

HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

Grade 6

All book summaries are provided by the publisher or written by committee members.

Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.

Acampora, Paul. ***In Honor of Broken Things***. Dial Books, 2022. In an introduction-to-clay class, two boys and a girl meet and become friends, sharing an appreciation for art, football, family, and faith. *Realistic fiction*

Anderson, John David. ***The Greatest Kid in the World***. Walden Pond Press, 2023. When Zeke Stahls is chosen to participate in an online contest for the World's Greatest Kid, even though he often gets into trouble at school, Zeke must figure out how to be his best self to win the contest's large cash prize and help his struggling family pay their bills. *Humor*

Anderson, John David. ***Stowaway***. Walden Pond Press, 2021. To save his scientist father after their spaceship is attacked, Leo stows away on a strange ship full of mercenary space pirates and must decide who to trust--human or alien--to stay alive. *Science fiction, series*

Barone, Rebecca E.F. ***Mountain of Fire: The Eruption and Survivors of Mount St. Helens***. Holt, 2024. This narrative nonfiction account of the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens introduces readers to the scientists who tried to sound the alarm about the impending eruption, as well as those who tried to escape the violent blast. *Nonfiction*

Behar, Ruth. ***Letters from Cuba***. Nancy Paulsen, 2020. In 1938, eleven-year-old Esther joins her father in tropical Cuba, where they toil together to rescue the rest of their Jewish family from persecution in Poland. *Historical fiction*

Bridges, Ruby. ***This Is Your Time***. Delacorte, 2020. Written as a letter to the "young peacemakers of America," Civil Rights activist Ruby Bridges recalls her experience as the first Black student to integrate an all-white school in 1960s New Orleans. *Nonfiction*

Brown, Aly. ***The Last Unexplored Place on Earth: Investigating the Ocean Floor with Alvin the Submersible***. Feiwel and Friends, 2023. Dive miles down into the depths of the ocean with Alvin the Submersible, which has been used for everything from science exploration to shipwreck searching, while learning more about the last great frontier on Earth. *Nonfiction*

Bruchac, Joseph. ***Rez Dogs***. Dial Books, 2021. Malian is visiting her grandparents on the Wabanaki reservation when all travel stops, and she must quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Realistic fiction*

Carson, Mary Kay. ***Urban Coyotes***. Clarion, 2024. Scientists with the Urban Coyote Research Project in Chicago study how coyotes have adapted to urban areas and work to promote peaceful coexistence between humans and wildlife. *Nonfiction*

Christmas, Johnnie. ***Swim Team***. HarperAlley, 2022. Middle schooler Bree is not afraid of hard work, but she is afraid of swimming, so when she ends up in Swim 101 for her elective, she tackles this new

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challenge with the help of an elderly neighbor and former swim team captain. *Realistic fiction, graphic novel*

Clayton, Dhonielle. ***The Marvellers***. Holt, 2022. Eleven-year-old Ella Durand is the first Conjuror to attend the Arcanum Training Institute, a magic school in the clouds, but when she falls under suspicion for helping a criminal escape prison, she must, with the help of her new friends and her growing powers, find a way to clear her family's name. *Fantasy, series*

Currie, Lindsay. ***The Mystery of Locked Rooms***. Sourcebooks, 2024. West, Hannah, and Sarah – known for their escape room prowess – enter an off-limits fun house to win the treasure hidden inside and to save Sarah's family's house from foreclosure. *Mystery, series*

Day, Nicholas. ***A World Without Summer: A Volcano Erupts, a Creature Awakens, and the Sun Goes Out***. Random House Studio, 2025. When Mount Tambora, a volcano in Indonesia, erupted in 1815, it caused catastrophic changes in the global climate. *Nonfiction, Robert F. Sibert Honor Book Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist*

Dobbs, Alda P. ***The Other Side of the River***. Sourcebooks, 2022. Twelve-year-old Petra Luna has escaped the Mexican Revolution and has arrived at a refugee camp in Texas, where she tries to build a new life with her abuelita, little sister, and baby brother. *Historical fiction, series*

Gemeinhart, Dan. ***Busted***. Holt, 2025. When twelve-year old Oscar Aberdeen finds out that he and his grandpa might be kicked out of their apartment in a retirement community, Oscar embarks on a wacky adventure to save his home. *Humor*

Gibbs, Stuart. ***Charlie Thorne and the Last Equation***. Simon & Schuster, 2019. The CIA forces twelve-year-old Charlotte "Charlie" Thorne, a rebellious genius, to use her code-breaking skills in an epic global chase to locate Einstein's last equation before dangerous agents discover it and unlock the solution to harnessing energy. *Action & Adventure, series*

Gidwitz, Adam. ***Max in the House of Spies***. Dutton, 2024. In 1939, after eleven-year-old Max is sent to London to escape the danger faced by Jewish children in Berlin, he sets out to become a British spy to help his family. *Historical fiction, series*

Gratz, Alan. ***Two Degrees***. Scholastic, 2022. Fire, ice, and flood create perilous situations for four kids who become committed to helping save the planet in this survival story. *Action & Adventure*

Hartman, Aubrey. ***The Undead Fox of Deadwood Forest***. Little, Brown, 2025. A silver-tailed fox, Clare, is content with his role as the guide of lost souls from Deadwood Forest to the Afterlife until a pesky badger shows up and turns everything upside down. *Fantasy, Newbery Honor Book*

Hiaasen, Carl. ***Wrecker***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2023. When fifteen-year-old Valdez Jones VIII, a.k.a Wrecker, unwittingly becomes entangled with a group of smugglers and grave robbers, he must deep-dive into their shady dealings to escape their twisted net. *Action & Adventure*

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- Higuera, Donna Barba. ***Alebríjes***. Levine Querido, 2023. In a barren, futuristic wasteland, thirteen-year-old Leandro is arrested and exiled for stealing and must work with other outcasts to save his sister and uncover dangerous lies told by the corrupt government. *Dystopian, series*
- Hopson, Nasuğraq Rainey. ***Eagle Drums***. Roaring Brook, 2023. A young Iñupiat hunter survives an encounter with a magical eagle and gains cultural wisdom meant to strengthen his community. *Folklore*
- Jamieson, Victoria, and Omar Mohamed. ***When Stars Are Scattered***. Dial Books, 2020. Brothers Omar and Hassan live together in a Kenyan refugee camp, and when Omar gets the opportunity for more education, he must make some tough decisions. *Graphic memoir, Schneider Family Honor winner*
- Johnson, Janet Sumner. ***Final Word***. Pixel+Ink, 2023. Thirteen-year-old twins Hope and Gordon enter a spelling bee in a last-ditch effort to save their family from financial ruin, only to find themselves in a cut-throat competition to uncover a fortune and dark secrets about the wealthy relations they have never known. *Mystery*
- Johnson, Katherine. ***Reaching for the Moon: The Autobiography of NASA Mathematician Katherine Johnson***. Atheneum, 2019. Katherine Johnson shares her account of helping to launch Apollo 11 with NASA during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. *Memoir*
- Kelly, Erin Entrada. ***The First State of Being***. Greenwillow, 2024. When Ridge, a time-traveling teenager from the future, gets trapped in 1999, he befriends Michael, a lonely 12-year-old boy, and changes the course of their lives forever. *Science fiction, Newbery Medal*
- Kelly, Erin Entrada. ***The Last Resort***. Scholastic, 2025. When Lila's estranged Grandpa Clem dies, she and her family move into his creepy Victorian Inn in Ohio, where she suddenly can see ghosts and must solve a supernatural murder. *Scary, series*
- Khan, Hena. ***We Are Big Time***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2024. When ninth-grader Aliya moves from Florida to Wisconsin, she joins an all-girls basketball team at her Islamic school and learns about teamwork and her Muslim identity. *Sports fiction, graphic novel*
- Korman, Gordan. ***Linked***. Scholastic, 2021. When swastikas start appearing at their middle school in a small Colorado town, three students work together to figure out their origin and create a project to unify their community. *Realistic fiction*
- Kuyatt, Meg Eden. ***Good Different***. Scholastic, 2023. A neurodivergent girl named Selah learns to embrace her differences and seeks acceptance from her school after a challenging incident disrupts her life. *Realistic fiction, novel in verse, Schneider Family Book Award Honor Book*
- LeZotte, Ann Clare. ***Show Me a Sign***. Scholastic, 2020. When Mary Lambert is kidnapped by a mad scientist who wants to study her deafness, she is pulled away from her home on Martha's Vineyard and is thrust into a world she does not understand. *Historical fiction, series*

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- Lupica, Mike. ***Strike Zone***. Philomel, 2019. Twelve-year-old Nick García dreams of winning MVP of his summer baseball league, finding a cure for his sister, meeting his hero, and no longer living in fear of the government and ICE agents. *Sports fiction*
- Martin, Pedro. ***Mexikid***. Dial Books, 2023. Pedro Martin has grown up in the U.S. hearing stories about his legendary abuelito, but during a family road trip to Mexico, he connects with his grandfather and learns more about his own Mexican identity. *Graphic memoir, Newbery Honor Book, Pura Belpré Youth Illustration and Children's Author Award*
- McNicoll, Elle. ***Like a Charm***. Random House, 2023. When Ramya's estranged but beloved grandpa dies, family secrets begin to spill out, including that her grandpa believed in magic and that Ramya can see through the charms of both friendly and nefarious creatures. *Fantasy, series*
- Messner, Kate. ***The Trouble with Heroes***. Bloomsbury, 2025. After seventh-grader Finn knocks over a gravestone in a fit of anger, his punishment is to climb the 46 peaks of the Adirondacks, which leads to a summer of reflection and redemption. *Realistic fiction*
- Nabi, Zohra. ***The Kingdom Over the Sea***. McElderry Books, 2023. When Yara's mother dies, Yara carries out her mom's final wishes and travels to the magical world of Zehaira on a quest to discover the truth about her mother and her own identity. *Fantasy, series*
- Nannestad, Katrina, ***We Are Wolves***. Atheneum, 2022. At the end of World War II, as three siblings flee Russian soldiers, they become separated from their mother and face new dangers as they fight to survive. *Historical fiction*
- Nielsen, Jennifer A. ***Iceberg***. Scholastic, 2023. Twelve-year-old Hazel stows away aboard the Titanic and, with the help of a porter and a first-class passenger, sets out to explore the great ship, uncovering a haunting mystery, until the ship hits an iceberg and she must fight to save herself and her friends. *Historical fiction*
- Nielsen, Jennifer. ***One Wrong Step***. Scholastic, 2025. On the eve of WWII, Atlas Wade, a 14-year-old mountaineer, attempts to rescue his dad's climbing team after disaster strikes on Mount Everest. *Action & Adventure*
- Palacio, R.J. ***Pony***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2021. When twelve-year-old Silas sees his father taken by three outlaws in the middle of the night, he sets out on a long journey to find his dad, with a ghostly friend and a mysterious pony by his side. *Action & Adventure*
- Paulsen, Gary. ***Northwind***. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022. After sickness destroys his fishing village, orphan Leif flees in a cedar canoe on a journey along the coastline. *Action & Adventure*
- Preto, Nick Prau. ***The Last Hope School for Magical Delinquents***. Viking, 2024. When Vin, a magical delinquent, can't control her magic, she is given one final chance at The Last Hope School, where she and her classmates work to save their school from an evil force beyond their doors. *Fantasy, series*

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- Riordan, Rick. ***Daughter of the Deep***. Disney-Hyperion, 2021. Ana Dakkar, a freshman at Harding Pencraft Academy, a high school that graduates the best marine scientists, naval warriors, navigators, and underwater explorers in the world, makes astounding discoveries about her heritage and puts her leadership skills to the test against deadly enemies from a rival school. *Fantasy*
- Rhodes, Jewell Parker. ***Will's Race for Home***. Little, Brown, 2025. In 1889, Will and his father leave Texas to stake a claim to land during the Oklahoma Land Rush, but they face many obstacles along the way. *Historical fiction, Coretta Scott King Author Award*
- Shayne, Ralph. ***Hour of Need: The Daring Escape of the Danish Jews During World War II***. Yellow Jacket, 2023. During World War II, the Danish Resistance worked bravely to save the Jewish population in Denmark by helping them evacuate to Sweden. *Graphic nonfiction*
- Sheinkin, Steve. ***Fallout: Spies, Superbombs, and the Ultimate Cold War Showdown***. Roaring Book, 2021. From espionage to weapons, this account of the Cold War delves into the battle for supremacy between the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1960s. *Nonfiction*
- Smith, Matthew Ross. ***The Million Dollar Race***. Aladdin, 2021. The Babblemoney Sneaker Company is hosting an international competition to discover the fastest kid in the world, and Grant Falloon, a track runner, badly wants to enter the competition, even though his parents never got him a legal birth certificate. *Sports fiction*
- Smith, Roland. ***Descent***. Houghton Mifflin, 2020. Peak Marcello and his infamous mountain-climbing father must navigate the mountains of Tibet to escape the Chinese government. *Action & Adventure, series*
- Sullivan, Tom. ***Jailbreak at Alcatraz: Frank Morris & the Anglin Brother's Great Escape***. Balzer + Bray, 2021. This true-crime nonfiction account highlights the unsolved case of how three inmates escaped Alcatraz in 1962. *Graphic nonfiction*
- Sumner, Jamie. ***One Kid's Trash***. Atheneum, 2021. When his father moves them halfway across Colorado, eleven-year-old Hugo "Shorts" O'Donnell is surprised that his remarkable talent for garbology makes him popular for the first time in his life. *Realistic fiction*
- Supplee, Suzanne. ***Sweetness All Around***. Holiday House, 2023. After Josephine's mother loses her business and they are forced to move, Josephine and her new friend Lisa Marie try to solve the mystery of a girl who was kidnapped from their trailer park. *Mystery, historical fiction*
- Thurman, Brittany J. ***Opal Watson: Private Eye***. Storytide, 2025. Amateur sleuth Opal returns home to Chicago from her summer in New Orleans to reports of strange noises in her apartment building and developers eyeing it as a teardown. *Mystery*
- Wolf, Allan. ***The Vanishing of Lake Peigneur: A Graphic Novel Based on a True Story***. Candlewick, 2025. This graphic nonfiction book explores a mining disaster on November 20, 1980, when a lake in Louisiana completely disappeared. *Graphic nonfiction*

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Wolk, Lauren. *Candle Island*. Dutton, 2025. After the death of her father, Lucretia and her mom move to Candle Island, off the coast of Maine, where the locals don't get along with the summer residents and secrets abound. *Mystery*

Compiled by:

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