

6

Sixth Grade Recommended Reading List
2022-2023 | oppl.org/kids-lists

Fiction

Ahmed, Samira. *Amira and Hamza*. When her little brother Hamza opens the forbidden Box of the Moon, Amira must journey to a mystical land to prevent the moon, the barrier between realms, from unleashing a nightmare on Earth.

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 English teacher.

Dobbs, Alda P. *Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna*. Based on a true story, the tale of one girl's perilous journey to cross the U.S. border and lead her family to safety during the Mexican Revolution.

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.

Heidicker, Christian McKay. *Scary Stories for Young Foxes* (series). When fox kits Mia and Uly are separated from their litters, they discover a dangerous world full of monsters. In order to find a den to call home, they must venture through field and forest, facing unspeakable things that dwell in the darkness: a zombie who hungers for their flesh, a witch who tries to steal their skins, a ghost who hunts them through the snow... and other very scary things!

Jung, Mike. *The Boys in the Back Row*. Best friends Matt and Eric are hatching a plan for one big final adventure together before Eric moves away: during the marching band competition at a Giant Amusement Park, they will sneak away to a nearby comics convention and meet their idol, a famous comic creator.

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

Kim, Jessica. *Stand Up, Yumi Chung!* When eleven-year-old Yumi Chung stumbles into a kids' comedy camp she is mistaken for another student, so she decides to play the part.

Kramer, Kasper J. *The List of Unspeakable Fears*. In 1910 New York City, four years after her Irish immigrant father dies of tuberculosis, ten-year-old Essie's fear and anxiety continue to grow uncontrollably, so much that when her mother, a brave nurse, remarries and the family moves to North Brother Island, where Essie's new stepfather runs a quarantine hospital for the incurably sick, Essie imagines all manner of horrors, including the ghost of a little girl—which might not be imaginary after all.

LaRocca, Rajani. *Red, White, and Whole*. Reha feels torn between two worlds: school, where she's the only Indian American student, and home, with her family's traditions and holidays. When Reha finds out that her Amma is sick, she becomes determined to be the perfect daughter and save her mother's life.

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 "assets" of enslaved people, possibly including Emma.

LeZotte, Ann Clare. *Show Me a Sign* (series). 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 now she's been kidnapped to use as a living specimen!

Maldonado, Torrey. *What Lane?* Biracial sixth-grader Stephen questions the limitations society puts on him after he notices the way strangers treat him when he hangs out with his white friends and learns about the Black Lives Matter movement.

Marks, Janae. *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*. Receiving an unexpected letter on her 12th birthday from the incarcerated father she has never met, a courageous young baker prepares for a cooking-show competition while scrambling to determine her father's innocence.

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.

Ortega, Claribel A. *Ghost Squad*. Casting a spell that accidentally awakens malicious spirits that wreak havoc throughout St. Augustine, Lucely and Syd team up with the latter's grandmother and tabby cat to break the curse and save Lucely's firefly spirits.

Pasternack, Sofiya. *Any 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.

Stroker, Ali. *The Chance to Fly*. After moving across the country, thirteen-year-old Natalie auditions for her new school's play and overcomes her fears and insecurities about performing in a wheelchair.

Stroud, Jonathan. *The Outlaws Scarlett and Browne* (series). On the run from her latest bank robbery, Scarlett McCain comes to the rescue of Albert Browne, the sole survivor of a horrific accident, and soon learns he may be the most dangerous threat of all.

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.

Youngblood, Leslie C. *Forever This Summer* (series). When eleven-year-old Georgie and her sister Peaches relocate to Bogalusa, Louisiana, with their mother to help their Great Aunt Vie, Georgie becomes involved in the search for the truth about her new friend Markie's mother.

continued on back



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6

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Nonfiction

Chambers, Veronica. *Finish the Fight! The Brave and Revolutionary Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote* (324.623 CHA). Celebrate the names and stories of the diverse heroines whose courage in fighting for the 19th amendment helped change the fabric of America.

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.

Lowry, Lois. *On the Horizon* (940.54 LOW). The human stories behind World War II's Pearl Harbor attack and Hiroshima bombing help us to contemplate what victims share in common and the importance of bridging cultural divides.

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, death is just the beginning for these creatures.

Nye, Naomi Shihab. *Cast Away: Poems for Our Time* (811 NYE). Young People's Poet Laureate Nye shines a spotlight on the things we cast away, from plastic water bottles to those less fortunate. A deeply moving, sometimes funny, and always provocative poetry collection.

Smith, Elliot. *Slavery and Reconstruction: The Struggle for Black Civil Rights* (323.119 SMI). With the freeing of four million enslaved people after the Civil War, the Reconstruction period brought new victories and challenges in the fight for Black rights.

Soontornvat, Christina. *All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team* (796.525 SOO). Firsthand interviews alongside scientific and cultural insights tell the story of the 2018 Thai cave rescue of the Wild Boars soccer team and the critical, sophisticated engineering operation that saved the lives of thirteen young people.

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.

Walker, Nell. *Marie Curie* (B CURIE). Learn about the fascinating life of Marie Curie, one of the world's most celebrated women scientists who changed the course of the world through her scientific discoveries.

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.

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.

Billet, Julia. *Catherine's War*. As France buckles under the Nazi regime, budding photographer Rachel Cohen must change her name, go into hiding, and bear witness to the atrocities of World War II.

Brown, Roseanne A. *Into the Heartlands*. Shuri and her pain-in-the-butt big brother, T'Challa, must travel deep into the mysterious Heartlands to save their family and their kingdom from a mysterious sickness.

Chau, Alina. *Marshmallow and Jordan*. Jordan's days as star player for her school's basketball team ended when an accident left her paralyzed from the waist down. Her competition days seem to be behind her until an encounter with a mysterious elephant helps Jordan discover a brand new sport.

Chmakova, Svetlana. *The Weirn Books: Be Wary of the Silent Woods* (series). In the Night Realm, supernatural things passing for human prowls the streets... but they still have to go to school! Ailis and Na'ya are pretty average students, but when a shadow starts looming and a classmate gets all weird, they are the first to notice.

Fajardo, Kat. *Miss Quinces*. Sue just wants to spend the summer reading and making comics at sleepaway camp with her friends, but instead she gets stuck going to Honduras to visit relatives with her parents and two sisters. The trip takes a turn for the worse when Sue's mother announces that they'll be having a surprise quinceañera for Sue, which is the last thing she wants.

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.

Hansen, Dustin. *My Video Game Ate My Homework*. Dewey Jenkins wants to have the top science project in class to win a state-of-the-art virtual reality video game, but after his friend accidentally breaks the console, they trigger the device, finding themselves transported inside a video game.

Johnson, Varian. *Twins*. Twins Maureen and Francine distinguish themselves for the first time by pursuing separate interests at the beginning of the sixth grade.

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?

Mercado, Yehudi. *Chunky*. Hudi would rather do anything else than try out for sports, but then he meets Chunky, his imaginary friend and mascot.

Venable, Colleen A. F. *Katie the Catsitter* (series). Twelve-year-old Katie is dreading the boring summer ahead until she realizes the mysterious neighbor who hired her to catsit is one of the city's greatest supervillains.