



Sixth Grade Reading List – Summer 2017

Dear Sixth Grader,

For your summer English class reading assignment, you need to read **two** books.

1. **Required reading:** *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls
You will take a quiz over the required reading when you get to school in the fall. (No book review necessary)

2. Choose **one** of the choice books listed below.

The following books are related to our sixth grade integrated curriculum. Read the summary of each book and choose the one that most appeals to you. You do not need to purchase the books; they may be borrowed from a library. Write a short book review of this book using the directions I've included at the end of this handout. Try to write and save it in electronic format on a computer. You will turn it in the first week of school in the fall. If you love to read, read as many of these books as you can! You only need to write a review for one of the choice books, but they are all good reading to enjoy.

Mrs. Hartle & Mrs. Rogers

Latin America/Mayan Culture Unit:

Among the Volcanoes by Omar S. Castaneda

Isabel, a young Mayan girl living in contemporary Guatemala, dreams of becoming a teacher. If she follows tradition, this dream will never be a reality. 192 pages

The Corn Grows Ripe by Dorothy Rhoads

When his father is badly injured in an accident, a young Mayan boy called Tigre wonders who will plant and harvest the corn that they need to survive--and to please the Mayan gods. Twelve-year-old Tigre has never done a man's work before. Now he will have to take his father's place. A Newbery Honor Book. 96 pages

Middle East Unit Desert Unit:

King of the Wind by Marguerite Henry

This classic, Newberry Medal-winning tale is from the famous author of *Misty of Chincoteague*. Young horse lovers everywhere are sure to delight in this dashing, dramatic story about a stallion, a stable boy, and their globe-spanning adventures. 176 pages

Shadow Spinner by Susan Fletcher

Every night, Shahrazad begins a story. And every morning, the Sultan lets her live another day — providing the story is interesting enough to capture his attention. After almost one thousand nights, Shahrazad is running out of tales. And that is how Marjan's story begins....

It falls to Marjan to help Shahrazad find new stories — ones the Sultan has never heard before. To do that, the girl is forced to undertake a dangerous and forbidden mission: sneak from the harem and travel the city, pulling tales from strangers and bringing them back to Shahrazad. But as she searches the city, a wonderful thing happens. From a quiet spinner of tales, Marjan suddenly becomes the center of a more surprising story than she ever could have imagined. 224 pages

South Asia and Southeast Asia Unit:

Keeping Corner by Kashmira Sheth

In India during World War I, Leela, 12, married at age nine, looks forward to moving to her husband's home. When he dies unexpectedly, Brahman custom requires her confinement at home for a year, "keeping corner." Prohibited from ever remarrying, her head shaved and pretty saris put away, Leela faces a barren future. Her loving family is heartbroken, but only Leela's brother has the courage to buck tradition, hiring a tutor to educate her. 288 pages

Iqbal by Francesco D'Adamo

When young Iqbal is sold into slavery at a carpet factory, his arrival changes everything for the other overworked and abused children there. It is Iqbal who explains to them that despite their master's promises, he plans on keeping them as his slaves indefinitely. But it is also Iqbal who inspires the other children to look to a future free from toil...and is brave enough to show them how to get there. This moving fictionalized account of the real Iqbal Masih is told through the voice of Fatima, a young Pakistani girl whose life is changed by Iqbal's courage. 128 pages

Ohio and Underground Railroad Unit:

Nightjohn by Gary Paulsen

Sarny, a female slave at the Waller plantation, first sees Nightjohn when he is brought there with a rope around his neck, his body covered in scars. He had escaped north to freedom, but he came back--came back to teach reading. Knowing that the penalty for reading is dismemberment Nightjohn still returned to slavery to teach others how to read. And twelve-year-old Sarny is willing to take the risk to learn. 92 pages

Stealing Freedom by Elisa Carbone

The moment Ann Maria Weems was born, her freedom was stolen from her. Like her family and the other slaves on the farm, Ann works from sunup to sundown and obeys the orders of her master. Then one day, Ann's family -- the only joy she knows -- is gone. Just 12 years old, Ann is overcome by grief, struggling to get through each day. And her only hope of stealing back her freedom and finding her family lies in a perilous journey: the Underground Railroad. Ann Maria Weems was an actual slave who lived in the mid-1800s near the author's home in Maryland. 272 pages

Former Soviet Union Unit:

Angel on the Square – by Gloria Whelan

In St. Petersburg in 1914, Katya Ivanova is safe behind palace walls; her mother is a lady-in-waiting for the Empress. But outside, war is sweeping Europe, and unrest is brewing in Russia. As the flame of revolution ignites in a country where the rich have always ruled, Katya's once-certain future dissolves. 288 pages

Broken Song – by Kathryn Lasky

The year is 1897, and gifted violinist Reuven Bloom is fifteen years old. Life for the Jews in Russia is very hard. First Reuven's best friend is captured to serve in the Tsar's army, and then his parents and older sister are murdered. Reuven's dreams of music must be set aside. Now he has only one goal: escape. With his baby sister strapped to his back, Reuven sets off toward an unknown freedom. His journey takes him first across Russia, and then ultimately to America. 154 pages

Related to Geography Studied in Sixth Grade

Carry On, Mr. Bowditch - by Jean Lee Latham.

Readers today are still fascinated by "Nat," an eighteenth-century nautical wonder and mathematical wizard. Nathaniel Bowditch grew up in a sailor's world—Salem in the early days, when tall-masted ships from foreign ports crowded the wharves. But Nat didn't promise to have the makings of a sailor; he was too physically small. Nat may have been slight of build, but no one guessed that he had the persistence and determination to master sea navigation in the days when men sailed only by "log, lead, and lookout." Nat's long hours of study and observation, collected in his famous work, *The American Practical Navigator* (also known as the "Sailors' Bible"), stunned the sailing community and made him a New England hero. 251 pages.

How to Write a Book Review

A book review has three parts:

1. Bibliographic information about the book (author, title, publisher, page numbers, date of publication)
2. The summary (a short description of the plot)
3. The evaluation (your opinion of the book)

1. The Bibliographic Information

This should include the author's full name (last name first), the full title, the publisher, the year it was published and how many pages it has. The title should be either underlined or typed in italics.

- Example: Levine, Gail Carson. *Ella Enchanted*. Harper Collins Publishers, 1998. 272 pages.

2. The Summary

The summary should be a brief description of the plot. No need to include every little detail. Summarize the plot quickly – three to five sentences is fine, as long as you write clearly and provide enough information about the story so the reader will know what the book is about. Make sure to mention the main character(s), the time and location of the story, what the main plot or conflict is, and how it is resolved. Your summary should generally answer the who, what, when, where and why of the story.

- **Example**: Lady Ella of Frell, who lives in a long ago and far away fairy tale land, was cursed at birth by the fairy Lucinda to always be obedient and do whatever she is told to do. Her unpleasant step-sisters and step-mother take advantage of her until Ella realizes that she must do whatever it takes to find Lucinda to break the curse. Her fairy godmother, Mandy, who all along was disguised as the family cook, helps her figure out a plan. On her search to find answers, Ella meets princes, ogres, elves, gnomes, witches, giants and numerous fairies and eventually ends up dancing at a ball wearing glass slippers. After falling in love with her Prince Charmont, she learns the secret to breaking the curse that was in reach her whole life, which leads to a happy ending.

3. The Evaluation

This part is where you include comments about what you liked and didn't like about the book, what you thought of the quality of the writing, and whether you would recommend

this book to others. If you liked the book, be complimentary without being gushy. If you didn't like the book, be honest, but fair and respectful.

- Example: I liked this retelling of the classic Cinderella story. There are enough twists and changes in it that made me want to keep reading. It was fun meeting all the new and interesting characters. Plus, there are some funny parts to the book that make it even more fun to read. I admire Ella's strength, determination, and intelligence that she uses to solve her problem in the end. Even though it ends up being a love story, this is an entertaining book that I think most Middle School students would like.

Helpful Tips on Writing a Good Review

- Use descriptive adjectives: "It was a bright, sunny day." is better than "It was a nice day." Try to use more interesting synonyms for common words.
- Don't make your review too long. Your whole review should be **no more than 250 words**. Check your word count to keep track.
- Don't be too general or vague, for example, "This book is very good." Try to be more descriptive in telling *why* you think it is very good. "This book is very good because"
- Never, ever copy from the book jacket or another review, not even a small little phrase. This is plagiarism. Be original!

Full Example of a Book Review – Your review should look something like this when you are finished.

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