

Grade 6 Book Suggestions

**The following titles were chosen to reflect our RAISE initiative:
*Freak the Mighty, So B. It and Tangerine.***

Level of reading difficulty (when indicated): (E) Easy, (A) Average, (C) Challenging

FICTION

Al Capone Does My Shirts, by Gennifer Choldenko

A twelve-year-old boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed next to the maximum-security prison there. Not only does Moose have to adjust to his extraordinary new environment, but he also has to figure out how to deal with his older sister. Once you finishing reading this book, you may want to check out the sequels: *Al Capone Shines My Shoes* and *Al Capone Does My Homework*.

Among the Hidden, by Margaret Peterson Haddix

This is the first book in a seven book series that tells a story of the Shadow Children. Because of overpopulation, families are limited to two children, but not everybody follows the rules. Luke Garner is a 3rd child and must spend his days hidden until one day he decides to take a chance. (E)

Because of Mr. Terupt, by Rob Buyea

When the students in Mr. Terupt's classroom show up for the first day of school, they have no idea what their year in 5th grade with a rookie teacher will be like. Told through the eyes of seven different narrators, this realistic fiction will make you laugh, make you cry and make you cheer for Mr. Terupt and the students of Snow Hill School. This book has become a favorite of many of the NAMS 6th grade students! Once you finish reading this book, you may want to check out the sequels, *Mr. Terupt Falls Again* and *Saving Mr. Terupt*. (E)

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, by Barbara Robinson

A hilarious story about the Herdmans, the worst kids "in the entire history of the world", and their plot to ruin the school's annual Christmas show. It's a short, easy novel that made me LOL! (E)

Bread and Roses, too, by Katherine Paterson

Jake and Rosa, two children, form an unlikely friendship as they try to survive and understand the 1912 Bread and Roses strike of mill workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts. This moving fictional story of hardships faced by immigrant mill workers and the kindness of strangers is based on events in local history.

The Call of the Wild, by Jack London

This gripping story follows the adventures of the loyal dog Buck, who is stolen from his comfortable family home, and forced into the harsh life of an Alaskan sled dog, and,

eventually, the leader of a wolf pack. This book is quite challenging but well worth the effort. (Many “easy to read” editions are also available.) (C)

Castaways series, by Brian Jacques

An immortal boy and his dog are fated to wander the earth and help others. This is a three book series that includes *Castaways of the Flying Dutchman*, *The Angel's Command*, and *Voyage of Slaves*. (A)

Dead End in Norvelt, by Jack Gantos

In the historic town of Norvelt, Pennsylvania, Jack Gantos spends the summer of 1962 grounded for various offenses until he is assigned to help an elderly neighbor with a most unusual chore. This is a quirky story filled with humorous characters and events! If you enjoy this book, check out the sequel, *From Norvelt to Nowhere*.

Firegirl, by Tony Abbott

A middle school boy's life is changed when Jessica, a girl disfigured by burns, starts attending his school while receiving treatment at a local hospital. This is a touching story about friendship and the power of small acts of kindness.

Found, by Margaret Peterson Haddix

When thirteen-year-olds Jonah and Chip, who are both adopted, learn they were discovered on a plane that appeared out of nowhere and was full of babies with no adults on board, they realize that they have uncovered a mystery involving time travel. If you enjoy this exciting Sci-Fi book, check out the next book in *The Missing* series, *Sent!*

The Fourteenth Goldfish, by Jennifer L Holm

Ellie's scientist grandfather has discovered a way to reverse aging, and consequently has turned into a teenager — which makes for complicated and humorous situations when he attends Ellie's school and the roles are reversed between Grandpa and Ellie's mom.

Freak the Mighty, by Rodman Philbrick

Maxwell Kane, a very large, learning-disabled boy, and Kevin, an undersized child with a physical handicap, team up and take on the world. They fight for good and true causes, and Maxwell learns that his real strength lies deep within himself. I love this book because it's about finding friendship and about life holding something for everyone! This book exemplifies INCLUSION. We value inclusion at NAMS and promote it through our RAISE initiative. (E)

Heart of a Samurai: Based on the True Story of Nakahama Manjiro, by Margi Preus

In 1841, after he is rescued from a remote island by an American whaler, teenage Manjiro, who dreams of becoming a samurai, learns new laws and customs as he becomes the first Japanese person to set foot in the United States. If you want to know more about the true story upon which this historical fiction is based, you may want to check out *Shipwrecked!: The True Adventures of a Japanese Boy*, by Rhoda Blumberg.

Inside Out & Back Again, by Thanhha Lai

Through a series of poems, a young girl chronicles the life-changing year of 1975, when she, her mother, and her brothers leave Vietnam and resettle in Alabama. Based on the author's childhood experiences, this is a moving story of facing new challenges in a new land, and finding hope.

Island of the Blue Dolphins, by Scott O'Dell

O'Dell won the Newbery Medal for this remarkable tale inspired by the real-life story of a 12-year-old American Indian girl, Karana, who survives alone for 18 years on an island off America's west coast. It's a beautiful, suspenseful story that I've read many, many times, and I still love it. (A)

The London Eye Mystery, by Siobhan Dowd

When Ted and Kat's cousin Salim disappears from the London Eye ferris wheel, the two siblings must work together — Ted with his brain that is "wired differently" and impatient Kat — to try to discover what happened to Salim. If you love to unravel mysteries, this might be the book for you!

Matilda, by Roald Dahl

Matilda, brilliant and determined, takes on both her idiotic parents and the evil Headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, in this hilarious novel. (E)

The Maze, by Will Hobbs

Rick Walker feels his life is a maze. He forms a friendship with a biologist who is trying to reintroduce the condor into the wild, and this leads to events that place their lives in danger. (E)

Midwife's Apprentice, by Karen Cushman

In medieval England, a nameless, homeless girl is taken in by a sharp-tempered midwife, and in spite of obstacles and hardship, eventually gains the three things she most wants: a full belly, a contented heart, and a place in this world. (A)

Ninth Ward, by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Twelve-year-old Lanesha, who can see ghosts, lives in New Orleans' Ninth Ward with her adopted grandmother. As Hurricane Katrina quickly approaches the city, Lanesha must find strength within herself and from others as the waters rapidly begin to rise.

Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry

Many students know that the Nazis sent millions of Jews to death camps during World War II. But students may not know the remarkable story of how the people of Denmark secretly transported 7,000 Jews to safety in Sweden. Lowry's fictionalized account of the story, told through the eyes of a 10-year-old Danish girl, won the 1990 Newbery Medal. I am absolutely obsessed with this time period, and I think Lowry did a fabulous job bringing this event to life. (E)

Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You, by Hanna Jansen

This unforgettable novel deals with the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The adoptive German mother of the main character, Jeanne, writes the story, and it deals with a variety of childhood memories ranging from listening to stories at her grandmother's knee to the fear of not surviving the next day. This book contains some emotionally challenging material and is meant for a mature reader. (C)

The Prince and the Pauper, by Mark Twain

Mark Twain, a great American author, writes his first historical fiction novel, and it instantly becomes a masterpiece. Tom Canty, the pauper, and Prince Edward switch places, and the story is underway. There are several versions of this book. Any and all are accepted since the goal is to expose the students to a classic. (E, A, & C)

The Ruins of Gorlan, by John Flanagan

When fifteen-year-old Will is rejected by Battleschool, he becomes the reluctant apprentice to the mysterious Ranger Halt, and winds up protecting the kingdom from danger. If you enjoy this book, there are eleven more in the *Ranger's Apprentice* series. Start by checking out the next book, *The Burning Bridge*!

The Secret Garden, by Frances Hodgson Burnett

It's hard to feel much sympathy for Mary, a young orphan sent to live in a dusty old English Manor. She's such a spoiled brat. But you'll love her contrary nature and her intrepid investigation of the Manor. Along with her plucky friend, Dickson, she discovers a secret garden. Mary also discovers her sickly cousin, Colin, who's been shut away in the Manor for years. Her determination to help Colin reenter the world profoundly changes Mary and leads to a surprising ending to this classic novel. (A)

So B. It, by Sarah Weeks

"There are some things in life a person just can't know." Join Heidi as she goes on a cross-country quest to learn secrets of her past. You will be drawn into the story of Heidi, her mentally disabled mom, and their neighbor Bernadette as Heidi discovers the truth about her family. This book exemplifies EMPATHY. We value empathy at NAMS and promote it through our RAISE initiative. (A)

Tangerine, by Edward Bloor

Paul Fisher has a new home in Tangerine County, Florida. When Paul joins his middle school soccer team, his teammates help uncover the secrets of his new hometown. Although your initial reaction to this book is that it's long and doesn't seem to be going anywhere, if you stick with it you won't be disappointed! I loved how this book unfolded! This book exemplifies ACHIEVEMENT. We value achievement at NAMS and promote it through our RAISE initiative. (A)

Tornado, by Betsy Byars

As a farm family takes shelter from a twister, a farmhand tells tales of Tornado, a dog that was literally dropped into his life. This is a great book to read aloud with other dog lovers! (Very E)

The Underdogs, by Mike Lupica

Small but fast twelve-year-old Will Tyler, an avid football player in the down-and-out town of Forbes, Pennsylvania, takes matters into his own hands to try and finance the city's football team, giving the whole community hope in the process. If you're a fan of sports fiction, check this one out!

When You Reach Me, by Rebecca Stead

If you liked *A Wrinkle in Time* you will love this novel. *When You Reach Me* is about Miranda, a New York City sixth grader who lives with her single mother. The suspense begins to build when their apartment key is stolen and Miranda starts to receive mysterious notes. Who is sending the notes and what are they leading Miranda to? (A)

NONFICTION

Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream, by Tanya Lee Stone

Presents the story of the thirteen women connected with NASA's Mercury 13 space mission, who braved prejudice and jealousy to make their mark and open the door for the female pilots and space commanders that would soon follow. (A)

Blizzard!, by Jim Murphy

Presents a history based on personal accounts and newspaper articles of the massive snowstorm that hit the Northeast in 1888, focusing on the events in New York City. (A)

Bodies from the Bog, by James M. Deem

Describes the discovery of bog bodies in northern Europe and the evidence which their remains reveal about themselves and the civilizations in which they lived. (A)

The Boys' War: Confederate and Union Soldiers Talk About the Civil War, by Jim Murphy

Boys, 16 years and younger, describe their Civil War experiences through diaries, journals, memoirs and letters. Their lives in the camps and on the field reveal the horror and glory of the war that took more lives than all of our other wars combined. (A)

Brown Girl Dreaming, by Jacqueline Woodson

In vivid poems that reflect the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, an award-winning author shares what it was like to grow up in the 1960s and 1970s in both the North and the South. This is a beautifully written memoir of growing up with racial discrimination and other challenges, and the power of family love and holding on to your dreams.

The Great Fire, by Jim Murphy

An account of the Great Chicago Fire combines archival photographs and drawings with personal accounts by its survivors and historical documents. (A)

Lincoln's Grave Robbers, by Steve Sheinkin

This is a suspenseful account of how counterfeiter Benjamin Boyd's gang stole the body of Abraham Lincoln and demanded Boyd's release from jail and \$200,000 as ransom, and the efforts of the Secret Service to recover the remains. You may have trouble putting this true crime thriller down as the plot thickens.

Lives of the Musicians: Good Times, Bad Times (and What the Neighbors Thought),

by Kathleen Krull

The lives of twenty composers and musicians, ranging from Vivaldi, Mozart, and Bach to Gershwin, Gilbert & Sullivan, and Woody Guthrie are profiled in this eclectic, humorous, and informative collection. (A)

Mosque, by David Macaulay

Through a fiction narrative Macaulay reveals how a 16th century mosque was constructed. (C)

Tracking Trash: Flotsam, Jetsam, and the Science of Ocean Motion, by Loree Griffin Burns

Describes the work of a man who tracks trash as it travels great distances by way of ocean current. (A)