

Springfield Public Schools Suggested Summer Reading List

SIXTH GRADE BOOK LIST

Summer provides a very important time for students of all ages to continue reading books of their own choosing. We know that the more a student is read to and reads independently, the more likely that student will become a lifelong reader. Start the summer off right by setting aside a consistent time of at least one-half hour each day for an enjoyable reading time for your child.

Choosing a “just right” book is important. Students should be encouraged to choose books that are interesting to them and that are not too difficult for them to read. The books below are merely suggestions to begin a search for books that will “hook” your child onto reading.

From Education World

***Absolutely Normal Chaos* by Sharon Creech**

A prequel to the Newbery Medal-winning *Walk Two Moons*, this book chronicles the daily life of 13-year-old Mary Lou Finney during her most chaotic and romantic summer ever. Mary Lou's summer journal -- which she begins grudgingly as a dreaded assignment for school -- becomes a hilarious chronicle of the circle of people and events that make her summer. There is Carl Ray, the mysterious and troublesome cousin that comes to visit; Beth Ann Bartels, her best friend who's recently gone boy crazy; Alex Cheevy, the boy that makes Mary Lou's brains "mushy;" and, of course, the Finney clan, her "normally strange family." What follows is the story of a summer filled with lessons and observations on love, death, friendship, and family.

***Belle Prater's Boy* by Ruth White** When Woodrow's mother suddenly disappears, he moves to his grandparents' home in a small Virginia town where he befriends his cousin, and together they find the strength to face the terrible losses and fears in their lives.

***Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, Donna Diamond (illus.)** An extraordinarily powerful tribute to friendship, this Newbery Award-winning novel recounts the unlikely friendship of a country boy, Jess, and his neighbor, an uprooted city girl named Leslie. When Leslie is killed during a storm while trying to reach Terabithia, their secret hiding place, Jess must gather all his strength to come to terms with his loss and find a way to heal.

***Catherine, Called Birdy* by Karen Cushman** Catherine, the spirited and inquisitive daughter of an English country knight, narrates in diary form the story of her 14th year -- in the year 1290. Here, she records the events of her life, particularly her longing for adventures beyond the usual role of women and her

efforts to avoid being married off.

***The Complete Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis, Chris Van Allsburg (illus.)** Enter the magical land of Narnia, where enchanted creatures live and battles are fought between good and evil! The seven volumes of C. S. Lewis's famed fantasy series come boxed in a hardcover case.

***The Egypt Game* by Zilpha Keatley Snyder, Alton Raible (illus.)** Even to Melanie, who knew that you could never predict what a new kid would be like, April Hall was something of a surprise. One look at her stringy upswept hair, false eyelashes, and ragged fox-fur collar, convinced Melanie that April was not going to be easy to integrate into the sixth grade at Wilson School. Within a month, April and Melanie had developed a common interest in ancient Egypt and had begun to develop a land of Egypt in an abandoned storage yard. Complications arose when other people joined the original Egyptians, when a murderer ranged the neighborhood, and when an oracle predicted strange things. But it was all in the game, which gave even April a fall and winter to remember.

***The Giver* by Lois Lowry** Eleven-year-old Jonas lives in a seemingly ideal world. There is no war or pain, and there are no choices. Every person is assigned a role in the community. When Jonas turns 12, he is chosen to receive special training from The Giver himself -- a man who alone holds the key to the true pain and pleasure of life: memories. Now it is time for Jonas to receive the truth. What will Jonas do once he experiences the power of deep emotions? This gripping and provocative Newbery Award-winning novel keeps readers turning the pages and exploring the special qualities that make us each human.

***Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J. K. Rowling** Orphaned as a baby, Harry Potter has spent 11 awful years living with his mean aunt, uncle, and cousin. But everything changes for Harry when an owl delivers a mysterious letter inviting him to attend a school for wizards. At this special school, Harry finds friends, fun, and magic in everything from classes to meals, as well as a great destiny that's been waiting for him...if Harry can survive the encounter. Fans of C. S. Lewis and Roald Dahl will love this enchanting, funny book! Also recommended: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

***I Heard the Owl Call My Name* by Margaret Craven** Amid the grandeur of the remote Pacific Northwest stands Kingcome, a village so ancient that, according to Kwakiutl myth, it was founded by the two brothers left on earth after the great flood. The Native Americans who still live there call it Quee, a place of such incredible natural richness that hunting and fishing remain primary food sources. But the old culture of totems and potlatch is being replaced by a new culture of prefab housing and alcoholism. Kingcome's younger generation is disenchanting and alienated from its heritage. And now, coming upriver is a young vicar, Mark Brian, who has two years to live. Sent to this Indian parish in British Columbia,

Mark embarks on a journey of discovery that can teach him -- and us -- about life, death, and the transforming power of love.

***The Island* by Gary Paulsen** Every morning 15-year-old Wil Neuton gets up, brushes his teeth, leaves the house, and rows away from shore. He's discovered the island, a place where he can go to be alone and learn to know nature -- and himself. On the island he watches the loons and the fish in the lake, and he writes and paints. It feels good to get away from the tension rising between his parents -- tension brought on by yet another move to a new town. But Wil can't stay away from the outside world forever. He must face Ray Bunner, the bully determined to challenge him, and his parents, who worry when Wil decides to stay on the island indefinitely. Can Wil bridge the growing gap between himself and the rest of the world?

***Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli** When Jeffrey Lionel Magee wanders into Two Mills, Pennsylvania, a legend is in the making. Before too long, stories begin to circulate about how fast and how far he can run and about feats so incredible they earn him the nickname "Maniac."

***The 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 wants most: a full belly, a contented heart, and a place in this world.

***Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry** Ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen and her best friend Ellen Rosen often think about life before the war. But it's now 1943, and their life in Copenhagen is filled with school, food shortages, and the Nazi soldiers marching in their town. When the Nazis begin "relocating" the Jews of Denmark, Ellen moves in with the Johansens and pretends to be part of the family. And as Annemarie helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis and embarks on a dangerous mission, she learns how to be brave and courageous -- to save her best friend's life.

***The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster, Jules Feiffer (illus.)** This ingenious fantasy centers around Milo, a bored ten-year old who comes home to find a large toy tollbooth sitting in his room. Joining forces with a watchdog named Tock, Milo drives through the tollbooth's gates and begins a memorable journey. He meets such characters as the foolish yet lovable Humbug, the Mathemagician, and the not-so-wicked "Which," Faintly Macabre, who gives Milo the "impossible" mission of returning two princesses to the Kingdom of Wisdom. Along his journey, Milo learns the importance of words and numbers -- and learns to appreciate life.

The River by Gary Paulsen In this exciting sequel to *Hatchet*, 15-year-old Brian Robeson, who survived alone in the wilderness for 54 days, returns to the wilderness at the request of a government survival school. This time, however, he won't be alone: Derek Holtzer, a government psychologist, will accompany him to observe and take notes. But during a freak storm, Derek is hit by lightning and falls into a coma. Afraid that Derek will die of dehydration unless he can get him to a doctor, Brian's only hope is to build a raft and try to transport Derek a hundred miles down the river to a trading post.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor The Logans, a black family living in the South during the 1930s, are faced with prejudice and discrimination which their children don't understand. It takes the events of one turbulent year -- the year of the night riders and the burnings, the year a white girl humiliates Cassie in public simply because she is black -- to show Cassie that having a place of their own is the Logan family's lifeblood. It is the land that gives the Logans their courage and pride, for no matter how others may degrade them, the Logans possess something no one can take away.

Summer of My German Soldier by Bette Greene The summer that Patty Bergen turns 12 is a summer that will haunt her forever. When her small hometown in Arkansas becomes the site of a camp housing German prisoners during World War II, Patty learns what it means to open her heart. Even though she's Jewish, she begins to see a prison escapee, Anton, not as a Nazi, but as a lonely, frightened young man with feelings not unlike her own. In Anton, Patty finds someone who softens the pain of her own father's rejection and who appreciates her in a way her mother never will. While patriotic feelings run high, Patty risks losing family, friends -- even her freedom -- for this dangerous friendship. It is a risk she has to take and one she will have to pay a price to keep.

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls A young boy living in the Ozarks achieves his heart's desire when he becomes the owner of two redbone hounds and teaches them to be champion hunters. Together, the three of them experience danger, adventure, love, and sorrow.

The Wish Giver, Three Tales of Coven Tree by Bill Brittain, Andrew Glass (illus.) The people of Coven Tree are no strangers to magic. In fact, the town's very name comes from a gnarled old tree where covens of witches used to gather. Even now, imps and fiends continue to appear, frightening the townfolk with their devilish pranks. Usually these creatures are easy to spot. They have a particular smell, sound, or way of moving that betrays their dark nature. But

Thaddeus Blinn showed none of these signs when he came to Coven Tree. He was just a funny little man who drifted into town with a strange tale about being able to give people whatever they wished -- for only 50 cents. There was nothing scary about him. At least, not until the wishing began....

***Words of Stone* by Kevin Henkes** While exploring the countryside outside of his home, 10-year-old Blaze Werla spots a devastating message on the side of a hill. Ultimately, Blaze's summer takes a turn toward mystery and adventure when he meets the boisterous and irresistible Joselle.

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