

RECOMMENDED READING FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 6

Please try to read 4 or more of these books. The librarians at the Hartford Public Library will be happy to suggest other titles and authors. While you are at the library, don't forget to sign up for the 2008 Summer Reading Program, *Outside in the City*. If you are participating in the program, please list the books you have read in the folder kept at your library. If you are not participating, please complete the activity sheets (attached), and bring them with you to school in August. Thank you!

Allen, Thomas. **Harriet Tubman, Secret Agent: How Daring Slaves and Free Blacks Spied for the Union During the Civil War.** National Geographic Society, 2006.

Harriet Tubman -- well-known as an ex-slave who led hundreds of people to freedom -- was also a spy for the Union Army. She worked behind Confederate lines getting information, and she recruited former slaves for Colonel James Montgomery, a Union officer who was raising an all-black brigade to attack plantations in South Carolina. Montgomery's men, along with Tubman, destroyed a Confederate supply depot, burned homes and warehouses, and freed more than 750 plantation slaves.

Allison, Jennifer. **Gilda Joyce: Psychic Investigator.** Penguin Group, 2005.

During the summer before ninth grade, intrepid Gilda Joyce invites herself to the San Francisco mansion of distant cousin Lester Splinter and his thirteen-year-old daughter, where she uses her purported psychic abilities and detective skills to solve a mystery.

Anderson, Laurie Halse. **Fever, 1793.** Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2000.

In 1793 Philadelphia, sixteen-year-old Matilda Cook learns about perseverance and self-reliance when she is forced to cope with the horrors of a yellow fever epidemic.

Bruchac, Joseph. **The Heart of a Chief.** Puffin, 1998.

Chris's life is complicated. At school, he's been selected to lead a project on sports teams with Indian names. At home, on the Penacook reservation, the Indians are divided about building a casino. It would destroy the beautiful island Chris thinks of as his own. Is there anything one sixth-grade boy can do?

Campoy, F. Isabel. **Tales our Abuelitas Told: A Hispanic Folktale Collection.** Atheneum, 2006.

These stories have journeyed far -- over mountains, deserts, and oceans -- carried by the wind, passed on to us by our ancestors. Now they have found their way to you. F. Isabel Campoy and Alma Flor Ada have retold twelve beloved stories that embody the lively spirit and the rich heritage of Latino people.

Charlton-Trujillo, E.E. **Prizefighter en Mi Casa.** Random House, 2007.

Following a car accident that left her with epilepsy, 12-year-old Chula -- with help from a scary Mexican boxer -- deals with the effect her new condition has on her family, neighborhood, and school.

Compestine, Ying Chang. **Revolution is Not a Dinner Party.** Henry Holt & Company, 2007.

Ling is very comfortable in her life; her parents are both dedicated surgeons in the best hospital in Wuhan, China. But when Comrade Li, one of Mao's political officers, moves into a room in their apartment, Ling begins to witness the gradual disintegration of her world. In an atmosphere of increasing mistrust, Ling fears for the safety of her neighbors and, soon, for herself and family.

Cooper, Susan. **Victory.** Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2006.

Alternating chapters follow the mysterious connection between a homesick English girl living in present-day America and an eleven-year-old boy serving in the British Royal Navy in 1803.

Cushman, Karen. **Rodzina**. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003.

One of a group of orphans, 12-year-old Rodzina boards a train on a cold day in March 1881. She's reluctant to leave Chicago, the only home she can remember, and she knows there's no substitute for the family she has lost. As the train rattles westward, Rodzina begins to develop friendships with her fellow travelers, and to accept the idea that there might be good homes for orphans. Will Rodzina find a new family that is right for her?

Fleischman, Sid. **Escape!: The Story of the Great Houdini**. HarperCollins Publishers, 2006.

Meet the astonishing Houdini - magician, ghost chaser, daredevil, pioneer aviator, and king of escape artists. No jail cell or straitjacket could hold him! He shucked off handcuffs as easily as gloves. Sid Fleischman, a former professional magician, enriches this biography with insider information.

Funke, Cornelia Caroline. **Inkspell**. Scholastic, Incorporated, 2005.

Dustfinger, a fire-eater brought into being from words, needs to return to his storybook. When he finds a crooked storyteller with the ability to "read him back," Dustfinger leaves behind his young apprentice Farid, and plunges into his past. Distraught, Farid and his friend Meggie follow; before long, both are caught inside the book, too. But the story is threatening to evolve in ways neither of them could ever have imagined.

Giff, Patricia Reilly. **Water Street**. Random House Children's Books, 2006.

Brooklyn, 1875: In the shadow of the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, young neighbors Bird Mallon and Thomas Neary make important decisions about their lives.

Hiaasen, Carl. **Flush**. Random House Children's Books, 2005.

You know it's going to be a rough summer when you spend Father's Day visiting your dad in the local lockup. Noah's dad is sure that the owner of the Coral Queen casino boat is flushing raw sewage into the harbor - which has made taking a dip at the local beach like swimming in a toilet. He can't prove it though, and so he decides that sinking the boat will make an effective statement. Right. The boat is pumped out and back in business within days and Noah's dad is stuck in the clink. Now Noah is determined to succeed where his dad failed.

Ibbotson, Eva. **Journey to the River Sea**. Penguin Group Incorporated, 2001.

In 1910, orphaned Maia is sent with her governess to live with eccentric relatives in Manaus, Brazil. She endures many hardships before fulfilling her dream of exploring the Amazon River.

Johnson, Angela. **Bird**. Penguin Group Incorporated, 2004.

Bird, a thirteen-year-old girl with a mission, has run away in pursuit of her stepfather. She's sure she'll be able to convince him to return home. While she hides near his sister's farmhouse, she becomes entwined in the lives of three people: Ethan, whose heart troubles have kept him too sheltered from kids his own age; Jay, whose brother has died unexpectedly; and Mrs. Pritchard, whose house has been too empty since her husband was moved to a nursing home. Through the unique voices of the three kids, an eloquent, affecting story unfolds--the story of how one individual's warmth and kindness can heal so many hurts.

Ketchum, Lisa. **Into a New Country: Eight Remarkable Women of the West**. Little Brown & Company, 2000.

Here are the stories of eight women from different backgrounds who exemplify the challenges and the opportunities women found as they went West.

Lawrence, Caroline. **The Pirates of Pompeii**. Penguin Group Incorporated, 2003.

It is A.D. 79. The Roman world is reeling from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Hundreds of refugees are living in a makeshift camp. Then, more tragedy strikes: the camp's children begin to disappear. Flavia Gemina and her friends Jonathan, Nubia, and Lupus are determined to find out more. A dangerous trail leads them to the caves and grottoes of Sorrento, where they encounter pirates, slave dealers and possible death.

Lester, Julius. **Day of Tears**. Hyperion Books for Children, 2005.

Emma has taken care of the Butler children since their mother left. Now, to pay off debts, Pierce Butler wants to cash in his slave "assets," possibly including Emma.

Matthews, L.S. **Fish**. Random House Children's Books, 2004.

As fighting closes in on the village where Tiger's parents have been working, the family and a mysterious guide set out on a difficult journey to safety.

McCaughrean, Geraldine (retold by). **Odysseus**. Cricket Books, 2004.

One of the greatest legends in world mythology comes to life in this retelling of the adventures of Odysseus after the fall of Troy.

McKay, Hilary. **Saffy's Angel**. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2002.

Saffron discovers that she is adopted, and sets out in search of all she remembers from her childhood -- a stone angel in a garden in Italy.

Markle, Sandra. **Rescues!** Millbrook, 2006.

True stories of modern survival and rescue, illustrated with great photographs.

Meltzer, Milton. **Ten Kings: And the Worlds They Ruled**. Scholastic, Incorporated, 2002.

Starting with Hammurabi, who ruled Mesopotamia, to Peter the Great, the legendary Russian czar, Milton Meltzer shows the reader how political leaders use and abuse power.

Miller, Sarah. **Miss Spitfire: Reaching Helen Keller**. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2007.

At age twenty-one, Annie Sullivan travels from Massachusetts to Alabama to try to teach a young girl self-discipline and communication skills. Her pupil will be six-year-old Helen Keller, deaf and blind since age two

Murphy, Jim. **A Young Patriot: The American Revolution As Experienced By One Boy**. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.

The true story of Joseph Plumb Martin, a fifteen-year-old Connecticut farm boy who enlisted in the revolutionary army in the summer of 1776 and fought until 1783.

Myers, Walter Dean. **The Greatest: Muhammad Ali**. Scholastic, Incorporated, 2001.

A riveting account of the extraordinary career of boxer Muhammad Ali, this biography also chronicles Ali's impact on race relations.

Napoli, Donna Jo. **Bound**. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2004.

In a novel based on Chinese Cinderella tales, fourteen-year-old Xing-Xing endures a life of neglect and servitude, as her stepmother cruelly mutilates her own daughter's feet so that she might marry well.

Nau, Thomas. **Walker Evans: Photographer of America**. Roaring Brook, 2007.

Determined to "capture life as he saw it," Walker Evans (1903-1975) became one of the great photographers of the twentieth century, shooting in the New York City subways as well as the American

heartland. His subjects included posters, billboards, and the Brooklyn Bridge--but he is best known for the stirring photographs he took of farmers during the Great Depression.

Nelson, Marilyn. **Carver: A Life in Poems**. Front Street, 2001.

The life of George Washington Carver, born into slavery, and later head of the agricultural department at the Tuskegee Institute, presented in verse.

Peck, Richard. **The Teacher's Funeral: A Comedy in Three Parts**. Penguin Group Incorporated, 2004.

Russell Culver is fifteen in 1904, and he's raring to leave his tiny Indiana farm town. Maybe now that his teacher has passed on, they'll shut the school down and leave him free to roam. No such luck. His own sister, Tansy, takes the job.

Ray, Deborah. **Down the Colorado: John Wesley Powell, the One-Armed Explorer**. Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2007.

Even after losing his right arm in battle during the Civil War, John Wesley Powell would not be deterred from his dream of leading the first scientific expedition down the Colorado River and through the Grand Canyon. Braving treacherous rapids and perilous waterfalls, Major Powell would surpass all expectations and return home a national hero.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. **Andy Warhol: Pop Art Painter**. Abrams, 2006.

Soup cans! Dollar bills! Movie stars! Paint by numbers! Is it art? Yes! Andy Warhol's art. A leader of the American art movement known as Pop, short for "popular culture", Warhol changed the way we think about art.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. **Becoming Naomi Leon**. Scholastic, Incorporated, 2004.

Naomi Soledad Leon Outlaw has had a lot to contend with in her young life, her name for one. Luckily, Naomi also has her soap carving, a talent at which she excels. And life at Avocado Acres Trailer Rancho in Lemon Tree, California, with Gram and her little brother, Owen, is happy and peaceful. That is, until their mother reappears after seven years of being gone, stirring up all sorts of questions and challenging Naomi to discover and proclaim who she really is.

Saldana, Rene. **The Jumping Tree**. Random House, 2001.

These lively stories follow Rey Castaneda from sixth through eighth grade in Nuevo Penitas, Texas. One side of Rey's family lives nearby in Mexico, the other half in Texas, and Rey fits in on both sides of the border. In Nuevo Penitas, he enjoys fooling around with his pals in the barrio; at school, he's one of the "A list" kids. As Rey begins to cross the border from childhood into manhood, he turns from jokes and games to sense the meaning of work, love, poverty, and grief, and what it means to be a proud Chicano -- moments that sometimes propel him to show feelings *un hombre* should never express.

Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. **The Unseen**. Random House Children's Books, 2005.

Feeling angry and out-of-place in her large family, twelve-year-old Xandra finds a magical key to a world of ghostly, sometimes frightening, phantoms that help her see herself and her siblings more clearly.

Temple, Frances. **Grab Hands and Run**. Scholastic, 1993.

After his father disappears, 12-year old Felipe and his family try to make the dangerous journey from El Salvador to Canada.

Warren, Andrea. **Escape from Saigon: How a Vietnam War Orphan Became an American Boy**. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004.

An unforgettable true story of an orphan caught in the midst of war, this account tells the story of Long's struggle to survive in war-torn Vietnam, his dramatic escape to America as part of "Operation Babylift" during the last chaotic days before the fall of Saigon, and his life in the United States as "Matt," part of a loving Ohio family. Finally, as a young doctor, he journeys back to Vietnam, ready to reconcile his Vietnamese past with his American present.

Whelan, Gloria. **Chu Ju's House**. HarperCollins Publishers, 2004.

One girl too many . . . When a girl is born to Chu Ju's family, it is quickly determined that the baby must be sent away. After all, Chinese law states that a family may have only two children, and tradition dictates that every family should have a boy. To make room for one, this girl will have to go. Fourteen-year-old Chu Ju knows she cannot allow this to happen to her sister. She sets out in the middle of the night, vowing to make her own way in the world.

Yee, Lisa. **Stanford Wong Flunks Big Time**. Scholastic, Incorporated, 2005.

After flunking sixth-grade English, basketball prodigy Stanford Wong must struggle to pass his summer-school class, keep his failure a secret from his friends, and satisfy his academically demanding father.

Of special interest to Spanish speakers and readers...

Allende, Isabel. **El Reino del Dragon de Oro**. Lectorum, 2003.

Alexander, his grandmother, and Nadia head to a forbidden kingdom in the Himalayas to find a mysterious statue before it is destroyed.

Campoy, F. Isabel. **Cuentos que Contaban Nuestros Abuelas**. Lectorum, 2006.

These stories have journeyed far -- over mountains, deserts, and oceans -- carried by the wind, passed on to us by our ancestors. Now they have found their way to you. F. Isabel Campoy and Alma Flor Ada have retold twelve beloved stories that embody the lively spirit and the rich heritage of Latino people.

Jimenez, Francisco. **Senderos Fronterizos**. Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

In this biography, the fourteen-year-old Francisco works in the fields of California, but fights to improve his life and complete his education (Spanish).

Paterson, Katherine. **Lyddie**. Espasa Juvenil, 2001.

When Lyddie and her younger brother are hired out as servants to help pay off their family farm's debts, Lyddie is determined to find a way to reunite her family once again. Hearing about all the money a girl can make working in the textile mills in Lowell, Massachusetts, she makes her way there, only to find that her dreams of returning home may never come true (Spanish).

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. **Yo, Naomi Leon**. Scholastic, Incorporated, 2004.

Naomi Soledad Leon Outlaw has had a lot to contend with in her young life, her name for one. Luckily, Naomi also has her soap carving, a talent at which she excels. And life at Avocado Acres Trailer Rancho in Lemon Tree, California, with Gram and her little brother, Owen, is happy and peaceful. That is, until their mother reappears after seven years of being gone, stirring up all sorts of questions and challenging Naomi to discover and proclaim who she really is (Spanish).