

**Laguna Blanca School
Summer Reading List 2026
For Students Entering Grade 6**

All Laguna Blanca students entering Grades 5-12 this fall are expected to read at least two books this summer. These works will form the basis for class discussion and writing assignments in English classes during the opening weeks of school.

REQUIRED READING: It is highly recommended that students read these books closer to the start of school so they remember the reading for in-class work.

***THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET** Sandra Cisneros

The House on Mango Street is a novel structured as a series of vignettes. It tells the story of Esperanza Cordero, a 12-year-old Chicana girl growing up in the Hispanic quarter of Chicago. Based in part on Cisneros's own experience, the novel follows Esperanza over the span of one year in her life, as she enters adolescence and begins to face the realities of life as a young woman in a poor and patriarchal community. Elements of the Mexican-American culture and themes of social class, race, identity, and gender are interwoven throughout the novel.

This novel will be the basis of personal narrative writing and choral language presentations as we return to campus in September.

IN ADDITION, STUDENTS MUST READ ONE BOOK FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST:

NOVELS

FISH IN A TREE 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. (ALA Notable Children's Book, *New York Times* Bestseller)

INSIDE THE WALLS OF TROY Clemence McLaren (Ancient Historical fiction)

The events surrounding the famous battle between the Greeks and the Trojans are told from the points of view of two women, the beautiful Helen and the prophetic Cassandra.

GHOST Jason Reynolds

Ghost is a fictional novel set in a modern day city and follows the life of 7th grader, Castle "Ghost" Cranshaw as he struggles to overcome a difficult childhood and find a new direction in life with the help of his mentor, Coach Brody.

THE EGYPT GAME Zilpha Keatley Snyder

Fascinated with Ancient Egyptian civilization, a diverse group of children form a club, creating "The Egypt Game" to entertain themselves. Strange things begin occurring, and the children start to wonder if the game has gone too far. It is a story in which the protagonist, April, learns to avoid prejudice and care for her ailing grandmother while joining her friends on an adventure that explores their wild imaginations and leads them into real danger.

SWEAR TO HOWDY Wendelin Van Draanen

Two thirteen-year-old boys share neighborhood adventures, complaints about their older sisters, family secrets, and even guilt that binds them together in a special friendship.

THE BRIDGE HOME Padma Venkatraman

When Viji and her sister, Rukku, whose developmental disability makes her overly trusting and vulnerable to the perils of the world, run away to live on their own, the situation could not be more grim. Life on the streets of the teeming city of Chennai is harsh for girls considered outcasts, but the sisters manage to find shelter on an abandoned bridge. There they befriend Muthi and Arul, two boys in a similar predicament, and the four children bond together and form a family of sorts. When Rukku and Muthu fall ill, Viji and Arul must decide whether to risk going for help--when most adults in their lives have proven themselves untrustworthy--or to continue holding on to their fragile, hard-fought freedom.

BOY EVERYWHERE A. M. Dasso

Boy, Everywhere chronicles their harrowing journey and struggle to settle in a new land. Forced to sell all their belongings and leave their friends and beloved grandmother behind, Sami and his family travel across the Middle East to Turkey, where they end up in a smuggler's den.

THE STARS BENEATH OUR FEET Jacqueline Woodson A boy tries to steer a safe path through the projects in Harlem in the wake of his brother's death in this outstanding debut novel that's been described as a fast and furious read in which we meet some amazing people, people that stay with us. Written by a Newbery Honor and National Book Award-winning author.

BRAVE James Bird

When Collin asked to leave yet another school, his dad decides to send him to live in Minnesota with the mother he's never met. She is Ojibwe, and lives on a reservation. Collin arrives in Duluth with his loyal dog, Seven, and quickly finds his mom and his new home to be warm, welcoming, and accepting of his condition. Collin's quirk is matched by that of his neighbor, Orenda, a girl who lives mostly in her treehouse and believes she is turning into a butterfly. With Orenda's help, Collin works hard to overcome his challenges. His real test comes when he must step up for his new friend and trust his new family.

BOOKS IN VERSE

RED, WHITE AND WHOLE Rajani LaRocca

This Newbery Honor Book is a heartbreakingly hopeful novel in verse about an Indian American girl whose life is turned upside down when her mother is diagnosed with leukemia.

OTHER WORDS FOR HOME Jasmine Warga

This New York Times bestseller and Newbery Honor Book is a gorgeously written, hopeful middle grade novel in verse about a young girl who must leave Syria to move to the United States.

BROWN GIRL DREAMING Jacqueline Woodson

A highly lauded collection of free-verse poems about the author's childhood in New York and South Carolina with the remnants of Jim Crow during the 1960s and 1970s. It has language simple enough to be accessible to tweens and young teenagers and more than enough complexity to engage older readers. The winner of a Newbery Honor, NAACP Image Award, National Book Award and Coretta Scott King Award, *Brown Girl Dreaming* presents the story of Woodson's experiences living with the remnants of Jim Crow during the 1960s and 1970s. The author confronts issues like faith, racism and abuse using the elegant, spare language and powerful imagery she has come to be known for.

CROSSOVER SERIES Kwame Alexander

The Crossover series is a masterful mix of rhythm and heart that tells the story of two brothers navigating the deep waters of love, loyalty, and championship play. It's verse is fluid and electric, poignant and wise, skillfully chronicling main character's tough lessons as he comes to realize that "true champions / learn / to dance / through / the storm

SHORT STORIES

BASEBALL IN APRIL Gary Soto

The Mexican American author Gary Soto draws on his own experience of growing up in California's Central Valley in this finely crafted collection of eleven short stories that reveal big themes in the small events of daily life. Crooked teeth, ponytailed girls, embarrassing grandfathers, imposter Barbies, annoying brothers, Little League tryouts, and karate lessons weave the colorful fabric of Soto's world.

FLYING LESSONS AND OTHER STORIES Various Authors

Whether it is basketball dreams, family fiascos, first crushes, or new neighborhoods, this bold anthology - written by the best children's authors and celebrates the uniqueness and universality in all of us.

ANCESTOR APPROVED Various Authors

Edited by award-winning and bestselling author Cynthia Leitich Smith, this collection of intersecting stories by both new and veteran Native writers bursts with hope, joy, resilience, the strength of community, and Native pride. Native families from Nations across the continent gather at the Dance for Mother Earth Powwow in Ann Arbor, Michigan In a high school gym full of color and song, people dance, sell beadwork and books, and celebrate friendship and heritage. Young protagonists will meet relatives from faraway, mysterious strangers, and sometimes one another (plus one scrappy rez dog). They are the heroes of their own stories.

GRAPHIC NOVELS

WHEN STARS ARE SCATTERED Victoria Jamieson, Omar Mohamed

Heartbreak, hope, and gentle humor exist together in this graphic novel about a childhood spent waiting, and a young man who is able to create a sense of family and home in the most difficult of settings. It's an intimate, important, unforgettable look at the day-to-day life of a refugee, as told to New York Times Bestselling author/artist Victoria Jamieson by Omar Mohamed, the Somali man who lived the story.

WHITE BIRD R. J. Palacio

In R. J. Palacio's *Wonder* Series, readers were introduced to Julian's grandmother, Grandmère. Here, Palacio makes her graphic novel debut with Grandmère's heartrending story: how she, a young Jewish girl, was hidden by a family in a Nazi-occupied French village during World War II; how the boy she and her classmates once shunned became her savior and best friend.