

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Summer 2009 Suggested Reading List**  
**for**  
**Rising Sixth Graders**

This list includes a wide variety of books to appeal to the interests and reading levels of many students. Parents are encouraged to review book selections with their children in order to help them make appropriate choices. Students may select books from this list, or they may read a comparable book that is approved by their parents.

Additional suggestions can also be found in reading lists developed by Fairfax County Public Library at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library) and Virginia Readers' Choice at <http://vsra.org/VRC.html>

Alvarez, Julia. **HOW TIA LOLA CAME TO STAY.** (Realistic Fiction) After his parent's divorce, Miguel's aunt, Tia Lola, comes from the Dominican Republic to stay with ten-year-old Miguel, his mother, and his sister. At first Miguel is embarrassed by his aunt's colorful behavior but, in time, he learns to love her.

Amato, Mary. **THE NAKED MOLE-RAT LETTERS.** (Realistic Fiction) When her father begins a long-distance romance with a Washington, D.C. zookeeper, twelve-year-old Frankie sends e-mails advising the zookeeper to end the relationship. Frankie learns much about growing up.

Armstrong, Alan. **WHITTINGTON.** (Fiction) This is the Newbery Honor-winning story of a legendary English cat and his extraordinary descendant that is woven through a family's gripping generational story.

Balliet, Blue. **CHASING VERMEER.** (Fiction) When seemingly unrelated and strange events start to happen and a precious Vermeer painting disappears, eleven-year-olds Petra and Calder combine their mathematical talents to resolve an international art scandal.

Birdsall, Jeanne. **THE PENDERWICKS.** (Realistic Fiction) This is the lighthearted, old fashioned story of a family of four sisters and a widowed botany professor and their summer adventures.

Birney, Betty G. **THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HUMPHRY.** (Fiction) With an engaging, hamster's-eye view of school, a class pet named Humphry brings laughter and fun to the students and families who host him and gives great gifts in return.

Blackwood, Gary. **THE SHAKESPEARE STEALER.** (Historical Fiction) Widge is an orphan whose fearsome master has just one demand: steal Shakespeare's play "Hamlet"--or else. Widge has no choice but to follow orders, so he works his way into the heart of the Globe Theatre, where Shakespeare's players perform.

Butler, Amy. **VIRGINIA BOUND.** (Historical Fiction) Thirteen-year-old orphaned beggar Rob Brackett is kidnapped from the streets of London and taken to the New World. There he works for a master who is a cruel tobacco farmer. His master also owns a Pamunkey Indian girl named Mattoume.

Clements, Andrew. **THE LAST HOLIDAY CONCERT.** (Realistic Fiction) When sixth graders are put in charge of the holiday concert, tables are turned and teachers learn from their students. This book will appeal to any student who has ever taken part in an organized production.

Clements, Andrew. **ROOM ONE: A MYSTERY OR TWO.** (Fiction) Ted Hammond is the only sixth grader in his small Nebraska town's one-room schoolhouse. His love of mysteries leads him to search for clues to the disappearance of a homeless family.

Cobb, Vicki. **MARIE CURIE.** (Nonfiction) This is the biography of the Nobel Prize-winning Polish scientist who discovered uranium and changed the world.

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Coman, Carolyn. **THE BIG HOUSE.** (Fiction)  
 When their parents are convicted of embezzlement, Ray and Ivy are sent to live the life of luxury with Marrieta Noland and her ancient husband, Lionel. Life at the Nolands' big house is not all it's cracked up to be as the book sheds light on family relationships.

Corbett, Sue. **FREE BASEBALL.** (Realistic Fiction)  
 Eleven-year-old Felix is angry with his mother for having too little time for him. The boy from Florida takes advantage of an opportunity to become bat boy for a minor league baseball team, hoping to someday be like his father, a famous Cuban outfielder. Glossaries of baseball terms and Spanish words and phrases are included in the book.

Cox, Clinton. **UNDYING GLORY.** (Nonfiction)  
 This is the story of the courageous men of the 54th Regiment of Massachusetts, who fought as Union soldiers to free their brothers and sisters from slavery. Included are black-and-white archival photographs that bring the "Glory" brigade to life.

Creech, Sharon. **GRANNY TORRELLI MAKES SOUP.** (Realistic Fiction) The world is bigger than just one person, but you can still make a difference. Sweet storytelling, easy language and humor make the book read like a conversation. It also includes advice about friendships (and cooking lessons).

Creech, Sharon. **LOVE THAT DOG. (Fiction)**  
 A young boy comes to love poetry through a personal understanding of what different famous poems mean to him. He even surprises himself by writing his own inspired poem.

Dakos, Kali. **IF YOU'RE NOT HERE, PLEASE RAISE YOUR HAND.** (Nonfiction) Favorite poems such as "Math is Brewing and I'm in Trouble," "My Homework isn't Done," and "I Left My Book in Hawaii" are included.

DiCamillo, Kate. **THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE.** (Fiction) Edward Tulane, a cold-hearted and proud toy rabbit, loves only himself until he is separated from the little girl who adores him. He travels across the country, acquiring new owners and listening to their hopes, dreams, and histories and learns about love along the way.

Dowell, Frances O'Roark. **CHICKEN BOY.** (Fiction)  
 Since the death of his mother, Tobin's family life and school life have been in disarray. After he starts raising chickens with his seventh-grade classmate, Henry, everything starts to fall into place.

Du Prau, Jeanne. **THE CITY OF EMBER.** (Fantasy)  
 The city of Ember was built as a last refuge for the human race. Two hundred years later, the great lamps that light the city are beginning to flicker. When Lina finds part of an ancient message, she's sure it holds the secret that will save the city.

Erdich, Louise. **THE BIRCHBARK HOUSE.** (Historical Fiction) Omakayas is a seven-year-old Native American girl of the Ojibwa tribe. She lives through the joys of summer and the perils of winter on an island in Lake Superior in 1847.

Feinstein, John. **LAST SHOT: A FINAL FOUR SHOT.** (Fiction) After winning a basketball reporting contest, eighth graders Stevie and Susan Carol are sent to cover the Final Four tournament. There they discover that a talented player is being blackmailed into throwing the final game.

Fleischman, Sid. **THE WHITE ELEPHANT.** (Fiction) How can a beautiful white elephant be a terrible curse? Run-Run, a young elephant trainer, discovers the answer when he incurs the anger of the prince. As the boy's punishment, he is given the gift of a white elephant. From that moment forward, the curse begins to reveal itself.

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Freedman, Russell. **FREEDOM WALKERS.** (Nonfiction) The author breathes life into the key personalities and events that contributed to the yearlong civil rights struggle. The struggle became known as the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Freedman, Russell. **GIVE ME LIBERTY!: THE STORY OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.** (Nonfiction) When the delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the Constitution, they knew it wasn't perfect. The book describes events leading to the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments aimed to preserve and protect the rights and liberties of all citizens, and its continuing importance today.

Fritz, Jean. **AROUND THE WORLD IN A HUNDRED YEARS FROM HENRY THE NAVIGATOR TO MAGELLAN.** (Nonfiction) This book examines the great wave of European exploration during the 1400s in a way that brings to life the explorers who changed the world map.

George, Kristine O'Connell. **OLD ELM SPEAKS – TREE POEMS.** (Nonfiction) The book includes a collection of short, simple poems that presents images relating to all types of trees throughout the seasons.

Hall, Alvin D. **SHOW ME THE MONEY.** (Nonfiction) Filled with games, puzzles, and fun facts, this bright, visual resource exposes young readers to basic concepts of currency and finance. Topics include the barter system, supply and demand, and how money works differently around the world.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett (ed.). **HAND IN HAND: AN AMERICAN HISTORY THROUGH POETRY.** (Nonfiction) This collection of poems and song lyrics provides a look at America from Colonial times to the present.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett (ed.). **LIVES: POEMS ABOUT FAMOUS AMERICANS.** (Nonfiction) This collection of poems includes portraits of sixteen famous Americans from Paul Revere to Neil Armstrong. Jane Yolen, Nikki Grimes, X. J. Kennedy, and other writers shed light on these famous people.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett (ed.). **MARVELOUS MATH, A BOOK OF POEMS.** (Nonfiction) A series of poems about math are included in the text, including "Math Makes Me Feel Safe," "Fractions," "Pythagoras," and "Time Passes." Janet S. Wong, Lee Bennett Hopkins, and Ilo Orleans are contributing authors.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett (ed.). **MY AMERICA: A POETRY ATLAS OF THE UNITED STATES.** (Nonfiction) A collection of poems divides the United States into eight geographical regions and demonstrates the variety throughout.

Ibbotson, Eva. **THE STAR OF KAZAN.** (Historical Fiction) Twelve-year-old Annika, an orphan living in late nineteenth-century Vienna, inherits a trunk of costume jewelry. A woman claiming to be her aristocratic mother arrives and takes her to live in a strange old mansion in Germany.

Janeczki, Paul B. **A KICK IN THE HEAD: AN EVERYDAY GUIDE TO POETIC FORMS.** (Nonfiction) Acclaimed poet Paul Janeczki and Caldecott illustrator Chris Raschka present lively examples of 29 poetic forms. The poems show not only the rules of poetry, but also the spirit that brings these forms to life.

Jones, Charlotte. **MISTAKES THAT WORKED.** (Nonfiction) The author presents the stories of 40 patented items that were invented or named by accident. Included are aspirin, X-rays, Frisbees, Silly Putty, and Velcro.

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Kinney, Jeff. **DIARY OF A WIMPY KID.** (series) (Fiction) Greg and his best friend, Rowley, are undersized weaklings in sixth grade. Greg records his experiences in middle school, among boys who need to shave twice daily, and hopes just to survive. When Rowley grows more popular, Greg must take drastic measures to save their friendship.

Konigsburg, E.L. **THE VIEW FROM SATURDAY.** (Realistic Fiction) Four hilariously different students develop a special friendship and attract the attention of their teacher. The teacher, a paraplegic, chooses them to represent their sixth grade class in the Academic Bowl competition.

LaFaye, A. **WORTH.** (Historical Fiction) After breaking his leg, eleven-year-old Nate feels useless because he cannot work on the family farm in nineteenth-century Nebraska. When his father brings home an orphan boy to help with the chores, Nate feels even worse.

Lubar, David. **PUNISHED!** (Fiction) While Logan and his friend Benedict are playing tag in the library, Logan runs into a mysterious man. As punishment, the man causes Logan to speak in puns. To return to normal, Logan must now find examples of oxymorons, anagrams, and palindromes.

Lubar, David. **DOG DAYS.** (Fiction) Larry has to work hard to try to earn money to buy food to feed three stray dogs. Now his brother has taken him to an alley where another dog is staying. How can he afford to take care of another dog?

Lupica, Mike. **HEAT.** (Realistic Fiction) Pitching sensation Michael Arroyo is on the run from social services after being banned from playing Little League baseball. Rival coaches doubt he is only twelve years old, and he has no parents to offer them proof.

Macaulay, David. **MOSQUE.** (Nonfiction) A mosque, with its enormous central dome of the prayer hall and minaret tower, rises above the city. How was such a structure built? Why was it built? Who are the architects?

McDonough, Yona Zeldis. **THE DOLL WITH THE YELLOW STAR.** (Historical Fiction) When France falls to Germany at the start of World War II, a nine-year-old Jewish girl named Claudine must leave her beloved parents and friends to stay with relatives in America. There she will be safe. Her doll, Violette, accompanies her on her journey.

Lippincott, Kristen. **DISCOVER THE MYSTERIES OF THE WORLD'S OLDEST SCIENCE—FROM CONSTELLATIONS TO MOON ROCKS.** (Nonfiction) The text encourages and supports students as they discover the mysteries of the world's oldest science—from constellations to moon rocks.

Nelson, Pete. **LEFT FOR DEAD: A YOUNG MAN'S SEARCH FOR JUSTICE FOR THE USS INDIANAPOLIS.** (Nonfiction) The story recalls the sinking of the U.S.S. Indianapolis at the end of World War II, the navy cover-up, and unfair court martial of the ship's captain. The book tells how a young boy helped the survivors set the record straight fifty-five years later.

Park, Linda Sue. **PROJECT MULBERRY.** (Fiction) While working on a project for an after-school club, Julia, a Korean American girl, and her friend Patrick learn about silkworms. During the project they also learn about tolerance, prejudice, friendship, and patience. Interaction between Julia and the author at the end of each chapter provides clues about the book's direction.

Park, Linda Sue. **ARCHER'S QUEST.** (Fiction) Twelve-year-old Kevin Kim helps Koh Chu-mong, a Great Archer of ancient Korea, return to his own time.

Pobst, Sandra. **ANIMALS ON THE EDGE: SCIENCE RACES TO SAVE SPECIES THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION.** (Nonfiction) This informed and educational narrative examines numerous threats to animals in the wild, raising awareness of each species, and detailing the extent and urgency of the problem. The book also encourages young animal lovers to take an active role in preservation.

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Pullman, Philip. **SCARECROW AND HIS SERVANT.** (Fantasy) A scarecrow and his boy servant, Jack, set off on a dangerous adventure. They try to outwit the dishonest Buffaloni family and stake a claim to valuable Spring Valley.

Ray, Delia. **GHOST GIRL: A BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN STORY.** (Historical Fiction) Eleven-year-old April is delighted when President and Mrs. Hoover build a school near her Madison County, Virginia home. But her family's poverty, their grief over the accidental death of her brother, and other problems may mean that April will never learn to read under the tutelage of her wonderful teacher, Miss Vest.

Richardson, Charisse K. **THE REAL LUCKY CHARM.** (Realistic Fiction) Ten-year-old Mia thinks that luck, rather than hard work, has helped her succeed on the court and at school. She panics and turns to her twin brother for help when her lucky gold basketball is missing from her charm bracelet.

Rinaldi, Ann. **SARAH'S GROUND.** (Historical Fiction) In 1861, eighteen-year-old Sarah Tracy, from New York state, comes to work at Mount Vernon, the historic Virginia home of George Washington. While there she tries to protect the safety and neutrality of the site during the Civil War. She also meets her future husband, Upton Herbert, the plantation superintendent. Historical notes are included.

Ryan, Pam Munoz. **BECOMING NAOMI LEON.** (Realistic Fiction) When Naomi's absent mother reappears to claim her, Naomi runs away to Mexico. Naomi, along with her great-grandmother and younger brother, set out to search for her father.

Schmidt, Gary D. **LIZZIE BRIGHT AND THE BUCKMINSTER BOY.** (Historical Fiction) In 1911, Turner Buckminster hates his new home of Phippsburg, Maine. Things improve when he meets Lizzie Bright Griffin, a girl from a poor, nearby island community founded by former slaves.

Selznick, Brian. **INVENTIONS OF HUGO CABRET.** (Fiction) Orphan, clock keeper, and thief, Hugo lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station. There his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. His world suddenly interlocks with an eccentric, bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy booth in the station, and Hugo's undercover life is put in jeopardy.

Stanley, Diane. **BELLA AT MIDNIGHT.** (Fantasy) Raised by peasants, Bella discovers that she is actually the daughter of a knight. She finds herself caught up in a terrible plot that will change her life and the kingdom forever.

Steig, William. **ABEL'S ISLAND.** (Fantasy) When Abel, a mouse, is unexpectedly swept away by floodwaters and dumped on an island, he is forced to use all his resourcefulness to survive and find his way home.

Stewart, Trenton. **MYSTERIOUS BENEDICT SOCIETY.** (Fiction) Reynie, Kate, Sticky, and Constance are all graduates of the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened and members of the Benedict Society. They embark on a scavenger hunt that turns into a desperate search for their missing benefactor, Mr. Benedict.

Thomas, Garen. **YES WE CAN: A BIOGRAPHY OF BARACK OBAMA.** (Nonfiction) This is a biography of Barack Obama, from Illinois senator to presidential candidate.

Van Draanen, Wendelin. **SHREDDERMAN** (the series). (Fiction) Fifth-grader Nolan Byrd, also known as Shredderman, solves a variety of mysteries.

Vande Velde, Vivian. **THREE GOOD DEEDS.** (Fantasy) Caught stealing some goose eggs from a witch, Howard is cursed for his heartlessness and turned into a goose himself. He can only become human again by performing three good deeds.

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Walker, Sally. **SECRETS OF A CIVIL WAR SUBMARINE: SOLVING THE MYSTERIES OF THE H. L. HUNLEY.** (Nonfiction) For more than one hundred years, a submarine lay buried beneath the ocean floor near Charleston, South Carolina. The H.L. Hunley made history in 1864 as the first submarine ever to sink an enemy ship. Something went wrong during that daring mission and the Hunley never returned to port.

White, Ruth. **THE SEARCH FOR BELLE PRATER.** (Historical Fiction) In 1955, Woodrow and his cousin Gypsy befriend a new girl in their seventh grade class in rural Virginia. The three of them set off to find Woodrow's missing mother, encountering unlikely and intriguing coincidences along the way.

Wiles, Deborah. **EACH LITTLE BIRD THAT SINGS.** (Realistic Fiction) Comfort Snowberger is well acquainted with death since her family runs the funeral parlor in their small southern town. Even so the ten-year-old is unprepared for the series of heart-wrenching events that begin on the first day of Easter vacation with the sudden death of her beloved great-uncle Edisto.

Yep, Lawrence. **WHEN THE CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN.** (Fiction) An Asian cook and a Chinese New Year celebration help a ten-year-old girl at a Montana stage coach station to regain her confidence after smallpox scars her face.