

Recommended Reading 2025

FIFTH GRADE ENTERING SIXTH GRADE

A.K.A. Genius by Marilee Haynes - "When standardized test scores identify seventh-grader Gabe Carpenter as St. Jude's resident genius, he wonders what it means to have brains when he can't even manage to open his own locker." ©2013 Grade Level 5-7

Almost Home by Joan Bauer - Sixth-grader Sugar and her mother lose their beloved house and experience the harsh world of homelessness. ©2012 Grade Level 5-8

Amina Voice by Hena Khan - Amina has never been comfortable in the spotlight. She is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except now that she's in middle school everything feels different. Soojin is suddenly hanging out with Emily, one of the "cool" girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more "American." Does Amina need to start changing too? ©2017 Grade Level 6-8

Counting Thyme by Melania Conklin When eleven-year-old Thyme Owens' little brother, Val, is accepted into a new cancer drug trial, it's just the second chance that he needs. But it also means the Owens family has to move to New York, thousands of miles away from Thyme's best friend and everything she knows and loves. ©2016 Grade Level 4-7

The Dreamer by Pam Munoz Ryan - a fictionalized biography of the Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, who grew up a painfully shy child, ridiculed by his overbearing father, but who became one of the most widely-read poets in the world. Includes author's notes about the poet. ©2012 Grade Level 5-9. Pura Belpré Award Winner

The Earth Dragon Awakes by Laurence Yep - a historical fiction novel for young readers that tells the story of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake from the perspectives of two young friends, Chin and Henry. The book vividly portrays the destruction and chaos of the earthquake and subsequent fires, while also highlighting the resilience and courage of the people who survived. ©2008 Grade Level 4-7

Eleven by Tom Rogers - nothing heroic ever happened to Alex. Nothing, that is, until his eleventh birthday. When Alex rescues a stray dog as a birthday gift to himself, he doesn't think his life can get much better. ©2014 Grade Level 4-7

Finding Langston by Lisa Cline-Ransome - It's 1946. Langston's mother has just died, and now they're leaving the rest of his family and friends. He misses everything-- Grandma's Sunday suppers, the red dirt roads, and the magnolia trees his mother loved. ©2018 Grade Level 5-7. Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book, Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction

Ground Zero by Alan Gratz - a gripping novel exploring the intertwined lives of Brandon in New York on 9/11 and Reshmina in Afghanistan, 18 years later, both profoundly affected by the consequences of 9/11. ©2021 Grade Level 4-7. 2021 Grateful American Book Prize

A Handful of Stars by Cynthia Lord - When Lily's blind dog, Lucky, slips his collar and runs away across the wide-open blueberry barrens of eastern Maine, it's Salma Santiago who manages to catch him. ©2017 Grade Level 5-7

Holes by Louis Sachar - Stanley Yelnats is falsely convicted of theft and sent to Camp Green Lake, a juvenile detention center where he must dig holes all day. He suspects a curse on his family, a treasure, and a hidden history in the dry desert landscape. ©1998 Grade Level 5-6. 1999 Newbery Award

Hour of the Bees by Lindsay Eagar - While her friends are spending their summers having pool parties and sleepovers, twelve-year-old Carolina (Carol) is spending hers in the middle of the New Mexico desert, helping her parents move the grandfather she's never met into a home for people with dementia. ©2016 Grade Level 5-8

I Survived the Attacks of September 11, 2001 by Lauren Tarshis - The story of Lucas, an 11-year-old boy who is caught in the midst of the September 11 attacks while on his way to visit his uncle, a firefighter in New York City. Lucas's journey to see his uncle to discuss football is interrupted by the tragic events of that day. ©2012 Grade Level 3-7

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Isabel Feeney, Star Reporter by Beth Fantaskey It's 1920s Chicago—the guns-and-gangster era of Al Capone—and it's unusual for a girl to be selling the *Tribune* on the street corner. But ten-year-old Isabel Feeney is unusually obsessed with being a news reporter. ©2017 Grade Level 5-7

Merci Suarez Changes Gears by Meg Medina Merci Suarez knew that sixth grade would be different, but she had no idea just *how* different. For starters, Merci has never been like the other kids at her private school in Florida, because she and her older brother, Roli, are scholarship students. ©2018 Grade Level 5-7, 2019 Newbery Medal

Restart by Gordon Korman - Chase doesn't remember falling off the roof. He doesn't remember hitting his head. He doesn't, in fact, remember anything. He wakes up in a hospital room and suddenly has to learn his whole life all over again. ©2017 Grade Level 7-9, South Carolina Book Award Nominee for Junior Book, Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee for Sundogs, Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award Nominee

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor - explores the struggles of African Americans in 1930s Mississippi through the perspective of nine-year-old Cassie Logan. ©1976 Grade Level 5-8. Coretta Scott King Award

Saint John Paul the Great: His Five Loves by Jason Evert - explores the five core passions of Saint John Paul II: Young People, Human Love, the Eucharist, Our Lady, and the Cross. The book uses previously unpublished stories and insights to reveal the depth of the saint's love for each, aiming to inspire and deepen the reader's faith. ©2014 Grade Level 6-8

The Wild Robot by Peter Brown Though Roz, a robot, is initially viewed with suspicion when she finds herself on an isolated island, she soon becomes part of the natural order, parenting an orphaned gosling and providing shelter for the animals. But is there really a place for her within this ecosystem? ©2016 Grade Level 5-7

Towers by Jewel Parkes Rhodes - tells the story of Deja, a young girl living in a homeless shelter in New York City, who struggles to understand the impact of the 9/11 attacks fifteen years later. As she navigates a new school and forms friendships, Deja and her classmates learn about the event and how it continues to affect their community and their families. ©2016 Grade Level 3-7

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin - inspired by lucky number 8 or good fortune is about a story-loving girl Minli's quest to change the fortune of her poor family. Minli and her family lived on the Fruitless Mountain, a mountain which bore not a single healthy rice crop. ©2009 Grade Level 4-6. 2010 Newbery Medal

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls - The story of Billy, a young boy in the Ozarks, who dreams of owning two redbone coonhounds. He works hard to save money and eventually buys Old Dan and Little Ann, with whom he experiences the joys of hunting and the profound bond of friendship, but also faces tragedy. ©1961 Grade Level 5-8. 1981 North Dakota Flicker Tale Children's Book Award, 1987 & 1988 Massachusetts Children's Book Award, 1989 Great Stone Face Award