

2025 NMS Summer Reading: 6th Grade

Students entering grade 6 should read **at least one book off List A** from the Sixth Grade list and **at least one additional book**. **Your one additional book can be a book off List B or any other book that is interesting!** Daily reading over the summer is encouraged to help students keep both their reading skills and stamina strong. Reading should be enjoyable and students are encouraged to read any books that interest them, even if they are not on this list.

Sixth Grade List A:

Students must read at least one book from this list, and be prepared to discuss themes, characters, and plot in class activities.



Fish In A Tree by Lynda Mullaly Hunt --Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she is able to hide her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. She is afraid to ask for help; after all, how can you cure dumb? However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the trouble maker. With his help, Ally learns not to be so hard on herself and that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of. As her confidence grows, Ally feels free to be herself and the world starts opening up with possibilities. She discovers that there's a lot more to her—and to everyone—than a label, and that great minds don't always think alike.



El Deafo by Cece Bell by Sharon Draper --Going to school and making new friends can be tough. But going to school and making new friends while wearing a bulky hearing aid strapped to your chest? That requires superpowers! In this funny, poignant graphic novel memoir, author/illustrator Cece Bell chronicles her hearing loss at a young age and her subsequent experiences with the Phonic Ear, a very powerful--and very awkward--hearing aid. After some trouble, she is finally able to harness the power of the Phonic Ear and become "El Deafo, Listener for All." And more importantly, declare a place for herself in the world and find the friend she's longed for.



Marvelous Jackson by Laura Anne Bird -- After losing his mom, a struggling thirteen-year-old boy in northern Wisconsin rediscovers the love of baking he once shared with her and decides to audition for the world-famous, big-hearted *Marvelous Midwest Kids Baking Championship* television show in Chicago. Jack is sure that his new sense of purpose will help him stay out of trouble, so he throws himself into learning the finer points of sprinkles and scones -- and hopefully even mending his broken relationship with his dad.



Out Of My Mind or another book in the series by Sharon Draper -- Melody is not like most people. She cannot walk or talk, but she has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She is smarter than most of the adults who try to diagnose her and smarter than her classmates in her integrated classroom - the very same classmates who dismiss her as mentally challenged because she cannot tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by cerebral palsy. And she's determined to let everyone know it - somehow.



Restart by Gordon Korman -- Chase does not remember falling off the roof, in fact he does not remember anything about himself, and when he gets back to middle school he begins to learn who he was through the reactions of the other kids--trouble is, he really is not sure he likes the Chase that is being revealed, but can he take the opportunity amnesia has provided and restart his life?



Ungifted by Gordon Korman -- Told through multiple viewpoints, *Ungifted* follows Donovan Curtis through his year at a magnet school for gifted and talented kids. Thanks to an administrative foul-up, the decidedly mediocre student Donovan finds himself enrolled in the Academy of Scholastic Distinction. Out of place and out of luck, Donovan joins the robotics team. And while he learns a few lessons from his gifted classmates, he also teaches a few of his own.

All descriptions taken from OCLN, Accelerated Reader, or Amazon.

Sixth Grade List B:

Students must read at least one other book (in addition to their selection from List A).

This book can come from this list, or any other book that is interesting!

Books are listed by main genre: click here to jump to [Fantasy/Science Fiction/Futuristic](#), [Graphic Novels](#), [Historical Fiction](#), [Mystery/Adventure](#), [Nonfiction](#), [Realistic Fiction](#), or [Sports](#).

FANTASY/SCIENCE FICTION/FUTURISTIC-



The False Prince by Jennifer Nielsen -- In a discontent kingdom, civil war is brewing. To unify the divided people, Conner, a nobleman of the court, devises a cunning plan to find an impersonator of the king's long-lost son and install him as a puppet prince. Four orphans are recruited to compete for the role, including a defiant boy named Sage. Sage knows that Conner's motives are more than questionable, yet his life balances on a sword's point -- he must be chosen to play the prince or he will certainly be killed. But Sage's rivals have their own agendas as well. As Sage moves from a rundown orphanage to Conner's sumptuous palace, layer upon layer of treachery and deceit unfold, until finally, a truth is revealed that, in the end, may very well prove more dangerous than all of the lies taken together.



Mark of the Thief by Jennifer Nielsen -- When Nic, a slave in the mines outside of Rome, is forced to enter a sealed cavern containing the lost treasures of Julius Caesar, he finds much more than gold and gemstones: He discovers an ancient bulla, an amulet that belonged to the great Caesar and is filled with a magic once reserved for the Gods -- magic some Romans would kill for. Now, with the deadly power of the bulla pulsing through his veins, Nic is determined to become free. But instead, he finds himself at the center of a ruthless conspiracy to overthrow the emperor and spark the Praetor War, a battle to destroy Rome from within.. In a quest to stop the rebellion, save Rome, and secure his own freedom, Nic must harness the magic within himself and defeat the empire's most powerful and savage leaders.



Orphan Island by Laurel Snyder -- On a perfect island, when the nine children go to sleep in their cabins, it is with full stomachs and joy in their hearts. And only one thing ever changes: on that day, each year, when a boat appears from the mist upon the ocean carrying one young child to join them—and taking the eldest one away, never to be seen again. Today's Changing is no different. The boat arrives, taking away Jinny's best friend, replacing him with a new little girl, and leaving Jinny as the new Elder. Jinny knows her responsibility is to teach Ess about the island, and to keep things as they've always been.



We're Not From Here by Geoff Rodkey -- The first time I heard about Planet Choom, we'd been on Mars for almost a year. But life on the Mars station was grim, and since Earth was no longer an option (we may have blown it up), it was time to find a new home. That's how we ended up on Choom with the Zhuri. They're very smart. They also look like giant mosquitoes. But that's not why it's so hard to live here. There's a lot that the Zhuri don't like: singing (just ask my sister, Ila), comedy (one joke got me sent to the principal's office), or any kind of emotion. The biggest problem, though? The Zhuri don't like us. And if humankind is going to survive, it's up to *my* family to change their minds. No pressure.



A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle -- Meg Murry and her friends become involved with unearthly strangers and a search for Meg's father, who has disappeared while engaged in secret work for the government. Everyone in town thinks Meg is volatile and dull-witted and that her younger brother Charles Wallace is dumb. People are also saying that their father has run off and left their brilliant scientist mother. Spurred on by these rumors, Meg and Charles Wallace, along with their new friend Calvin, embark on a perilous quest through space to find their father. In doing so they must travel behind the shadow of an evil power that is darkening the cosmos, one planet at a time.

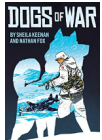
GRAPHIC NOVELS



Amulet Vol. 1: The Stonekeeper or any other book in this series by Kazu Kibuishi: After moving to their ancestral home, Emily and Navin's mother is kidnapped by a tentacled creature in the basement that leads the children on a deadly chase into the magical world below their home.



Cool Code or a book in this series by Deidre Langeland: In an attempt to fit in, Zoey develops an app called the Cool Code with a cute llama avatar that will tell her everything from what to say to what to wear based on pop culture algorithms she's uploaded. But when the app gives her ridiculous advice, awkwardness and hilarity ensues. With a few upgrades and a bit of debugging from the coding club, the app actually works—Zoey gets *really* popular . . . and gets her pulled in all kinds of directions, including away from her real friends.



Dogs of War by Sheila Keenan -- Based on the real-life roles of military dogs that served as Red Cross rescuers, messengers, scouts, search-and-rescue teams, sentries, and mascots, during World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War, this collection of three fictional stories tells the remarkable adventures of a soldier and his service dog. DOGS OF WAR captures both the adventure and the devastation brought on by war, as well as the celebrations of life and friendship between boys and their dogs.



Illegal by Eoin Colfer- Ebo is alone. His brother, Kwame, has disappeared, and Ebo knows it can only be to attempt the hazardous journey to Europe, and a better life—the same journey their sister set out on months ago. But Ebo refuses to be left behind in Ghana. He sets out after Kwame and joins him on the quest to reach Europe. Ebo's epic journey takes him across the Sahara Desert to the dangerous streets of Tripoli, and finally out to the merciless sea. But with every step he holds on to his hope for a new life, and a reunion with his family.



Max and the Midnighters by Lincoln Peirce -- Max wants to be a knight! Too bad that dream is about as likely as finding a friendly dragon. But when Max's uncle Budrick is kidnapped by the cruel King Gastley, Max has to act...and fast! Joined by a band of brave adventurers--the Midnighters--Max sets out on a thrilling quest: to save Uncle Budrick and restore the realm of Byjovia to its former high spirits!



Stealing Home by J. Torres - -When Sandy Saito, a baseball-loving boy, is forced to move to a Japanese internment camp during WWII, his world is turned upside down. Separated from his father, Sandy, his mother, and brother struggle to adjust to the harsh new reality. But through it all, Sandy draws strength from his love of baseball, especially the Asahi team. He learns that life, like the game, is about facing what comes your way and finding your way back home.



Swim Team by Johnnie Christmas- Bree can't wait for her first day at her new middle school, Enith Brigitha, home to the Mighty Manatees—until she's stuck with the only elective that fits her schedule, the dreaded Swim 101. The thought of swimming makes Bree more than a little queasy, yet she's forced to dive headfirst into one of her greatest fears. Lucky for her, Etta, an elderly occupant of her apartment building and former swim team captain, is willing to help. With Etta's training and a lot of hard work, Bree suddenly finds her swim-crazed community counting on her to turn the school's failing team around. But that's easier said than done, especially when their rival, the prestigious Holyoke Prep, has everything they need to leave the Mighty Manatees in their wake. Can Bree defy the odds and guide her team to a state championship, or have the Manatees swum their last lap—for good?



Sunny Makes her case or another book in this series by Jennifer L Holm—Sunny is figuring out middle school, but still feels like an outsider. Most kids have a sport or activity, but she's not cut out for football or cheerleading. When her friend Arun suggests starting a debate club, Sunny's unsure — isn't debating just arguing? She's good at that. Fun topics like "best candy" are easy, but as the club grows and the debates get tougher, Sunny learns she'll have to do more than argue — she'll have to prove her point.

HISTORICAL FICTION



Al Capone Does My Shirts or any other book in this series by Gennifer Choldenko -- A twelve-year-old boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there, and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.



A Night Divided by Jennifer A. Nielsen -- With the rise of the Berlin Wall, twelve-year-old Gerta finds her family suddenly divided. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. One day, Gerta spots her father on a viewing platform on the western side, pantomiming a peculiar dance. Then, when she receives a mysterious drawing, Gerta puts two and two together and concludes that her father wants Gerta and Fritz to tunnel beneath the wall, out of East Berlin.



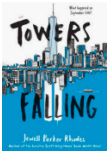
Refugee by Alan Gratz -- JOSEF is a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world . . . ISABEL is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety in America . . . MAHMOUD is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe . . . All three kids go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers.



Resistance by Jennifer Nielsen -- Chaya Lindner is a teenager living in Nazi-occupied Poland. Simply being Jewish places her in danger of being killed or sent to the camps. After her little sister is taken away, her younger brother disappears, and her parents all but give up hope, Chaya is determined to make a difference. Using forged papers and her fair features, Chaya becomes a courier and travels between the Jewish ghettos of Poland, smuggling food, papers, and even people. Soon Chaya joins a resistance cell that runs raids on the Nazis' supplies. But after a mission goes terribly wrong, Chaya's network shatters. She is alone and unsure of where to go, until Esther, a member of her cell, finds her and delivers a message that chills Chaya to her core, and sends her on a journey toward an even larger uprising in the works — in the Warsaw Ghetto.



The Seventh Most Important Thing by Shelley Pearsall -- In 1963, thirteen-year-old Arthur is sentenced to community service helping the neighborhood Junk Man after he throws a brick at the old man's head in a moment of rage, but the junk he collects might be more important than he suspects. Inspired by the work of American folk artist James Hampton.



Towers Falling by Jewell Parker Rhodes-- When her fifth-grade teacher hints that a series of lessons about home and community will culminate with one big answer about two tall towers once visible outside their classroom window, Dèja can't help but feel confused. She sets off on a journey of discovery, with new friends Ben and Sabeen by her side. But just as she gets closer to answering big questions about who she is, what America means, and how communities can grow (and heal), she uncovers new questions, too. Like, why does Pop get so angry when she brings up anything about the towers?



Voyage of the Sparrowhawk by Natasha Farrant—In the aftermath of World War One, the small town of Barton is full of people rebuilding their lives. Ben is desperate to find his missing brother, Sam, to avoid being sent to an orphanage. Lotti faces being shipped off to boarding school by her dreadful aunt and uncle—just after managing to get expelled. When the two meet by chance, they quickly recognize a kindred spirit in each other. But when disaster strikes, they're forced to run. Together, they hatch a bold plan to cross the English Channel on Ben's narrowboat, *Sparrowhawk*, to find Sam in France—where Lotti is searching for something of her own, too.

MYSTERY/ADVENTURE



The Fourth Stall or any other book in this series by Chris Rylander -- if you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can pay him, Mac and his best friend Vince will be there. Their methods might sometimes run afoul of the law, or at least the school code of conduct, but Mac is on your side. His office is located in the East Wing boys' bathroom, fourth stall from the high window. And business is booming. Or at least it was, until one particular Monday. It starts with a third grader in need of protection. Mac and Vince soon realize that the trouble with solving everyone else's problems is that there's no one left to solve yours.



The Name of This Book Is Secret by Pseudonymous Bosch -- Two eleven-year-old misfits try to solve the mystery of a dead magician and stop the evil Dr. L and Ms. Mauvais, who are searching for the secret of immortality. This is the story of a secret, and also a secret story.

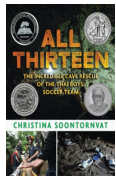


Spy School or any other book in this series by Stuart Gibbs -- Ben Ripley may only be in middle school, but he's already pegged his dream job: C.I.A. or bust. Unfortunately for him, his personality doesn't exactly scream "secret agent." In fact, Ben is so awkward, he can barely get to school and back without a mishap. Ben is entirely shocked to discover that the school is actually a front for a junior C.I.A. academy. Could the C.I.A. really want *him*? Actually, no. There's been a case of mistaken identity—but that doesn't stop Ben from trying to morph into a supercool undercover agent.

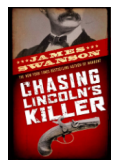


Wildfire by Rodman Philbrick -- Flames race toward Sam Castine's summer camp as evacuation buses are loading, but Sam runs back to get his phone. Now a wall of fire separates Sam from his bus, and there's only one thing to do: Run for his life.

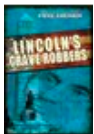
NONFICTION



All Thirteen : The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai boys' Soccer Team by Christina Soontornvat --a boys' soccer team in Thailand goes on an adventure to explore a cave after practice. But suddenly, heavy rain floods the cave, trapping all 12 boys and their coach deep inside! As days pass, people around the world worry about them. Brave divers, rescuers, and scientists work together in an amazing mission to save them. This true story shows how teamwork, courage, and problem-solving helped the boys face this seemingly impossible challenge.



Chasing Lincoln's Killer by James Swanson -- "This story is true. All the characters are real and were alive during the great manhunt of April 1865. Their words are authentic and come from original sources: letters, manuscripts, trial transcripts, newspapers, government reports, pamphlets, books and other documents. What happened in Washington, D.C., that spring, and in the swamps and rivers, forests and fields of Maryland and Virginia during the next twelve days, is far too incredible to have been made up. So begins this fast-paced thriller that tells the story of the pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth and gives a day-by-day account of the wild chase to find this killer and his accomplices. Based on James Swanson's bestselling adult book MANHUNT: THE 12-DAY CHASE FOR LINCOLN'S KILLER, this young people's version is an accessible look at the assassination of a president, and shows readers Abraham Lincoln the man, the father, the husband, the friend, and how his death impacted those closest to him.



Lincoln's Grave Robbers by Steve Sheinkin -- This dramatic account of the 1875 attempt to steal the sixteenth president's body describes how a counterfeiting ring plotted to ransom Lincoln's body to secure the release of their imprisoned ringleader.



Outlaws, Spies, and Gangsters: Chasing Notorious Criminals by Laura Scandiffio -- Tells about eight of the world's most wanted men, including John Dillinger and Osama bin Laden, and how they were captured.

REALISTIC FICTION



Breakout by Kate Messner – Nora Tucker is excited for summer in Wolf Creek—full of swimming, popsicles, and practicing journalism. But when two inmates escape from the nearby prison, the town is thrown into chaos. With increased security and rising tension, fear begins to change how people treat each other. Told through letters, poems, texts, and news stories, Nora documents it all for a school time capsule project.



Front Desk Series by Kelly Yang -- Recent immigrants from China and desperate for work and money, ten-year-old Mia Tang's parents take a job managing a rundown motel in Southern California, even though the owner, Mr. Yao, is a nasty skinflint who exploits them. While her mother (who was an engineer in China) does the cleaning, Mia works the front desk and tries to cope with demanding customers and other recent immigrants--not to mention being only one of two Chinese in her fifth grade class, the other being Mr. Yao's son, Jason.



Mustaches For Maddie by Chad Morris and Shelly Brown – Twelve-year-old Maddie loves making people laugh with the fake mustaches she keeps in her pocket. She hopes they'll help her connect with Cassie, the popular girl at school. Lately, Maddie's been struggling with her right arm and tripping a lot, but she assumes it's just part of growing up—until a doctor reveals she has a brain tumor and needs surgery. Afraid but determined, Maddie must find courage to face her fears both in the hospital and in everyday life.



Nine, Ten by Nora Raleigh Baskin – In the days leading up to September 11, 2001, four kids across the country are facing personal struggles. Sergio in Brooklyn wrestles with feelings about his absent father. Will is grieving the loss of his dad in a car accident. Nadira, new at school, feels singled out for wearing a headscarf. Amy is adjusting to a move while missing her mom, who's on a business trip to New York. Though they don't know each other yet, the events of 9/11 will connect their lives in unexpected ways.



The Outsmarters by Deborah Ellis – Twelve-year-old Kate, suspended from school and struggling with anger, lives with her distant grandmother after being left by her mother. Hoping to save money for their future reunion, Kate opens a philosophy booth to offer advice. Along the way, she learns adults have their own issues—including Gran, who's been hiding the truth about Kate's mom. A fierce argument pushes Kate to take control of her life and begin letting go of her anger by turning to unexpected allies.



Scar Island by Dan Gemeinhart -- Jonathan Grisby is the newest arrival at the Slab Henge Reformatory School for Troubled Boys -- an ancient, crumbling fortress of gray stone rising up from the ocean. Jonathan has done something terrible. And he's willing to accept whatever punishment he has coming. Just as he's getting used to his new situation, however, a freak accident leaves the troubled boys of Slabhenge without any adult supervision. Suddenly the kids are free, with an entire island to themselves. But freedom brings unexpected danger.



Squint By Chad Morris -- Flint loves to draw. In fact, he's furiously trying to finish his comic book so he can be the youngest winner of the "Find a Comic Star" contest. He's also rushing to finish because he has keratoconus—an eye disease that could eventually make him blind. *Squint* is the inspiring story of two new friends dealing with their own challenges, who learn to trust each other, believe in themselves, and begin to truly *see* what matters most.



Starfish by Lisa Fipps – Ever since Ellie made a splash in a whale swimsuit at her fifth birthday, she's been bullied for her weight. To cope, she follows the Fat Girl Rules—like avoiding attention and not eating in public. Her swimming pool is her escape, where she feels free to take up space like a starfish. At home, her mom's constant criticism hurts, but Ellie finds support in her dad, her therapist, and a new friend, Catalina. With their help, she begins to challenge the rules and embrace who she truly is.

SPORTS



Checked by Cynthia Kadonata -- Hockey is Conor's whole life. When Conor's dog is diagnosed with cancer, Conor chooses to put his hockey lessons and practices on hold so they can pay for Sinbad's chemotherapy. But without hockey to distract him, Conor begins to notice more. Like his dad's crying bouts, and his friend's difficult family life. And then Conor notices one more thing: without hockey, the one thing that makes him feel special, is he really special at all?



The Crossover by Kwame Alexander -- Josh Bell and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.



Game Changers by Mike Lupica -- When the coach's son, Shawn O'Brien, is chosen to play quarterback, eleven-year-old Ben McBain is not surprised--but when he tries to be a good teammate and help the inconsistent Shawn, he is startled to learn that his new friend does not really want the position.



Ghost by Jason Reynolds -- Running. That's all Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. Ghost has been the one causing problems—and running away from them—until he meets Coach, an ex-Olympic Medalist who sees something in Ghost: crazy natural talent. If Ghost can stay on track, literally and figuratively, he could be the best sprinter in the city. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed, or will his past finally catch up to him?



Pinch Hit by Tim Green -- Trevor and Sam are nearly identical in appearance, but their lives couldn't be any more different. Trevor has a lead role in a major feature film and lives in a Bel Air mansion. But even though he seems to have everything, he can't get the one thing he truly wants: the opportunity to play baseball for real.