

5th Grade Summer Reading List:

Please read at least two titles from this list and come to school in the fall prepared to complete reflections of the books.

A Mango Shaped Space – Wendy Mass

For 13-year-old Mia Winchell, the world has always been filled with a wonderful, if sometimes dizzying, sensory onslaught--numbers, letters, words, and sounds all cause her to see a distinct array of colors. She keeps her unusual condition a secret until eighth grade, but then her color visions make math and Spanish impossibly confusing, and she must go to her parents and a doctor for help. However, this is more than a docu-novel. Mass beautifully integrates information about synesthesia with Mia's coming-of-age story, which includes her break with her best friend and her grief over her grandfather's death.

A Single Shard – Linda Sue Park

Tree-ear, a thirteen-year-old orphan in medieval Korea, lives under a bridge in a potters' village, and longs to learn how to throw the delicate celadon ceramics himself.

A Year Down Yonder – Richard Peck

In 1937, during the Depression, fifteen-year-old Mary Alice, initially apprehensive about leaving Chicago to spend a year with her fearsome, larger-than-life grandmother in rural Illinois, gradually begins to better understand and admire her grandmother's unusual qualities.

Airborn (series) – Kenneth Oppel

Once in a long while, an adventure story captures the mind and the heart of listeners/readers, creating a miniature world that makes a deep impression on them. Such is the case with Kenneth Oppel's Printz Honor Book (Eos, 2004) which weaves a magical tale of adventure, treachery, friendship, and courage. Taking place in a future where airships and blimps travel across the Atlanticus and the Pacificus Oceans, cabin boy Matt Cruse, on board the *Aurora*, battles pirates and prehistoric cloudcats, accompanied by spirited heiress Kate DeVries. A cast of 32 actors, including high school sophomore David Kelly (as the voice of Matt Cruse), delivers riveting narration and excellent vocal special effects (such as the ship's captain speaking through his radio). Full of fun, adventure, and heart, *Airborn* makes for a one-of-kind listening experience. Fans of period history, science fiction, and adventure will cheer Matt along.

Al Capone Does My Shirts – 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.

Artemis Fowl: The Lost Colony – Eoin Colfer

Once again, Artemis will have to pair up with his old comrade, captain Holly Short, to track down the missing demon and rescue him before the time spell dissolves and the lost demon colony returns violently to Earth.

(The) Beastly Arms – Patrick Jennings

Eleven-year-old Nickel, a boy with a great affinity for both animals and photography, moves into an apartment building run by the strange and mysterious Mr. Beastly and discovers a secret about the other tenants.

Between Mom and Jo – Julie Anne Peters

Fourteen-year-old Nick has a three-legged dog named Lucky 2, some pet fish, and two mothers, whose relationship complicates his entire life as they face prejudice, work problems, alcoholism, cancer, and finally separation

Bud, Not Buddy – Christopher Paul Curtis

Ten-year-old Bud, a motherless boy living in Flint, Michigan, during the Great Depression, escapes a bad foster home and sets out in search of the man he believes to be his father--the renowned bandleader, H.E. Calloway of Grand Rapids.

Elsewhere - Gabrielle Zevin

After fifteen-year-old Liz Hall is hit by a taxi and killed, she finds herself in a place that is both like and unlike Earth, where she must adjust to her new status and figure out how to "live."

Ender's Game – Orson Scott Card

nder Wiggin is a very bright young boy with a powerful skill. One of a group of children bred to be military geniuses and save Earth from an inevitable attack by aliens, known here as "buggers," Ender becomes unbeatable in war games and seems poised to lead Earth to triumph over the buggers. Meanwhile, his brother and sister plot to wrest power from Ender. Twists, surprises and interesting characters elevate this novel into status as a bona fide page turner. It captured the Nebula and Hugo Awards.

Eragon (The Inheritance Trilogy) - Christopher Paolini

In Aagaesia, a fifteen-year-old boy of unknown lineage called Eragon finds a mysterious stone that weaves his life into an intricate tapestry of destiny, magic, and power, peopled with dragons, elves, and monsters.

Esperanza Rising – Pam Muñoz Ryan

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

(The) Eye, the Ear and the Arm – Nancy Farmer

In 2194 in Zimbabwe, General Matsika's three children are kidnapped and put to work in a plastic mine while three mutant detectives use their special powers to search for them.

(The) Frog Princess – E.D. Baker

An amusing fairy-tale adventure that takes the frog-turned-prince story a little further. Princess Emeralda is incredibly clumsy, she brays like a donkey when she laughs, and she would rather spend time outdoors or learning magic from her witch-aunt Grassina than marry self-centered Prince Jorge. When she runs off to the nearby swamp, she meets "Frog" who, naturally, claims to be an enchanted prince and begs her for a spell-breaking kiss. But when she finally complies, something goes terribly wrong, and suddenly Emma is a green-skinned, pond-hopping frog. She and Eadric spend the rest of the book trying to undo the spells that have bewitched them, struggling to avoid a dragon, a frog-eating dog, and an inept angry witch along the way. When they are finally released from their enchantments, it's clear they will live a happy-if rather unconventional-life together.

(The) Fruit Bowl Project – Sarah Durkee

A new teacher who is an admitted dork reveals to her eighth-grade Writers' Workshop students that she is related to rock superstar Nick Thompson. Not much impresses these savvy New York City kids, but they are suitably wowed. Nick, a songwriter, is invited to teach the class. He contends that a song is like a bowl of fruit, and that he needs to figure out how to paint it, using words as colors. There are infinite ways to create the canvas, using style, voice, genre, and much more. He challenges the students to each write a piece based on only seven simple elements: school, sixth grade, a reading test, a dropped pencil, an angry girl, lunch, and milk out the nose. The balance of the novel consists of the students' 50 projects, ranging from rap to haiku, monologue, fairy tales, a screenplay, etc.

(The) Golden Compass (series) – Philip Pullman

The Golden Compass, a story ostensibly for children but one perhaps even better appreciated by adults. The protagonist of this complex fantasy is young Lyra Belacqua, a precocious orphan growing up within the precincts of Oxford University. But it quickly becomes clear that Lyra's Oxford is not precisely like our own--nor is her world. For one thing, people there each have a personal *daemon*, the manifestation of their souls in animal form. For another, hers is a universe in which science, theology, and magic are closely allied. In *The Golden Compass*, Philip Pullman has written a masterpiece that transcends genre. It is a children's book that will appeal to adults, a fantasy novel that will charm even the most hardened realist. Best of all, the author doesn't speak down to his audience, nor does he pull his punches; there is genuine terror in this book, and heartbreak, betrayal, and loss. There is also love, loyalty, and an abiding morality that infuses the story but never overwhelms it. This is one of those rare novels that one wishes would never end.

(The) Goose Girl – Shannon Hale

On her way to marry a prince she's never met, Princess Anidori is betrayed by her guards and her lady-in-waiting and must become a goose herder to survive until she can reveal her true identity and reclaim the crown that is rightfully hers.

Guts: The True Story Behind Hatchet – Gary Paulsen

What do you do when you're being charged by a red-eyed furious wall of brown fur that is an insane moose? How do you make a weapon with your bare hands? How do you sneak up on a grouse or a rabbit, kill it with a well-aimed arrow, and cook it over a fire--without a pot? All this and lots more is essential learning for Brian Robeson, the young wilderness survivor in Gary Paulsen's classic novel *Hatchet*. In writing that book, Paulsen was determined that everything that happened to Brian--the survival techniques and the physical and emotional traumas--would be drawn closely from reality and his own experiences. In *Guts* he reveals the stories behind *Hatchet*, as he lived them. Linked to specific incidents from Brian's ordeal are the skills and insights Paulsen learned as a teenager passionately in love with hunting in the north woods of Minnesota, the extremes of exhaustion and cold he knew in running the Iditarod dog races in Alaska, the chilling close-up knowledge of heart attacks from his experiences as a volunteer ambulance driver, the silence and majesty of the wilderness. Some great stories are told here: the child killed by two kicks from the razor-sharp hooves of a small deer, the difficulties of sharing a rescue helicopter ride with a terrified dog team, and some spectacular gross-outs about the nutritional need to eat every part of an animal.

Hatchet – Gary Paulsen

When the pilot dies of a heart attack, Brian crash-lands the small plane in the Canadian wilderness. Left with only a hatchet and the clothes he is wearing, he begins a 54 day ordeal that challenges him to his limits. (Newbery Honor 1988).

(The) Higher Power of Lucky – Susan Patron

Fearing that her legal guardian plans to abandon her to return to France, ten-year-old aspiring scientist Lucky Trimble determines to run away while also continuing to seek the Higher Power that will bring stability to her life. Newbery Honor 2007.

Inkheart – Cornelia Funke

Twelve-year-old Meggie learns that her father Mo, a bookbinder, can "read" fictional characters to life when an evil ruler named Capricorn, freed from the novel "Inkheart" years earlier, tries to force Mo to release an immortal monster from the story.

Maximum Ride –James Patterson

A group of genetically enhanced kids who can fly and have other unique talents are on the run from part-human, part-wolf predators called Erasers in this exciting SF thriller that's not wholly original but is still a compelling read. Max, 14, and her adopted family–Fang and Iggy, both 13, Nudge, 11, Gazzy, 8, and Angel, 6–were all created as experiments in a lab called the School. Jeb, a sympathetic scientist, helped them escape and, since then, they've been living on their own. The Erasers have orders to kill them so the world will never find out they exist. Max's old childhood friend, Ari, now an Eraser leader, tracks them down, kidnaps Angel, and transports her back to the School to live like a lab rat again. The youngsters are forced to use their special talents to rescue her as they attempt to learn about their pasts and their destinies.

**Number the Stars – Lois Lowry

In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.

(The) Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place – E.L. Konigsburg

Upon leaving an oppressive summer camp, twelve-year-old Margaret Rose Kane spearheads a campaign to preserve three unique towers her grand uncles have been building in their back yard for over forty years.

(The) Palace of Laughter – Jon Berkeley

When the mysterious Circus Oscuro arrives in the dead of night, Miles Wednesday, a runaway orphan living in a barrel, is the only person in the town of Larde to witness the event. Later that same night, he is approached by a tiger who claims he can smell the circus in Miles. Thus begins a chain of events that introduces the boy to a winged waif named Little, a captive of the circus's sinister ringmaster. Upon Little's escape, the two set out to rescue her friend from the Palace of Laughter, which seems to be far more dangerous and horrible than the name implies.

The Penderwicks : a summer tale of four sisters, two rabbits, and a very interesting boy -Jeanne Birdsall

While vacationing with their widowed father in the Berkshire Mountains, four lovable sisters, ages four through twelve, share adventures with a local boy, much to the dismay of his snobbish mother.

Princess Academy – Shannon Hale

While attending a strict academy for potential princesses with the other girls from her mountain village, fourteen-year-old Miri discovers unexpected talents and connections to her homeland.

Replay – Sharon Creech

While preparing for a role in the school play, twelve-year-old Leo finds an autobiography that his father wrote as a teenager and ponders the ways people change as they grow up. Includes the text for the play, "Rumpopo's Porch."

Ruby Holler - Sharon Creech

Thirteen-year-old fraternal twins Dallas and Florida have grown up in a terrible orphanage but their lives change forever when an eccentric but sweet older couple invites them each on an adventure, beginning in an almost magical place called Ruby Holler.

Sammy Keyes and the Hotel Thief (series)- by Wendelin Van Draanen

Thirteen-year-old Sammy's penchant for speaking her mind gets her in trouble when she involves herself in the investigation of a robbery at the "seedy" hotel across the street from the seniors' building where she is living with her grandmother.

Seedfolks – Paul Fleischman

One by one, a number of people of varying ages and backgrounds transform a trash-filled inner-city lot into a productive and beautiful garden, and, in doing so, the gardeners are themselves transformed.

Skellig - David Almond

Unhappy about his baby sister's illness and the chaos of moving into a dilapidated old house, Michael retreats to the garage and finds a mysterious stranger who is something like a bird and something like an angel.

Small Steps – Louis Sachar

Three years after being released from Camp Green Lake, Armpit is trying hard to keep his life on track, but when his old pal X-Ray shows up with a tempting plan to make some easy money scalping concert tickets, Armpit reluctantly goes along.

Stormbreaker (the Alex Rider series) – Anthony Horowitz

After the death of the uncle who had been his guardian, fourteen-year-old Alex Rider is coerced to continue his uncle's dangerous work for Britain's intelligence agency, MI6.

Trouble Don't Last – Shelley Pearsall

Strong characters and an inventive, suspenseful plot distinguish Pearsall's first novel, a story of the Underground Railroad in 1859. Samuel, the 11-year-old slave who narrates the story, is awakened by 70-year-old Harrison, who has decided to flee their tyrannical Kentucky master. The questions that immediately flood the boy's mind provide the tension that propels the novel: What has precipitated the old man's sudden desire for freedom? Why would he risk taking Samuel along? Harrison is mindful of the dangers and wary of trusting even the strangers who might offer help. Samuel, an impulsive boy who seems prone to trouble, is grudgingly accustomed to his life of servitude and reluctant to leave it. As days of hiding and nights of stealthy movement take them farther away from their former lives, Harrison and Samuel forge a bond that strengthens their resolve.

(The) View From Saturday – E.L. Konigsburg

Four students, with their own individual stories, develop a special bond and attract the attention of their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent their sixth-grade class in the Academic Bowl competition.

(The) Thief Lord – Cornelia Funke

Orphaned brothers Prosper and Bo, having run away from their cruel aunt and uncle, decide to hide out in Venice where they fall in with the Thief Lord, a thirteen-year-old boy who leads a crime ring of street children.

Walk Two Moons – Sharon Creech

After her mother leaves home suddenly, thirteen-year-old Sal and her grandparents take a car trip retracing her mother's route. Along the way, Sal recounts the story of her friend Phoebe, whose mother also left.

- All summaries excerpted from the San Francisco Public Library or Amazon.com

** Number the Stars will be studied as a class at the beginning of the year, and will refer to themes in the book throughout the year.