

Suggested Titles Heading into Sixth: For students entering Grade 6

Titles are coded for readability: C=challenging A=average E=easy

Realistic Fiction:

Blackwater by Eve Bunting (141 pages – A) Thirteen-year-old Brodie Lynch was ready for the perfect summer of adventure along the awesome Blackwater River. That was before everything changed forever. When a harmless prank goes too far, the unthinkable happens.

Crash by Jerry Spinelli (176 pages– A) The hilarious and poignant story of a cocky seventh-grade super jock named Crash Coogan.

Everyone Else's Parents Said Yes by Paula Danziger (115 pages - E) Matthew Martin is an annoying soon-to-be eleven-year-old boy. He regularly insults his sister and plays embarrassing jokes on his classmates. Meanwhile, he is eagerly anticipating his birthday party – a sleepover with tons of junk food. He finds that he must face the consequences for his behavior when the sixth-grade girls declare war on him and it coincides with his party.

The Liberation of Gabriel King by Kelly Going (192 pages - A) Gabe's best friend, Frita, decides to use the summer to rid Gabe of all his fears (and there are many) as well as her own (a much shorter list) so that the two can face "the big kids" in the fall.

No More Dead Dogs by Gordon Korman (180 pages - A) Eighth-grade football hero Wallace Wallace is sentenced to detention attending rehearsals of the school play where, in spite of himself, he becomes wrapped up in the production and begins to suggest changes that improve not only the play but his life as well.

A Week in the Woods by Andrew Clements (160 pages - E) The fifth grade's annual camping trip in the woods tests Mark's survival skills and his ability to relate to a teacher who seems out to get him.

A Year of No Rain by Alice Mead (129 pages – E) Stephen, 11, lives with his mother and older sister in a poor, drought-stricken village in the southern Sudan. His father went off to fight with the rebels when the boy was an infant, and the family remains fearful of assaults by northern government soldiers. When the village is attacked (by the southern rebels, as it turns out), the boy and two friends are sent to hide in the forest. Upon returning home, they find that their village has been destroyed, Stephen's mother has been killed, and his sister is missing, possibly taken as a slave.

Historical Fiction:

A Boy at War: A Novel of Pearl Harbor by Harry Mazer (104 pages – A) Fourteen-year-old Adam Pelko, the son of a navy lieutenant, witnesses the sinking of his father's battleship, the "Arizona," during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Lily's Crossing by Patricia Reilly Giff (200 pages - E) During a summer spent at the beach in 1944, Lily's friendship with Albert, a young Hungarian refugee, causes her to see the war and her own world differently.

When the Soldiers Were Gone by Vera W. Propp (101 pages - A) At the end of WWII, in 1945, Henk is separated from the Dutch Christian family that has raised and protected him throughout the war and is taken back home by strangers, his real parents, who are Jewish.

Adventure:

Chronicles of Darkness #1: Wolf Brother by Michelle Paver (304 pages - C) In this page-turning, original adventure, set 6,000 years ago 12-year old Torak and his wolf-cub companion must defeat the evil that stalks their land. Their journey takes them through the deep forest onto glaciers, and into dangers they never dreamed of.

Danger on Midnight River: World of Adventure Series, Book 6 by Gary Paulsen (80 pages – E) Slow learner Daniel Martin escapes peer teasing by spending most of his time outdoors. Daniel's survival skills are put to a severe test when a van crash plunges into the river and Daniel must choose between saving himself and risking his life to save the passengers trapped in the van.

Science Fiction/Fantasy:

Dealing With Dragons by Patricia Wrede (212 pages - C) Princess Cimorene moves into a dragon's cave as a cook to avoid marrying an idiotic prince.

Heartlight by T.A. Baron (242 pages - C) Kate's grandfather has discovered an element, called "Pure Concentrated Light," which has the power to liberate your "Heartlight" so that you can travel to anyplace in space. Together, he and Kate voyage into a world where Darkness and the Pattern are battling it out. They learn about the desire to live forever in contrast to the rightness of the pattern where death of one thing means the birth of something else.

Skellig by David Almond (182 pages - A) Michael met Skellig, the man-owl-angel who lies motionless behind the tea chests, in an abandoned garage behind Michael's house. As disturbing as this discovery is, it is the least of Michael's worries. His new house is a mess, his parents are distracted, and his brand-new baby sister is seriously ill. Still, he can't get this mysterious creature out of his mind, even as he wonders if he has really seen him at all. David Almond examines the large issues of death, life, friendship, love and the breathtaking connections between all things.

Humor:

How Angel Peterson Got His Name by Gary Paulsen (128 pages - E) When you grow up in a small town in the north woods, you have to make your own excitement. High spirits, idiocy, and showing off for the girls inspire Gary Paulsen and his friends to attempt some "extreme sports" of their own invention.

Sideways Stories from Wayside School by Louis Sachar (128 pages – E)

Thirty stories centered on thirty different characters describe the strange things that happen at Wayside School, an architectural accident that was built sideways, thirty stories high with one classroom on each floor.

Poetry:

A Family of Poems: My Favorite Poetry for Children by Caroline Kennedy (143 pages - A) An anthology of poems celebrating poetry's ability to connect us like family.

Locomotion by Jacqueline Woodson (112 pages – E)

Eleven-year-old Lonnie Collins Motion, affectionately dubbed Locomotion by his mother, deals with the loss of his parents and the separation from his sister, Lili, by writing poetry.

Nonfiction: Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream by Tanya Lee Stone (133 p.-A) Profiles 13 women who challenged social norms and government policies to prove they could be exceptional astronauts.

Cave Detectives: Unraveling the Mystery of an Ice Age Cave by David L. Harrison (47 p.- A) Fossil evidence found in a Missouri cave depicts the way life in this region evolved over millions of years.

Hidden Worlds: Looking Through a Scientist's Microscope by Stephen P. Kramer. (57 p.-A) Photographs and text explain how scientist Stephen Kramer has been using microscopes to study the world.