



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
Summer Reading List
For Students Entering Grade 6

FICTION

The Boggart by Susan Cooper

After visiting the castle in Scotland, which her family has inherited and returning home to Canada, 12-year old Emily finds that she has accidentally brought back with her a “boggart.” This is an invisible, mischievous spirit with a fondness for practical jokes.

Journey to Topaz by Yoshika Uchida

Uprooted from her home and shipped to the Topaz concentration camp during World War II, Yuke and her family face new hardships daily.

A Mouse Called Wolf by Dick King-Smith

Wolfgang Amadeus Mouse, called Wolf, discovers he is a musical genius. He sings along as the woman whose house he inhabits plays classical music. He ends up saving her life by singing for her when she is ill.

Shiloh by Phyllis Reynolds

Eleven-year old Marty befriends an abused dog. Too poor to support a pet, Marty’s family struggle with the questions of ownership, law, and time-honored issues.

Ella Enchanted by Gail Carson Levine

The enchanting story of Princess Ella, who under a curse, must obey anyone who tells her to do something. Episodes and adventures help her to break the curse and save the romance with her worthy prince.

Absolutely Normal Chaos by Sharon Creech

Mary Lou is keeping a journal as an English class assignment. Through the entries, the events of her summer come alive.

The Ghost of Fossil Glen by Cynthia DeFelice

Allie Nichols is being pursued by a ghost. The ghostly voice guides Allie down a steep cliff. Allie and her friend Dub try to figure out what the ghost wants from Allie.

The Dollhouse Murder by Betty Ross Wright

With the help of her younger sister and family of dolls discovered in an old-fashioned dollhouse in a dusty attic, Amy solves an old and haunting mystery.

The House of Dies Drear by Virginia Hamilton

This tale gives the reader a history lesson about the Underground Railroad. An African-American family discovers incredible secrets in the Civil War era house.

Time for Andrew: A Ghost Story by Mary Downing Hahn

When he spends the summer with his great aunt in the family’s old house, a boy is drawn to the past by mysterious circumstances.

Frindle by Andrew Clements

When fifth-grader Nick Allen tries to distract his teacher, Mrs. Granger, with a question about words, she assigns him an oral report on the dictionary. Nick invents the word “frindle” to replace “pen.” Pretty soon he has the whole school using “frindle.” The war attracts media attention and Nick’s idea takes on a life of its own and he must learn to deal with fame.

Chasing Vermeer by Blue Balliett

Already being heralded as *The DaVinci Code* for kids, *Chasing Vermeer* will have middle grade readers scrutinizing art books as they try to solve the mystery along with Calder and Petra. In an added bonus, artist Brett Helquist has also hidden a secret pentomino message in several of the book's illustrations for readers to decode. An auspicious and wonderfully satisfying debut that will leave no young detective clueless.

HISTORICAL FICTION

The Apprentice translated by Robin Longshaw

Thirteen-year old Arduino is a Renaissance apprentice in Florence. A glimpse into the painting world of Michelangelo, Donato, and Cosimo is imbedded into the suspenseful plot.

Letters from Rifka by Karen Hesse

Fleeing Russia in 1919 with her family, Rifka is forced to stay behind due to an infectious disease. The fears of this thirteen-year old are told in letters that touch the heart.

Dustbowl by David Booth

Through watercolors, pencil illustrations, and text full of feeling, the author tells the story of a family that stayed with their land during a drought.

The Egypt Game by Zilpha Keatley Snyder

April and Melanie are eleven-year old friends in a small town in California. They are deeply interested in ancient Egypt, and the game they invent leads to a real-life criminal investigation.

Lily's Crossing by Patricia Reilly Giff

During a summer spent at Rockaway Beach in 1949, Lily's friendship with a young Hungarian refugee causes her to see the war and her own world differently.

Charley Skedaddle by Patricia Beatty

A young boy from New York City enlists in the Union army as a drummer boy after his brother is killed at Gettysburg and then he "skedaddles" away from the army and hides in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The Wadjet Eye by Jill Rubalcaba

After his mother dies, Damon, a young medical student living in Alexandria, Egypt, in 45 B.C., makes a perilous journey to Spain to locate his father who is serving in the Roman army led by Julius Caesar.

BIOGRAPHY

The Great Little Madison by Jean Fritz

James Madison, fourth president of the United States and one of the authors of the Constitution, was a small man with a quiet voice. Biographer Fritz seeks out fascinating details and anecdotes to add color to the historical information that forms the core of the biography.

The Story of Matthew Henson by Jerri Ferris

This is a gripping account of African-American explorer Matthew Henson and partner Robert Peary's six perilous attempts to reach the North Pole. It includes diary quotes that vividly recreate the scenes of the Arctic.

Seven Brave Women by Betsy Hearne

Highlighting the brave exploits of seven of her female ancestors, the author celebrates the determination of "ordinary" women who, though time, have found a million ways to be brave.

Women Win the Vote by Betsy Covington Smith

Part of the "Turning Points in American History" series, this book gives an overview of the history of women's rights in America from 1620 to the present and focuses, in detail, on the struggle to gain the right to vote.

Sports Great Wayne Gretsky by Ken Rappoport

Hockey fans call him *The Great One*, and this short biography shows why. Growing up in Ontario, Gretsky excelled on the ice from childhood. Hockey fans will enjoy the detailed descriptions of games and seasons as the Oilers worked toward winning the Stanley Cup. Includes black and white photos.

NON-FICTION

Mistakes That Worked by Charlotte Foltz Jones

From penicillin to potato chips and post-it notes to vulcanized rubber, these “mistakes” work in our every day world.

The Boys War: Confederate and Union Soldiers Talk about the Civil War by Jim Murphy

Real stories of real boys who went off to fight for their part of the United States.

Painters of the Caves by Patricia Lauber

Mammoths, bison, horses, bears, and lions leap to life across the cave walls depicted on the pages of this book. These animals and the artists lived 32,000 years ago. These works of early Europeans were recently discovered in caves of southern France.

Trapped by the Ice! Shackelton’s Amazing Antarctic Adventure by Michael McCurdy

Taut text and striking illustrations recreate the two-year ordeal of the ill-fated 1919 Antarctica expedition. Shackleton and his crew endured and survived unbelievable hardship and danger.

How Things Work by David Macaulay

Using drawings, diagrams, and explanations, technology is demystified in an interesting visual presentation with supporting text.

POETRY

Dancing Teepees: Poems of American Indian Youth selected by Virginia Sneve

This is a beautifully illustrated collection of short poems, many transcribed by the editor from oral tradition, and others written by contemporary Native American poets, including the author herself.

Favorite Poems Old and New selected by Helen Ferris

This is a classic one-volume collection with over 700 poems, grouped into 18 sections. Just turn to any section and start reading!

Make a Joyful Sound: Poems for Children by African-American Poets edited by Deborah Slier

This happily illustrated collection brings together familiar and not-so-familiar poems by African-American poets.

Something Big Has Been Here by Jack Prelutsky

Funny verses from a favorite poet with vivid words, rhythmic cadences, and infectious humor.

A Kick in the Head by Paul B. Janeczko

A well organized collection of poems of all forms, with clear and well illustrated information about all poetry forms.

FAVORITE SERIES

Chronicles of Narnia by C. S. Lewis

Four children evacuated from London during the blitz slip into a wardrobe cupboard and emerge in a fantasy world of magical adventures.

Redwall by Brian Jacques

In the woods of Mossflower, Redwall Abbey is home to a peaceful group of mice and a wise abbot. The coming of Cluny the Scourge and his gang of villains transform the peaceful Redwall inhabitants into heroic warriors.

Dear America

Historical stories about significant events and the way ordinary women coped. They are written in the form of diaries and journals.

Royal Diaries

A series set in a variety of historical periods and settings. The series contributors are all well known authors.

Dimwood Series: (Poppy, Poppy and Rye) by Avi

The popular characters of Dimwood continue to delight readers.

Orphan Train Quartet by Joan Lowery Nixon

Mary Frances Kelly and her five siblings are forced by poverty to leave their widowed mother. Leaving New York in 1860, on the orphan train, they head west. Mary Frances poses as a boy so she can stay with her little brother. A gripping story of courage and strength.

The Time Warp Series by Jon Scieszka

Zapped into the 21st century by "The Book," Sam, Fred, and Joe find a future that is definitely worth waiting for in a bizarre, bookish, magical universe.

FAVORITE AUTHORS

Gary Paulson

Jerry Spinelli

Will Hobbs

Sharon Creech

Jean Craighead George

Roald Dahl

Bruce Coville

E. L. Konigsburg

Scott O'Dell

Avi

Karen Cushman

Matt Christopher

Jack Gantos

Jean Fritz

Paula Danziger