. *No One is Too Small to Make a Difference* (363.7 THU). The groundbreaking speeches of Greta Thunberg, the young climate activist who has become the voice of a generation.

Tougas, Mike. *The Finest Hours: The True Story of a Heroic Sea Rescue* (910.452 TOU). The story of a harrowing Coast Guard rescue when four men in a tiny lifeboat overcame insurmountable odds and saved more than 30 stranded sailors.

Wallace, Sandra Neil. *First Generation: 36 Trailblazing Immigrants and Refugees Who Make America Great* (305.906 WAL). Celebrate the genius, diversity, and grit of immigrants and refugees. The men and women in this book represent nations from Somalia to Germany, from Syria to China, from Mexico to Sweden, and more.

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library* (B SCHOMBURG). Amid the scholars, poets, authors, and artists of the Harlem Renaissance stood an Afro-Puerto Rican named Arturo Schomburg. This law clerk's life's passion was to collect books, letters, music, and art from Africa and the African diaspora and bring to light the achievements of people of African descent through the ages.

Woodward, Kay. *What Would She Do? 25 True Stories of Trailblazing Rebel Women* (920.72 WOO). From historic world leaders to brilliant scientists, artists, and modern-day pioneers, here are twenty-five incredible women's stories that educate and empower.

Yousafzai, Malala. *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World* (B YOUSAFZAI). Malala Yousafzai was only ten years old when the Taliban took control of her region. 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. And on October 9, 2012, she nearly lost her life for the cause: She was shot point-blank while riding the bus on her way home from school. No one expected her to survive.

Graphic Novels

Andrews, Ryan. *This Was Our Pact*. Ben and his friends are determined to find out where the paper lanterns of the annual Autumn Equinox Festival go, so they follow the river as far as they can.

Bagieu, Pénélope. *Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World*. Feisty female role models, some world famous, some little known. From Nellie Bly to Mae Jemison or Josephine Baker to Naziq al-Abid, each woman's story comes alive.

Broskol, Vera. *Be Prepared*. All Vera wants to do is fit in—but that's not easy for a Russian girl in the suburbs. There's one summer camp in her single mother's price range—Russian summer camp. Nothing could prepare her for all the “cool girl” drama, endless Russian history lessons, and outhouses straight out of nightmares!

Gardner, Whitney. *Fake Blood*. In order to get the attention of Nia, the girl he likes, eleven-year-old A.J. pretends to be a vampire, unaware that she intends to be a slayer.

Gill, Joel Christian. *Tales of the Talented Tenth: True Adventures of Amazing African Americans* (series). The amazing stories of Bass Reeves, an escaped slave who became one of the most successful lawmen of the Old West, and Bessie Stringfield, the woman who became The Motorcycle Queen of Miami!

Jamieson, Victoria. *All's Faire in Middle School*. Homeschooled by Renaissance fair enthusiasts, 11-year-old Imogene has a hard time fitting in when her wish to enroll in public school is granted.

Leyh, Kat. *Snapdragon*. When Snap's dog goes missing and turns up at the town witch's house, Snap will have to confront her. But is she really a witch? How does she know so much about Snap's family?

Ostertag, Molly Knox. *The Witch Boy* (series). In Aster's family, all the girls are raised to be witches, while boys grow up to be shapeshifters. Unfortunately for Aster, he still hasn't shifted, and he's still fascinated by witchery, no matter how forbidden it might be.

Tynion, James IV. *The Backstagers* (series). When Jory transfers to an all-boys private high school, he's taken in by the only ones who don't treat him like a new kid, the stage crew. Soon Jory is introduced to an entire magical, underground world.