



**H A I S L N**

***RECOMMENDED  
READING LIST***

***2026***

## **About the HAISLN Recommended Reading List**

This list of titles has been compiled by librarians at member schools of the Houston Area Independent Schools Library Network (HAISLN). It includes fiction and nonfiction books by some of the best authors for children and young adults.

Books on the list are evaluated annually by grade-level committees. Committee members rely on recommendations from standard, professionally prepared evaluation aids, input from students and teachers, and the collective expertise of HAISLN. A conscious effort is made to appeal to students' diverse interests, maturity levels, and reading abilities.

In most cases, the number of books by any author is limited to 1 or 2 per grade-level list. An older title with superior literary quality may remain on the list despite newer publications by the same author. Before reading a recommended author's book that does not appear on the student's grade list, readers should know that authors often write for multiple interests and age levels. Books that are part of a series are also noted, but not all books are necessarily appropriate at the indicated grade level.

Students may find that some titles that are required reading for their classes appear on this list. Be advised that if a book for required reading is selected for independent reading, it may have to be re-read with the class later.

This list is offered as one possible source of reading guidance. Additional lists of award winners and recommended books may be obtained from your school or public librarian. We hope that books from this list bring students many hours of enjoyment and encourage the lifelong love of reading.

*Houston, Texas  
April 2026*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Preschool, Prekindergarten, Kindergarten**

*All book summaries are provided by the publisher or written by committee members.*

*Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.*

Águila, María Dolores. ***Menudo Sunday: A Spanglish Counting Book***. Dial Books, 2025. When a little girl accidentally breaks her grandfather's bowl of menudo during a lively Sunday family gathering, everyone works together to make a new batch while readers learn to count from 1-15 in Spanish and English.

Avery, Sean E. ***Frank's Red Hat***. Walker, 2025. Frank, a penguin known for his terrible ideas, creates a bold red hat—an object entirely unexpected in the cold, colorless Antarctic world—making his fellow penguins immediately nervous about his strange creation.

Awan, Jashar. ***Towed by Toad***. Tundra Books, 2024. A busy toad mechanic is always helping Others, but he learns when his own tow truck breaks down that even the helpers sometimes need help.

Blackall, Sophie. ***If We Were Dogs***. Little, Brown, 2025. At a birthday party, one child commandeers another to pretend to be dogs.

Boldt, Mike. ***Cantaloupe and HoneyDo Ride a Bike***. Dial Books, 2024. Two adventurous fruit friends, Cantaloupe and HoneyDo, have a delightful journey of discovery, friendship, and laughter. *Series*

Boss, Todd. ***The Boy Who Said Wow***. Beach Lane Books, 2024. Ronan has never spoken a word, but when his grandfather takes him to a concert, he is so moved by the music that he speaks aloud for the first time.

Brockington, Drew. ***Kitty Camp***. Abrams Books, 2025. A girl accidentally boards the wrong bus and ends up at a chaotic summer camp full of kittens, where she discovers unexpected ways to have fun despite the mayhem.

Browne, Anthony. ***Big Gorilla: A Book of Opposites***. Candlewick, 2024. This picture book uses a variety of primates—from large gorillas to tiny capuchins—to introduce and celebrate the concept of opposites for young readers.

Buchet, Nelly. ***Dog vs. Strawberry***. Random House, 2024. In a humorous race between an energetic dog and a motionless strawberry, Dog's frantic antics and mid-race nap allow the calm fruit to maintain its position, leading to a thrilling finish.

Bunting, Philip. ***The Wonderful Wisdom of Ants***. Crown, 2024. Combining information, comedy, and warmth, this factual book brings readers into the realm of ants, revealing how these small insects accomplish impressive feats through teamwork.

Burgess, Matthew. ***Fireworks***. Clarion, 2025. Two siblings spend a hot summer day anticipating a colorful fireworks display.

Cáceres, Andrea. ***My Dog Just Speaks Spanish***. Candlewick, 2023. Aurora's dog Nena can only understand Spanish, so Aurora teaches her friends at the park how to use Spanish commands to communicate with Nena.

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**Preschool, Prekindergarten, Kindergarten**

- Campbell, Chelsea M. *When You Go to Dragon School*. Feiwel and Friends, 2025. A human child attends dragon school and discovers that despite lacking scales, wings, or fire-breathing abilities, you can fit in and thrive using your own courage and special talents.
- Catchpole, Lucy. *Mama Car*. Little, Brown, 2025. A child celebrates how her mother's wheelchair transforms everyday moments into adventures, emphasizing that the best part is simply having Mama there.
- Cherrix, Amy. *Animal Superpowers!* Beach Lane Books, 2023. Animals use physical and behavioral traits in amazing ways. Some are expert escape artists, while others subdue their prey with electricity or even with bubbles!
- Cordell, Matthew. *To See an Owl*. Random House, 2025. A young girl learns patience and perseverance as she searches for months to spot an elusive owl in the wild, finally succeeding when she quietly observes the snowy woods with her mother.
- Cornwall, Gaia. *Fairy Walk*. Candlewick, 2025. Three children and their dog explore the woods in search of fairies and discover that imagination and nature reveal their own kind of magic.
- Cutler, Marcus. *I Do Not Eat Children*. Little, Brown, 2024. A misunderstood monster tries to convince others that he is not dangerous.
- Denise, Christopher. *Knight Owl and Early Bird*. Little, Brown, 2024. Owl, captain of the Knight Watch is dismissive of Early Bird, an energetic and talkative bird who aspires to be a Knight Owl, until her bravery shines through during a wolf attack. *Series*
- DiPucchio, Kelly. *Becoming Charley*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2023. Unlike all the other caterpillars, Charley sometimes wonders what it would be like to be a fawn or a waterfall, so when the day comes to form her chrysalis, Charley must decide who she will become.
- DiTerlizzi, Angela. *The Curious Why*. Little, Brown, 2024. A bored child is visited by the Curious Why, a whimsical creature who inspires the child to explore the world, ask questions, and discover how curiosity transforms boredom into adventure. *Series*
- Dockrill, Laura. *Gray*. Candlewick, 2024. A child feeling “gray” uses color similes and poetic metaphors to express a down mood, comparing the feeling to scribbles and puddles while demonstrating the importance of embracing difficult emotions.
- Dominguez, Angela. *I'm Not Sleepy! ¡No Tengo Sueño!* Holt, 2023. Lolo the T. rex insists he's not sleepy and is too busy to be, but he gradually completes his bedtime routine with help from his friend.
- Donaldson, Julie. *Jonty Gentoo: The Adventures of a Penguin*. Scholastic, 2024. Are you ready for a pole-to-pole adventure? Jonty, a plucky little gentoo penguin, is setting off on the adventure of a lifetime. But can he really waddle all the way to Antarctica?
- Dubuc, Marianne. *Everyone Gets a Turn*. Princeton Architectural, 2024. Four forest animals take turns caring for an egg that hatches into Little Bird, who learns from each friend before building her own house.

**HAI SLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Preschool, Prekindergarten, Kindergarten**

- Fang, X. *Broken*. Tundra Books, 2025. Mei Mei breaks her grandmother's favorite cup and lets the cat take the blame, but guilt eventually forces her to confess the truth.
- Ferry, Beth. *A Moving Story*. Harper, 2024. Brothers and movers Tiny and Pete handle everything with care, but when a young panda's turtle vanishes during their biggest job, even their dedication might not be enough to find the missing pet.
- Flake, Sharon G. *You Make Me Sneeze*. Astra Young Readers, 2024. When Duck appears allergic to Cat during their camping trip, they try various remedies until they discover the real cause of Duck's symptoms.
- Fleming, Meg. *The Everything Trail*. Beach Lane Books, 2025. Some young explorers' journey through the forest and discover the endless wonders of nature, from giant redwoods to tiny creatures, learning to appreciate both the big and small marvels around them.
- Flett, Julie. *Let's Go!* Greystone Books, 2024. A child watches skateboarders, practices until he feels ready, hesitates at the park due to insecurity, then gains confidence when other new kids arrive.
- Forsythe, Matthew. *Aggie and the Ghost*. Simon & Schuster, 2025. When Aggie moves into her new house and discovers it's haunted, she challenges the rule-breaking ghost to a game of tic-tac-toe to determine who gets to stay.
- Freedman, Deborah. *Partly Cloudy*. Viking, 2024. Two bunnies go cloud watching; one sees the science of the clouds and the other sees imaginative forms.
- Gehl, Laura. *Frog Can Hop*. Simon Spotlight, 2023. One energetic friend and one laid-back friend discover the value of switching their usual routines when they swap roles.
- Goade, Michaela. *Moon Song*. Little, Brown, 2025. A girl tells her worried cousin a story about moonlight in the forest, bioluminescence by the shore, and northern lights in the sky.
- Hahn, Sabina. *I Am a Dragon!* HarperCollins, 2023. Little frogs insist that a dragon is a frog based on their logical reasoning about green, wet, amphibious creatures, until he breathes fire on them.
- Hall, Michael. *Punch!: A Story About Kindness*. Greenwillow, 2025. Badger shoves, kicks, and pokes the other animals in his way until Bear decides to teach Badger a lesson, which is an example of empathy for others.
- Hare, John. *Duck, Duck, Goose!* Greenwillow, 2024. A simple game escalates into a wild, rhyming adventure featuring a moose on the loose and a chaotic journey with trains and trucks.
- Harris, Shawn. *Let's Be Bees*. Neal Porter, 2025. A parent and child use their imaginations to transform into various elements of nature, creating playful sounds together in this whimsical adventure.
- Harrison, David L. *A Tree is a Community*. Holiday House, 2024. A tree is more than just a plant, but a whole ecosystem hiding in plain sight, on street corners and in backyards everywhere. Discover how one tree provides shelter, food, and clean air to a host of animals and insects.

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- Hartman, Brooke. *All Aboard the Alaska Train*. Red Comet Press, 2024. Travel on the Alaska train to discover Alaska's animal treasures such as buffalo, otters, sheep, grizzly bears, and more.
- Henkes, Kevin. *Finding Things*. Greenwillow, 2024. An invitation to reflect on the simple treasures that are in plain sight but often go unnoticed.
- Hest, Amy. *Big Bear and Little Bear Go Fishing*. Holiday House, 2024. Little Bear accompanies Big Bear on a fishing trip where they wait patiently for fish.
- Hevron, Amy. *Poo Pile on the Prairie*. Beach Lane Books, 2025. On the prairies of North America, bison poo creates tiny ecosystems that fertilize soil, spread seeds, and house hundreds of species, forming an essential building block for diverse grassland life cycles.
- Higgins, Ryan T. *We Don't Lose Our Class Goldfish*. Disney-Hyperion, 2023. Penelope Rex, terrified of Walter the class goldfish, must overcome her fear when he goes missing under her care.
- Hulse, Patrick. *At Our Table*. Little, Brown, 2024. The book celebrates community, generosity, and gratitude through cozy illustrations of family gatherings.
- Iwai, Melissa. *Perfect Paper Cranes*. HarperCollins, 2024. At the Japan Day Festival, Gigi attempts to create an origami crane like her grandfather's, but becomes discouraged and must decide whether to quit or persevere. *Series*
- Kalb, Bess. *Buffalo Fluffalo*. Random House, 2024. A grumpy buffalo tries his hardest to pretend He is bigger than he really is, but realizes others like him, no matter his size. *Series*
- Könnecke, Ole. *Diggers, Dozers, and Dumpers*. Gecko, 2025. Introduces a variety of construction vehicles through humorous animal-filled stories, blending real facts with imaginative adventures and a fairy-tale ending.
- Laden, Nina. *Seeds of Change*. Roaring Brook, 2024. This rhyming, lyrical picture book about investing in the future of ourselves and our community teaches an invaluable lesson about having the patience to see that, in time, effort will blossom into a more peaceful and loving world.
- Laminack, Lester L. *A Cat Like That*. Peachtree, 2025. A sociable island cat makes her daily rounds through town, visiting familiar places and people in a predictable rhythm that encourages young readers to engage with the story and create their own narratives.
- LaRochelle, David. *Mr. Fox's Game of "No!"* Candlewick, 2024. Try to beat Mr. Fox in this interactive picture book using yes-or-no questions.
- Lee, Gee Eun. *The Red Fruit*. Levine Querido, 2023. A hungry baby bear climbs a tall tree searching for red fruit, mistaking various objects along the way before being mesmerized by the setting sun.
- Levington, Rebecca Gardyn. *Some Days I'm the Wind*. Barefoot Books, 2025. A young girl explores different emotions and imaginative play throughout her day at home, pretending to be various elements like the sun and sea.
- Lies, Brian. *Cat Nap*. Greenwillow, 2025. A kitten chases a mouse through a framed poster on the wall, embarking on an epic adventure through time, art, and history in what may be a dream.

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- Liu, Linda. *Sour Apple*. Holt, 2024. A lonely, unpicked apple questions why it was left behind at harvest.
- Long, Loren. *The Yellow Bus*. Roaring Brook, 2024. The journey of a school bus is shown, from transporting children, to seniors, to goats, and she never loses her sense of joy and purpose.
- Mack, Jeff. *Scaredy Cats*. Holiday House, 2023. Three kittens discover a gift-wrapped present and let their imaginations run wild as they wonder what might be inside.
- Maconie, Kat. *What Kind of Shoes Does a Hippopotamus Choose?* Flamingo Books, 2025. Animals throughout a busy town wear creative footwear—from dogs in clogs to cats in kitten heels—as they gather at a hippo’s party where the mystery of what hippos wear is finally revealed.
- Madan, Vikram. *Owl and Penguin: Here and There*. Holiday House, 2024. Best friends Owl and Penguin make pizza, build snowbirds, and hike in this beginning graphic novel.
- Más Davidson, Rachel. *The Helping Sweater*. Little, Brown, 2024. When Maya’s beloved sweater unravels after her cat pulls a thread, she discovers it can help others in magical ways before school starts.
- Mensah, Bernard. *Jollof Day*. Dial Books, 2025. A boy and his father celebrate Jollof Day by cooking a traditional Ghanaian rice dish together, dancing through each step of the recipe.
- Naylor-Ballesteros, Chris. *Frank and Bert*. Nosy Crow, 2023. Frank and Bert play hide-and-seek, but when Bert’s scarf unravels and leaves a long pink yarn trail, Fox pretends not to find him.
- Nyeu, Tao. *Exactly as Planned*. Rocky Pond Books, 2024. This reversible picture book can be read from either side, with each half showing the story through a different friend’s eyes.
- Otis, Chad. *The Bright Side*. Rocky Pond Books, 2023. An unhoused boy faces some struggles as he enters school for the first time, but discovers his resilience and imagination, learning to define “the bright side” for himself.
- Paul, Chris. *Basketball Dreams*. Roaring Brook, 2023. NBA All-Star Chris Paul shares how his grandfather Papa Chilly taught him essential values like respect, faith, and determination.
- Perkins, Mitali. *Between My Hands*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2024. Maya is bored at the beginning of her summer vacation, so she goes on a quest to discover the ways her neighbors give back and how she can also namaste the world.
- Pett, Mark. *I Eat Poop: A Dung Beetle Story*. Roaring Brook, 2021. Dougie, a dung beetle who secretly eats poop, must decide whether to hide his identity or stand up for himself and a friend when the lunchroom crowd discovers what they eat.
- Portis, Antoinette. *To Activate Space Portal, Lift Here*. Neal Porter, 2025. This book is an interactive experience where the pages become an interstellar portal that allows Zrk and Blrg to meet an alien through the pages...who just happens to be the reader!

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- Preller, James. *Two Birds...and a Moose*. Simon Spotlight, 2024. A moose attempts to reach birds in a tree using daring methods such as a pogo stick, a helium balloon, and a high-wire walk.
- Rayner, Catherine. *Molly, Olive, and Dexter: Who's Afraid of the Dark?* Candlewick, 2025. As night falls, three friends hear and see strange things that cause them to worry until they realize there is nothing they need to be afraid of in the dark.
- Reynolds, Peter. *The Gift of Words*. Orchard Books, 2025. A young boy, disappointed by the uninspiring words he finds around his town, creates his own collection of uplifting messages to decorate a tree with positive words for everyone to share.
- Rinker, Sherri Duskey. *Construction Site: Taking Flight!* Chronicle Books, 2023. The Construction Site crew teams up with airport vehicles to expand the airport, build new runways, service planes, and clear snow. *Series*
- Rosen, Michael. *Oh Dear, Look What I Got!* Candlewick, 2025. A boy's shopping trip goes awry when each store gives him animals instead of the items he needs.
- Rothman, Scott. *Warm and Fuzzy*. Tundra Books, 2025. As Warm and Fuzzy prepare for a new adventure, Fuzzy has many questions but overcomes his fear, allowing him to enjoy trying new things.
- Rylant, Cynthia. *Hornbeam All In*. Beach Lane Books, 2023. A lovable moose navigates three adventures with his animal companions.
- Salas, Laura Purdie. *Zap! Clap! Boom!* Bloomsbury, 2023. Three children experience a building thunderstorm from sunny skies through dramatic thunder and lightning.
- Saltzberg, Barney. *A Delicious Story*. Hippo Park, 2023. This delightful book, ideal for beginning readers, follows a small mouse on a quest to find a story, only to discover a new friend along the way.
- Sayre, April Pulley. *Happy Sloth Day!* Beach Lane Books, 2022. See the rainforest through a sloth's eyes using real photographs, while learning about sloths and the other animals that share their delicate canopy ecosystem.
- Sidman, Joyce. *Dear Acorn (Love, Oak): Letter Poems to Friends*. Clarion, 2025. Through paired poems between connected elements—like an oak tree and its acorn, or a brick and its schoolhouse—this collection explores how everything in a community ecosystem supports and depends on one another.
- Silverman, Buffy. *Starlight Symphony*. Millbrook, 2024. This charming book uses rhyming text and vivid animal photos to compare the nighttime sounds on a peaceful pond to orchestra instruments.
- Smith, Lane. *Stickler Loves the World*. Random House, 2023. A stick-covered creature and its friend explore the world together, marveling at everyday wonders like the sun and overlooked details like falling seed pods. *Series*
- Sobel, June. *First Day, Hooray!* Clarion, 2024. This back-to-school picture book teaches young children to identify, name, and use their feelings as helpful tools when navigating new experiences like the first day of school.

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**Preschool, Prekindergarten, Kindergarten**

- Sterer, Gideon. *Treehouse Town*. Little, Brown, 2024. Children create and inhabit an idyllic treetop community where everyone works together and resolves conflicts peacefully.
- Stewart, Melissa. *Shape Search*. Reycraft Books, 2024. Readers are invited to look closely at various shapes found in nature, and to extend their curiosity by hunting for more shapes both in the book and in their own world.
- Tabor, Corey R. *Ursula Upside Down*. Greenwillow, 2024. A contented catfish enjoys her aquatic life until another fish's criticism about how she swims suddenly turns her perspective and her world upside down.
- Taltec, Olivier. *A Better Best Friend*. Gecko, 2024. A squirrel and mushroom friend experience the seasons together until new friends arrive, making the squirrel question whether it's okay to have more than one best friend.
- Tatsukawa, Maya. *Mole is Not Alone*. Holt, 2023. Mole is invited to a party, but he worries as he travels through the tunnels about whether he can overcome his shyness.
- Taylor, Sean. *Five Little Friends: A Collection of Finger Rhymes*. Candlewick, 2025. This unique collection offers parents and caregivers simple ways to sing and play with their little ones and encourages both children and grown-ups to use their fingers, hands, arms, legs, and even feet to become a stomping elephant, falling snow, or bursting fireworks!
- Timmers, Leo. *The Monster in the Lake*. Gecko, 2025. Although Eric the duck worries about monsters in the water, a courageous dip turns his fear into wonder as he discovers the spectacular life beneath the surface.
- Varchol Perron, Lisa. *All the Rocks We Love*. Rise x Penguin, 2024. This book celebrates children's fascination with rocks and shares a multitude of playful possibilities.
- Vere, Ed. *The Artist*. Doubleday, 2023. A dinosaur artist travels to a gray city where she creates vibrant murals and learns that mistakes are essential to the creative process.
- Walker, David. *The Not-So-Sleepy Little Panda*. Atheneum, 2025. When Little Panda resists bedtime due to fear of the dark, her creative parents find a natural solution to help her feel safe and comfortable at night.
- Wallace, Chelsea Lin. *Dare to Be Daring*. Abrams Books, 2024. This book encourages children to face their anxieties by showing them that each act of courage will build their confidence.
- Ward, Jennifer. *Sleepy: Surprising Ways Animals Snooze*. Beach Lane Books, 2024. Using rhyming couplets paired with informational text, this book describes the different ways animals sleep.
- Weeks, Sarah. *Sketty and Meatball*. HarperCollins, 2024. After a fun day at a dog show, making new friends, Meatball and Sketty curl up for a nap under their favorite tree.
- Wiley, DeAnn. *Homegrown*. Holt, 2024. A Black child explores the concept of "home" through family wisdom and learns that home provides a sense of belonging.

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**Preschool, Prekindergarten, Kindergarten**

Willems, Mo. *Are You Big?* Union Square Kids, 2024. This book helps children understand relative size and reassures them of their own significance in a big universe.

Wilson, Rachel Michelle. *How to Pee Your Pants: The Right Way.* Feiwel and Friends, 2024. A light-hearted, humorous look at how to get through the embarrassing moment of peeing your pants.

Wong, Jack. *All that Grows.* Groundwood Books, 2024. In a delightful, nuanced story about cultivating patience and letting knowledge grow, a boy discovers how vast the universe is and how much there is to learn ... until he resolves to let his knowledge grow in its own way and time, just like the mysterious plants he has decided to nurture in the garden.

Worsley, Justin. *Henry is an Artist.* Flamingo Books, 2025. Henry, a dog who creates daily sculptures on his park walks, he feels unappreciated when people throw away his artwork until an unexpected admirer finally recognizes his talent.

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## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 1 and Grade 2

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Alladin, Erin. ***Outside, You Notice***. Pajama Press, 2021. Through nonfiction text, readers are led through a child's sensory experience of multiple outdoor spaces, including facts and information relating to animal homes, flowers, seeds, vegetables, and more.

Applegate, Katherine. ***Doggo and Pupper Search for Cozy, Book 3***. Feiwel and Friends, 2022. The conclusion to the Doggo and Pupper early readers trilogy. The canines help Cat adjust to a big change: A new bed! *Series*

Applegate, Katherine. ***Odder: An Otter's Story***. Feiwel & Friends, 2025. Picture book adapted from the author's novel of the same title. Odder spends her days playing underwater and learning life lessons from her mother. But when Odder's life takes a dramatic turn, she is rescued by humans. The people are kind and introduce Odder to other rescues. Soon, it's clear that Odder has a talent for teaching other pups how to otter.

Arnold, Elana K. ***Starla Jean Cracks the Case***. Roaring Brook, 2023. Starla Jean and her pet chicken, Opal Egg, return in this side-splitting third-chapter book, just in time to solve a puzzling mystery that takes them on a chase through the neighborhood! *Series*

Ashman, Linda. ***Fire Chief Fran***. Astra Young Readers, 2022. Fire Chief Fran leads her firefighters through everything from inspections to drills to dangerous blazes, while they help their community in many ways every day.

Bailey, Jenn. ***Henry, Like Always***. Chronicle Books, 2023. Henry, a first grader on the autism spectrum, attempts to navigate friendships and sudden changes in classroom routines--like a parade on Friday instead of share time. *Geisel Award 2023*.

Bailey, Linda. ***The Three Little Mittens***. Tundra, 2023. Dotty and Other Dotty are a perfect match. The pair of yellow-spotted, pink, woolly mittens flaunt their partnership in front of a lonesome single-mitten named Stripes. That is, until one day the little girl asks, why do mittens have to match?

Barnett, Mac. ***Jack Gets Zapped!*** Viking, 2021. Zapped into his favorite video game by a sneaky bolt of lightning, mischievous Jack finds himself racing around game puzzles while outmaneuvering a pounding boss. *Series*

Barrett, Hayley. ***Girl Versus Squirrel***. Margaret Ferguson Books, 2020. One resourceful girl. One determined squirrel. Great minds meet their match in this tale of persistence and learning that compromise can be a wonderful thing.

Bell, Cece. ***Smell My Foot!*** Candlewick, 2019. Shares the interactions of the rule-following Chick and the absent-minded Brain, whose friendship is tested by miscommunications and misunderstandings about good manners.

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### Grade 1 and Grade 2

- Booth, Leslie Barnard. ***One Day this Tree Will Fall***. Simon & Schuster, 2024. A tree's life story is told from its beginnings as a seed to its survival in the wilderness until it finally falls, but continues its life as a log, an animal habitat, and finally decomposes to provide nutrition for future trees.
- Brockington, Drew. ***Waffles and Pancake: Planetary-YUM***. Little, Brown, 2021. Waffles and his sister Pancake visit the science museum with Cat-Dad for a fun afternoon until Cat-Dad goes missing in this graphic novel for young readers. *Series*
- Brunelle, Lynn. ***Life After Whale: The Amazing Ecosystem of a Whale Fall***. Holiday House, 2024. A nonfiction exploration of the rich ecosystem after the death of a whale, beautiful illustrations add to the text.
- Burach, Ross. ***Make Way for the Butterfly***. Scholastic, 2023. Butterfly learns from Bee that he too is a pollinator and can help in the important work of pollinating plants. Factual information is delivered humorously. *Series*
- Butler, Dori Hillestad. ***King and Kayla and the Case of the Unhappy Neighbor***. Peachtree, 2020. King, the golden retriever, struggles to communicate with his human, Kayla, as both try to clear Thor of trashing Mr. Gary's yard. *Series*
- Byers, Grace. ***I Am Enough***. Balzer + Bray, 2018. This gorgeous, lyrical ode to loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another comes from *Empire* actor and activist Grace Byers and talented newcomer artist Keturah A. Bobo.
- Calmenson, Stephanie. ***How to Cheer Up a Friend***. Beach Lane Books, 2024. A young boy and his elephant friend brainstorms many ways to cheer up a friend who's feeling down.
- Campbell, Marcy. ***The More You Give***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2022. A multi-generational story showing love and care passed down from one family to the next.
- Castillo, Lauren. ***Our Friend Hedgehog: A Place to Call Home***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2022. Our beloved Hedgehog and friends return for another adventure that leads them to the realization that home can be found in unexpected places. *Series*
- Clanton, Ben. ***Narwhal's School of Awesomeness***. Tundra Books, 2021. Narwhal and Jelly become the coolest teachers in the worldwide waters in the hilarious sixth book of this blockbuster series! *Graphic novel, Series*
- Cordell, Matthew. ***Cornbread & Poppy at the Museum***. Little, Brown, 2023. Celebrating priceless friendship and the value of what makes us individuals, children will find this classic odd couple irresistible as they encounter relatable issues with humor and heart. *Series*
- Cordell, Matthew. ***Evergreen***. Feiwel and Friends, 2023. Evergreen the squirrel is afraid of many things: thunder, hawks, and the dark paths of Buckthorn Forest. But when her mother tasks Evergreen with delivering soup to her sick Granny Oak, the little squirrel must face her fears and make the journey.
- Cornwall, Gaia. ***Jabari Jumps***. Candlewick, 2017. With his father's support and encouragement, Jabari overcomes his fear, musters up his courage, and jumps off the swimming pool diving board.

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### Grade 1 and Grade 2

- Cronin, Doreen. *Lawrence and Sophia*. Rocky Pond Books, 2023. Lawrence prefers to stay in his small backyard, and his friend Sophia, a bird who avoids the ground, helps each other overcome their fears during a rainstorm.
- DiPucchio, Kelly. *Becoming Charley*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2023. Unlike all the other caterpillars Charley sometimes wonders what it would be like to be a fawn or a waterfall, so when the day comes to form her chrysalis, Charley must decide who she will become.
- Doerrfeld, Cori. *Beneath*. Little, Brown, 2023. A child and their grandfather take a walk in the woods and discover more about themselves. Finn begins to realize that people, just like the elements of nature, are more than they appear.
- de la Peña, Matt. *Carmela Full of Wishes*. Putnam's, 2018. Carmela, finally old enough to run errands with her brother, tries to think of the perfect wish, while his wish seems to be that she stays home.
- DiCamillo, Kate. *Franklin Endicott and the Third Key*. Candlewick, 2021. A constant worrier, Franklin Endicott earns a fresh cause for alarm when he accompanies Eugenia Lincoln to her favorite thrift shop and leaves with a mystery to solve. *Series*
- DiCamillo, Kate. *Mercy Watson is Missing!: Tales from Deckawoo Drive*. Candlewick, 2023. When Mercy Watson the pig goes missing, all of Deckawoo Drive is in an uproar. *Series*
- Ellis, Elina. *Have You Seen an Elephant?* Kids Can Press, 2024. Meet Alex, an explorer who loves elephants and has decided to see one for herself, but there's one problem: where are all the elephants? *Series*
- Fang, X. *Dim Sum Palace*. Tundra Books, 2023. A little girl's love of dim sum spills over into her dreams, taking her on a fantastical food-filled adventure
- Faruqi, Saadia. *Yasmin the Detective*. Picture Window, 2022. Nani likes to sit outside and sew, but little things like her thimble keep disappearing, so she turns detective and applies a science lesson to solve the mystery. *Series*
- Feuti, Norm. *Beak and Ally #4: Snow Birds*. HarperCollins, 2023. When noisy neighbors move in for the winter, will Beak & Ally ever find peace and quiet? Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor Award. *Graphic novel, Series*
- Fisher, Lalena. *Friends Beyond Measure*. Harper, 2023. Ana and Harwin's friendship has been off the charts since day one! But when Harwin learns her family will move far away, they aren't sure how their friendship can survive the move.
- Fitzgerald, Laura Marx. *Wild for Winnie*. Rocky Pond Books, 2022. A young girl with sensory processing issues starts at a new school with new classmates and a teacher who knows just how to make her feel welcome.
- Flintham, Thomas. *Game Over, Super Rabbit Boy!* Scholastic, 2017. Uh-oh, Animal Town is in trouble! Meanie King Viking has created a dreaded robot army to spread No Fun across the land. On top of that, he has stolen the happiest and most fun animal ever, Singing Dog. There is only one person who can save the day: Super Rabbit Boy! *Series*

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 1 and Grade 2

- Funk, Josh. *Dear: Unicorn A Pen Pal Tale*. Viking, 2023. Connie's art class is partnering with Nic's as pen pals and the two of them love trading their artistic creations back and forth. They have slightly different approaches to art, but sharing their perspectives is what makes being pen pals so fun. Both eagerly await the end-of-year art festival where the classes will finally meet but they are in for quite a shock...Connie doesn't know Nic is a unicorn! And Nic has no clue that Connie is a human! Will this surprise change everything for the two budding friends? *Series*
- Franco, Betsy. *Counting in Dog Years and Other Sassy Math Poems*. Candlewick, 2022. Twenty-nine silly and sassy poems about math with bright, zany illustrations invite readers to think about all the ways math is a part of their lives.
- Greenawalt, Kelly. *I Can Build It!* Scholastic, 2020. Princess Truly is a great inventor! With her magic and sparkling curls, she can build anything from a Brushy- Brush machine to a super-cool, turbo-boosted racing bike for her little brother. But when Truly and her sidekick pug Sir Noodles discover that the animal shelter is all out of treats, it's time for their biggest invention yet... the Super Snack Machine! *Series*
- Gutman, Dan. *My Weird School: Teamwork Trouble*. Harper, 2018. Ryan wants to form a curling team at school with A.J. and Andrea, but soon trouble amongst his teammates threatens to end their season early. *Series*
- Hanlon, Abby. *Dory Fantasmagory: Tiny Tough*. Dial Books, 2019. Dory tries to help her big sister when she has trouble with her friends at school, but somehow, as only Dory manages to do, she mixes in pirates and treasure along the way. *Series*
- Harvey, Jeanne Walker. *Ablaze with Color: A Story of Painter Alma Thomas*. HarperCollins, 2022. The incredible true story of Alma Thomas, the first Black woman to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum in New York City and to have her work chosen for the White House.
- Hernandez, Laurie. *She's Got This*. HarperCollins, 2018. This is a beautiful story of a young girl who learns that hard work and perseverance are worth it, especially when accompanied by the encouragement and support of her family.
- Iwai, Melissa. *Gigi and Ojiji: What's in a Name?* Harper, 2022. Gigi wants to go by something besides her baby name--but Geraldine is too long to write and Hanako, her middle name, doesn't feel quite right. Will Gigi find the perfect name? *Series*
- Jenkins, Emily. *Toys Go Out: Being the Adventures of a Knowledgeable Stingray, a toughy little Buffalo and someone called Plastic*. Schwartz & Wade, 2006. Three best friends go on adventures and solve problems in six stories. *Series*
- Jenkins, Steve. *Stinkiest!: 20 Smelly Animals*. Clarion, 2018. Through illustrations, infographics, facts and figures, readers will see how big each animal is compared to humans, its habitat located on the globe, and just how putrid it can be. *Series*
- John, Jory. *The Good Egg*. HarperCollins, 2019. When the other eggs in his carton behave badly, the good egg feels like he needs to be perfect.

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 1 and Grade 2

- Johnson, Kevin. *Cape*. Roaring Brook, 2023. A child wears a cape as protection from grief after the loss of a loved one, using it at first to avoid memories that keep bubbling up, and then later for comfort and strength.
- Kelly, Scott. *My Journey to the Stars*. Crown, 2017. A picture book memoir about NASA astronaut Scott Kelly that takes readers on a journey through his ordinary childhood to his record-breaking year commanding the International Space Station.
- Kügler, Tina. *Snail and Worm, of Course*. Clarion, 2023. Follows best friends Snail and Worm through three adventures. *Series*
- Lanan, Jessica. *Jumper: A Day in the Life of a Backyard Jumping Spider*. Roaring Brook, 2023. A beautifully illustrated nonfiction story following a day in the life of a backyard jumping spider meticulously researched and utterly charming. *Sibert Honor 2024*.
- Lerner, Jarrett. *Nat the Cat Takes a Nap*. Simon Spotlight, 2023. A witty narrator and a secondary character, Pat the Rat, prevent Nat the Cat from taking a much-needed nap.
- Lerner, Jarrett. *Geeger the Robot Goes to School*. Aladdin, 2020. When Geeger the robot goes to human school, his looney antics, mega misunderstandings and literal explanations get in the way of making friends and making it through the day. *Series*
- Leung, Julie. *The Fearless Flights of Hazel Ying Lee*. Little, Brown, 2021. Fearless from birth, Chinese American Hazel Ying Lee fulfilled her dream of flying and became an aviation pioneer when she joined the Women Airforce Service Pilots during World War II.
- Llanos, Mariana. *Benita and the Night Creatures*. Barefoot Books, 2023. Benita has found a new book to enjoy, and she is so engaged that she is undisturbed by a parade of night creatures from Peru intent on scaring her.
- Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Are Friends*. HarperCollins, 2003. First published 1970. Be entertained by the classic, short, delightful tales about best friends Frog and Toad. *Series*
- Lukoff, Kyle. *I'm Sorry You Got Mad*. Dial Books, 2024. Jack attempts to write his classmate Zoe an apology note after knocking over her block tower, and soon realizes it takes more than just two words to make amends.
- Madan, Vikram. *Owl and Penguin: Best Day Ever*. Holiday House, 2023. Sometimes, best friends disagree. Though Owl and Penguin are opposites, they like to resolve their conflicts through creative play. From conquering fears to flying a runaway kite, there's nothing these pals can't get through together. *Graphic novel-*
- May, Kyla. *Beach Pug*. Scholastic, 2024. It is Bub the pug's first trip to the beach, and Bella wants to enter him in a pet-surfing contest, but Bub is scared of the ocean and refuses, so he hopes to make it up to Bella by presenting her with the treasure at the end of the map he found. *Series*
- McKibben, Bill. *We Are Better Together*. Holt, 2022. A hopeful book written by an environmentalist honoring the power of human cooperation in protecting our beautiful world.
- Medina, Juana. *Elena Rides*. Candlewick, 2023. A determined elephant and her loyal sidekick will inspire students to persist when facing a challenge.

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 1 and Grade 2

- Messner, Kate. ***Over and Under the Rainforest***. Chronicle Books, 2020. Explore the extraordinary life and the activity that lie hidden among the roots, above the winding rivers, and under the brilliant green trees of the rainforest. *Series*
- Michalak, Jamie. ***Hazel the Handful*** Candlewick, 2025. Hazel the dog and her girl, Bea, have a sensational life together, that is, until the baby arrives.
- Miller, Rhett. ***No More Poems!: A Book in Verse That Just Gets Worse***. Little, Brown, 2019. Full of clever wordplay and bright visual gags—and toilet humor to spare—these twenty-three rhyming poems make for an ideal read-aloud experience.
- Morris, J.E. ***Flubby Does Not Like Snow***. Penguin Workshop, 2023. Kami tries to convince her finicky cat, Flubby, to come outside and enjoy the winter wonderland. *Series*
- Morris, Keisha. ***Between Two Windows***. HarperCollins, 2024. Mateo and Kayla live in different buildings, but by passing their drawings on a laundry line strung between their windows, they can interact as if they were in the same room.
- Mosca, Julia Finley. ***The Doctor with an Eye for Eyes: The Story of Dr. Patricia Bath***. Innovation, 2017. As a girl coming of age during the Civil Rights Movement, Patricia Bath dreamed of becoming a doctor, and not only did she fulfill that dream, but she also invented a procedure to remove cataracts and became the first African American female doctor to hold a medical patent.-
- Palatini, Margie. ***Kitty cam***. Simon Spotlight, 2023. Kitty has a pet cam attached to its head, and readers see everything the kitten sees, including a day of pouncing, eating, washing, and playing. *Series*
- Parsons, Karyn. ***Saving the Day: Garrett Morgan's Life-Changing Invention of the Traffic Signal***. Little, Brown, 2021. Rhyming text presents the story of African American inventor, Garrett Morgan, who created the first three-way traffic signal. *Series*
- Perkins, Mitali. ***Home is in Between***. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021. Immigrating to America, a young girl navigates between her family's Bengali traditions and her new country's culture.
- Raczka, Bob. ***Niko Draws a Feeling***. Carolrhoda Books, 2017. A young boy draws his feelings, but no one seems to understand what he is drawing until he meets Iris, the new girl who moves in next door.
- Reid, C. L. ***Friendship Goals***. Capstone, 2022. Emma, who is deaf and wears a cochlear implant, enjoys playing soccer with her friends Izzie and Chen. But when Izzie is frustrated and wants to quit the team, Emma and Chen show her that improvement and success come with practice. *Series*
- Rivadeneira, Caryn. ***Monster Match***. Red Chair Press, 2023. Fred, now “Frank” in school after an author signing mix-up, partners with his desk-mate, Luisa, to save the school from a mysterious potion, all while completing his What If Poem writing assignment. *Series*
- Robbins, Dean. ***Margaret and the Moon: How Margaret Hamilton Saved the First Lunar Landing***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2017. Pursuing her childhood passion for mathematics and astronomy, Margaret Hamilton became a pioneer in computer programming and a hero in the Apollo 11 mission.

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 1 and Grade 2

- Rocco, Hayley. *Wild Places: The Life of Naturalist David Attenborough*. Putnam's, 2024. A richly illustrated look at the life of British naturalist David Attenborough, who famously traveled around the world to bring attention to animals and habitats.
- Rosen, Sybil. *Carpenter's Helper*. Schwartz & Wade, 2021. Renata and her father halt work on their new bathroom when a pair of wrens build a nest over the bathtub.
- Ruzzier, Sergio. *Up and Down: and Other Stories*. Chronicle Books, 2022. In the tradition of Frog + Toad, this critically acclaimed early reader series features Fox and Chick—two unlikely friends. *Series*
- Saltzberg, Barney. *A Delicious Story*. Hippo Park, 2023. When Big Mouse eats the story in their book, Little Mouse, who is not ok with this, wants to hear a tale--and will settle for nothing less.
- Santat, Dan. *After the Fall: How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again*. Roaring Brook, 2017. After his famous fall, Humpty Dumpty summons his courage to get back up and is rewarded with something amazing.
- Santat, Dan. *Harold & Hog Pretend for Real!* Hyperion, 2019. Can the friendship of best friends Harold and Hog, a carefree elephant and a careful hog, survive a game of pretending to be Mo Willems's Elephant and Piggie? *Series*
- Sharpson, Neil. *Don't Trust Fish*. Dial Books, 2025. A supposed nature guide humorously warns readers not to trust fish, exploring their mysterious and villainous nature.
- Smith, Emma Bland. *Mr. McCloskey's Marvelous Mallards: The Making of Make Way for Ducklings*. Calkins Creek, 2022. Robert McCloskey finds himself navigating the delightful chaos of raising a flock of ducklings in his cramped New York City apartment, facing challenges as he tries to capture their essence in his illustrations before they outgrow their adorable stage.
- Sundin, David. *The Book That Did Not Want to Be Read*. Simon & Schuster, 2022. Beware! This picture book will do anything in its power to stay unread in this fun, interactive, and irresistibly silly read-aloud.
- Tabor, Corey R. *Fox the Tiger*. Balzer + Bray, 2018. Fox decides to become a tiger because they are fast and sneaky, and soon, his other animal friends are joining in the fun. *Series*
- Tabor, Corey R. *Snail Crossing*. Balzer + Bray, 2020. Determined to make his way to a plump, crisp cabbage across the road, Snail risks speeding cars and hungry crows during a long and slow journey before getting lost while helping a crew of ants escape a rainstorm.
- Temple, Kate. *The Underdogs Catch a Cat Burglar*. Razorbill, 2022. A group of dog detectives team up with a new feline recruit to catch a mysterious art forger. *Series*
- Todd, Traci N. *Nina: A Story of Nina Simone*. Putnam's, 2021. An award-winning picture book biography celebrating the life and voice of acclaimed singer, Nina Simone.
- Troupe, Thomas Kingsley. *Baseball Bonk!* Seahorse, 2023. Taking turns isn't easy, and Tim only wants to play as the pitcher. Will Tim give the outfield a try, or will he strike out? *Series*
- Tysoe, Alina. *The Great Puptective*. Simon & Schuster, 2025. A playful puppy is adopted by a new family and while settling in, solves mysteries in the house and torments the family cat in this graphic novel. *Series*

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 1 and Grade 2

- Van Dusen, Chris. *If I Built a School*. Dial Books, 2019. If Jack built a school, there would be hover desks and pop-up textbooks, skydiving wind tunnels and a trampoline basketball court in the gym, a robo-chef to serve lunch in the cafeteria, field trips to Mars, and a whole lot more! *Series*
- Vere, Ed. *Max and Bird*. Sourcebooks, 2017. Max, a kitten, and Bird, a very young bird, want to be friends, but Max also wants to eat Bird, so they strike a deal. *Series*
- West, Kara. *Mia Mayhem Rides the Waves*. Little Simon, 2021. Mia Mayhem learns some important things about herself and her abilities during a family vacation to the beach. *Series*
- West, Tracey. *Howl of the Wind Dragon*. Scholastic, 2021. Drake and Rori rush off to find a Wind Dragon--the final dragon needed to undo the False Life spell. *Series*
- Willems, Mo. *We Are in a Book!* Hyperion, 2010. Gerald is careful. Piggie is not. Piggie cannot help smiling. Gerald can. Gerald and Piggie are best friends. Gerald and Piggie discover the joy of being read. But what will happen when the book ends? *Series*
- Winkler, Henry and Lin Oliver. *Detective Duck: The Case of the Strange Splash*. Abrams, 2023. Willow Feathers McBeaver, aka Detective Duck, and her pond animal pals investigate puzzling mysteries caused by human disruptions to their habitat. *Series*
- Windness, Kaz. *Worm and Caterpillar are Friends*. Simon Spotlight, 2023. A worm and a caterpillar are best friends and when one of them is about to go through a big change, they both learn what is inside is what counts.
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *The Day You Begin*. Nancy Paulsen, 2018. There are many reasons to feel different. Maybe it's how you look or talk, or where you're from; maybe it's what you eat, or something just as random. It's not easy to take those first steps into a place where nobody knows you yet, but somehow you do it.
- Yuksel, M.O. *One Wish: Fatima al-Fihri and the World's Oldest University*. HarperCollins, 2022. Picture book biography of Fatima al-Fihri, a trailblazing woman who founded the oldest existing and continually operating university in the world.

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Compiled By:

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**H AISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 3 and Grade 4**

*All book summaries are written by committee members or provided by the publishers.*

*Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.*

- Albus, Kate. ***A Place to Hang the Moon***. Holiday House, 2021. In World War II, England, orphaned siblings William, Edmund, and Anna are evacuated from London to live in the countryside, where they bounce from home to home in search of someone willing to adopt them permanently.
- Almond, David. ***Puppet***. Candlewick, 2024. A very touching story about a puppet master and his last creation, which comes to life and helps him make a friend and share his puppet-making skills with the next generation.
- Applegate, Katherine. ***Odder***. Feiwel and Friends, 2022. A remarkable sea otter's life changes after a dangerous encounter with a shark.
- Applegate, Katherine. ***Pocket Bear***. Feiwel and Friends, 2025. Pocket Bear is a tiny stuffed bear, originally made during World War I to comfort soldiers, who now lives over a century later as the beloved "mayor" of a home where old toys are restored and given new chances to be loved.
- Applegate, Katherine. ***The One and Only Family***. Storytide, 2024. Along with his family, Ivan is loving life at the wildlife sanctuary while reminiscing about his time spent in the circus, his jungle upbringing, and his own twin's memory as he embraces fatherhood. *Series*
- Barton, Chris. ***What Do You Do with a Voice Like That?*** Beach Lane Books, 2018. A biography about the life of Houston native Barbara Jordan, who was best known for her work as a lawyer, politician, and civil rights leader.
- Borba, Adam. ***Outside Nowhere***. Little, Brown, 2022. After setting off one too many pranks, Parker is sent to work on an unusual farm in the middle of nowhere, where something extraordinary is growing underground.
- Boxer, Elisa. ***Hidden Hope: How a Toy and a Hero Saved Lives during the Holocaust***. Abrams Books, 2023. The true story of teenager Jacqueline Gauthier and her toy duck that helped save Jewish families in Nazi-occupied France during World War II.
- Broach, Elise. ***Duet***. Christy Ottaviano, 2022. A talented but reluctant piano student is coaxed into playing again by a singing goldfinch, and together, they work to unravel the mystery of a valuable missing piano.
- Brooks, Molly. ***Sanity & Tallulah***. Hyperion, 2018. Sanity and Tallulah, who live in a space station, search the galaxy for Sanity's three-headed kitten. *Graphic novel*
- Brown, Peter. ***The Wild Robot Escapes***. Little, Brown, 2018. After being captured by the Recons and returned to civilization for reprogramming, Roz is sent to Hilltop Farm, where she befriends her owner's family and animals, but pines for her son, Brightbill. *Series*
- Chau, Alina. ***Marshmallow & Jordan***. First Second, 2021. Jordan's days as a star basketball player are over after an accident leaves her paralyzed from the waist down. She befriends Marshmallow, a mysterious white elephant, who helps Jordan discover a new sport. *Graphic novel*

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 3 and Grade 4

- Churnin, Nancy. *The William Hoy Story: How a Deaf Baseball Player Changed the Game*. Whitman, 2016. Deaf baseball player William Hoy helped to forever change the way baseball is played.
- Cline-Ransome, Lesa. *Before She Was Harriet: The Story of Harriet Tubman*. Holiday House, 2018. An evocative poem and opulent watercolors come together to honor a woman of humble origins whose courage and compassion make her larger than life.
- Cline-Ransome, Lesa. *Finding Langston*. Holiday House, 2018. Discovering a book of Langston Hughes' poetry in the library helps Langston cope with the loss of his mother, relocating from Alabama to Chicago as part of the Great Migration, and being bullied.
- Creech, Susan. *Saving Winslow*. Joanna Cotler, 2018. When Louis' dad brings home a scrawny, sickly newborn donkey, their connection is instant; while the adults around him say Winslow might not survive, Louis finds the faith and courage to believe in his donkey and himself.
- Crimi, Carolyn. *Secondhand Dogs*. Balzer + Bray, 2021. A group of rescue dogs must work together and courageously embark on a difficult journey to save one of their own.
- Dahl, Roald. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Puffin was first published in 1964. Delicious and mysterious adventures await our hero, Charlie Bucket, and four other lucky winners of the Golden Ticket contest on their private tour of Willy Wonka's infamous Chocolate Factory.
- Delargy, Flora. *Rescuing Titanic: A True Story of Quiet Bravery in the North Atlantic*. Wide Eyed Editions, 2021. The true account of the Carpathia crew's valiant efforts to save the lives of Titanic survivors in the icy North Atlantic.
- DiCamillo, Kate. *Lost Evangeline*. Candlewick, 2026. A gentle, fairy-tale-style story about a tiny girl who is separated from the shoemaker who raised her and must navigate the world on her own.
- Engle, Margarita. *Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreño Played the Piano for President Lincoln*. Atheneum, 2019. Teresa was a child prodigy at the piano. As her fame spread in the United States after her family emigrated from Venezuela, she received an invitation from President Lincoln to play at the White House. *Pura Belpré Illustrator Award 2020*
- Engle, Margarita. *The Flying Girl: How Aida de Acosta Learned to Soar*. Atheneum, 2018. This beautifully illustrated picture book tells the inspirational story of Aida de Acosta, the first woman to fly a motorized aircraft.
- Fairbairn, Nathan. *Paws: Gabby Gets It Together*. Razorbill, 2022. Three best friends, who love animals but can't own pets, work together to start a dog-walking business. *Graphic novel*
- Farley, Walter. *The Black Stallion*. Random House was first published in 1941. Set in the 1940s, a young boy and a wild stallion build a relationship of trust and a lifelong friendship after being shipwrecked and surviving on a deserted island together.
- Farook, Nizrana. *The Girl Who Lost a Leopard*. Peachtree, 2023. Twelve-year-old Selvi loves the animals that live in the mountains behind her home, particularly the beautiful golden leopard, Lokka. She is determined to protect him from the hunter Jansz, who threatens not only Lokka but also Selvi's family.

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### Grade 3 and Grade 4

- Ferry, Beth. *Growing Home*. Simon & Schuster, 2025. A whimsical story about four unlikely housemates—a goldfish, a spider, a plant, and a violet—who discover magic and work together to protect the human family they love, celebrating friendship, teamwork, and belonging.
- Fleming, Candace. *Polar Bear*. Neal Porter Books, 2022. Exploration of the life and habitat of a mother polar bear and her cubs.
- Forrester, Amy Seto. *Search for a Giant Squid: Pick Your Path*. Chronicle Books, 2023. Readers join a team of scientists and experts on an expedition to the ocean's twilight zone in search of the hard-to-find giant squid, making choices about their adventure along the way. *Series*
- Fulton, Kristen. *Flight for Freedom: The Wetzel Family's Daring Escape from East Germany*. Chronicle Books, 2020. Set in 1979, this is the true story of Peter Wetzel and his family, who made the daring escape over the Berlin Wall in their handmade hot air balloon, succeeding where others had failed, making freedom a reality and inspiring hope for their fellow East Berliners.
- Giovanni, Nikki. *I am loved*. Atheneum, 2018. This collection of poems and art celebrates individuality, personal histories, diversity, and the universal and powerful value of love on all levels for everyone.
- Gottesfeld, Jeff. *Twenty-one Steps: Guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*. Candlewick, 2001. A tribute to the nameless fallen soldiers and the sentinels who guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.
- Gratz, Alan. *Ban this Book*. Starscape, 2017. Amy Anne, who never gets in trouble, finds herself in the battle of a lifetime when a concerned parent in her school has her favorite book taken off the library shelf.
- Gray, Kristin L. *The Amelia Six: An Amelia Earhart mystery*. Simon & Schuster, 2020. Eleven-year-old Millie and five other girls snowed in at Amelia Earhart's Birthplace Museum in Atchison, Kansas, are on a scavenger hunt when the lights go out, and Amelia's aviator goggles go missing.
- Green, Poppy. *A New Friend*. Little Simon, 2015. After a long winter break, Sophie Mouse and her friends return to school to find a new student in their class, Owen the snake, who could cause a problem for Sophie and her fellow classmates. *Series*
- Harris, Chris. *I'm Just No Good at Rhyming and Other Nonsense for Mischievous Kids and Immature Grown-ups*. Little, Brown, 2017. In the vein of Shel Silverstein, this collection of poems is filled with humor, nonsensical language, rhyme, wordplay, and even codes to crack.
- Harris, Chris. *My Head Has a Bellyache: and More Nonsense for Mischievous Kids and Immature Grown-Ups*. Little, Brown, 2023. This lighthearted collection of humorous poems uses rhymes and clever wordplay to share silly and nonsensical stories.
- Hartman, Aubrey. *The Lion of Lark-Hayes Manor*. Little, Brown, 2023. Twelve-year-old Poppy meets a water nymph and exchanges her favorite book for a lion, but her deal has unexpected consequences that Poppy must fight to correct.

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 3 and Grade 4

- Humphrey, Anna. *Megabat*. Tundra Books, 2018. When Daniel moves into a new house in a new town, he thinks it might be haunted, but he is surprised to find a new friend who happens to be a fruit bat in need of some help to make the long journey back home. *Series*
- Jaggar, Louisa, and Sheri Becker. *Sprouting Wings: The True Story of James Herman Banning, the First African American Pilot to Fly Across the United States*. Crown, 2021. James Herman Banning dreamed of touching the sky, and he became the first African American pilot to fly across the United States.
- Jenkins, Steve. *The Frog Book*. Harcourt, 2019. An introduction to an assortment of the world's frog species, discussing a myriad of topics such as their colors, shapes, and sizes, their various habitats, and how they find food, escape danger, and attract a mate.
- Johnson, Terry Lynn. *Sled Dog School*. Clarion, 2019. When eleven-year-old Matt must set up a business to save his failing math grade, he overcomes his self-doubt and gains two friends along the way.
- Keating, Jess. *The Girl Who Built an Ocean: An Artist, an Argonaut, and the True Story of the World's First Aquarium*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2022. The inspiring tale of a seamstress-turned-scientist who invented the world's first aquarium at a time when women in STEM were startlingly rare.
- Kenny, Emily. *The Extraordinary Adventures of Alice Tonks*. Rock the Boat, 2022. Alice Tonks desperately wants to make friends at boarding school, but being autistic, she's always found it hard to fit in. Then she discovers she is a 'switcher' and can talk to animals.
- Khan, Hena. *Power Forward*. Salaam Press, 2018. Fourth-grader Zayd yearns to play basketball on the Gold Team, but when he skips orchestra rehearsals to practice, his parents forbid anything basketball-related, and tryouts are coming soon. *Series*
- Kelly, Erin Entrada. *Felix Powell, Boy Dog*. Greenwillow, 2024. Animal communicator Felix's day takes a bizarre turn when a spell transforms the eight-year-old into a dog.
- Klostermann, Penny Parker. *The Spider Lady: Nan Songer and Her Arachnid World War II Army*. Calkins Creek, 2025. This picture book biography tells the story of Nan Songer, who used her love of spiders to help the United States during World War II by collecting their strong silk and turning it into tools that helped the military.
- Korman, Gordon. *Old School*. HarperCollins, 2025. After growing up with his grandmother in a retirement home, twelve-year-old Dexter Foreman is made to attend a "real" middle school. Dexter's old and new worlds unexpectedly cross as he struggles with fitting in, with unforeseen results.
- Krull, Kathleen. *Fly High, John Glenn: The Story of an American Hero*. Harper, 2020. John Glenn was the first American astronaut to orbit Earth; he was also a devoted family man, a U.S. Senator, and a national hero who, for 95 years, never lost his love of flying.
- Lai, Remy. *Pawcasso*. Holt, 2021. Eleven-year-old Jo discovers that a small lie can turn into a big problem when her town assumes a talented and fun-loving dog is hers. *Graphic novel*
- Lang, Heather. *The Leaf Detective: How Margaret Lowman Uncovered Secrets in the Rainforest*. Calkins Creek, 2021. In this nonfiction book, learn how Margaret braved the odds to discover the secrets of trees from the rainforest.

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 3 and Grade 4**

- Latham, Irene, and Charles Waters. *Can I Touch Your Hair?: Poems of Race, Mistakes, and Friendship*. Carolrhoda Books, 2018. In this collection of poems in conversation, two students, one black and one white, learn to communicate, relate, and celebrate differences.
- Leiloglou, Carolyn. *Between Flowers and Bones*. WaterBrook, 2024. For those with the gift, paintings can serve as portals, and Georgia must use them to protect her family and the art world from evil forces, while overcoming her own insecurities and jealousy of her cousin Vincent's flashy abilities. *Series*
- Lloyd, Megan Wagner. *Allergic*. Graphix, 2021. Hoping to adopt a pet to find a sense of belonging in a busy family, Maggie is disappointed to discover she is severely allergic to anything with fur and tries to find a pet to love. *Graphic novel*
- Lloyd, Megan Wagner. *Super Pancake*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2023. After a prank by the Bacon Bullies accidentally grants Peggy Pancake superpowers, she teams up with her new friend and trusty sidekick, Luc Croissant, to become a superhero and protect Breakfast Town from the evil Dr. Breakfast Sandwich. *Graphic novel, series*.
- López, Diana. *Sing with Me: The Story of Selena Quintanilla*. Dial Books, 2001. A picture book biography that follows Selena's rise to success, from singing at her family's restaurant to performing at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo in the Astrodome.
- MacColl, Michaela. *Lady of the Lines: How Maria Reiche Saved the Nazca Lines by Sweeping the Desert*. Astra Young Readers, 2025. This picture book biography tells the story of scientist Maria Reiche, who in 1941 discovered the giant animal and plant shapes of Peru's Nazca Lines, carefully mapped and studied them and worked her whole life to protect them so they could become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- MacLachlan, Patricia. *Painting the Game*. McElderry Books, 2024. In a story of great perseverance, Lucy loves to play baseball. Even as she trains relentlessly, Lucy wonders if she'll ever feel brave enough to share her progress with her mom and dad.
- McCarthy, Meghan. *The Wildest Race Ever: The Story of the 1904 Olympic Marathon*. Simon & Schuster, 2016. The exciting and bizarre true story of the 1904 Olympic marathon, which took place at the St. Louis World's Fair.
- McDonald, Andrew. *Real Pigeons Fight Crime!* Yearling, 2020. Rock the Pigeon considers working with the crime-fighting crew to uncover the mysteries of the disappearing breadcrumbs and the kidnapped bats in this first book of the series. *Series*
- McDonald, Megan. *Judy Moody in a Monday Mood*. Candlewick, 2021. When her teacher, Mr. Todd, makes Monday special by celebrating Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day, Judy Moody's frown is turned upside down, prompting her to come up with the perfect idea to make this the best week ever. *Series*
- McKissack, Patricia C. *What is Given from the Heart*. Schwartz & Wade, 2019. James Otis and his family live in poverty, yet his mother insists they need to help seven-year-old Sarah, whose family lost everything in a fire.

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 3 and Grade 4

- McNamara, Margaret. *The Dinosaur Expert*. Schwartz & Wade, 2018. When a classmate tells Kimmy, who dreams of being a paleontologist, that “girls aren’t scientists,” their teacher, Mr. Tiffin, teaches them otherwise.
- Messner, Kate. *The Next President: The Unexpected Beginnings and Unwritten Future of America’s Presidents*. Chronicle Books, 2020. Explore our nation’s presidents, learn what they were doing before they were president, and imagine what the next president could be doing right now – it could be you!
- Newman, Lesléa. *Gittel’s Journey: An Ellis Island Story*. Abrams Books, 2019. When it’s time for nine-year-old Gittel and her mother to leave their homeland and immigrate to America to start a new life, a health inspection forces Gittel to find the courage to leave her family behind; based on true stories told by the author’s grandmother.
- Nobleman, Marc Tyler. *Thirty Minutes Over Oregon: A Japanese Pilot’s World War II Story*. Houghton Mifflin, 2018. In this important and moving true story of reconciliation after war, beautifully illustrated in watercolor, a Japanese pilot bombs the continental U.S. during WWII—the only enemy ever to do so—and comes back 20 years later to apologize.
- Nolan, Janet. *Seven and a Half Tons of Steel*. Peachtree, 2016. This powerful story reveals how seven and a half tons of steel, once a beam in the World Trade Center, became the bow of a navy ship, showing how something remarkable can emerge from a devastating event.
- Ortega, Claribel A. *Frizzy*. First Second, 2022. This charming coming-of-age tale follows Marlene’s journey of self-acceptance and confidence as she learns to celebrate her naturally curly hair.
- Paeff, Colleen. *The Great Stink: How Joseph Bazalgette Solved London’s Poop Pollution Problem*. McElderry Books, 2021. Something smells in 19<sup>th</sup>-century London! Joseph Bazalgette designed London’s first comprehensive sewage system, saving thousands of lives from cholera outbreaks.
- Parry, Rosanne. *A Horse Named Sky*. Greenwillow, 2023. Sky is a young horse running free in the Wild West when he is captured for the Pony Express. He must then escape and return home to rescue his family.
- Pennypacker, Sara. *Leeva at Last*. Balzer + Bray, 2023. With the help of an orphaned badger, a risk-averse boy in a hazmat suit, and the town’s librarians, Leeva sets off to discover her own answer to the question, “What are people for?”--setting off a chain of events that will change Nutsmore forever.
- Perkins, Lynne Rae. *Violet and Jobie in the Wild*. Greenwillow, 2022. Mice Violet and Jobie, live in a human home but soon find themselves uprooted and must quickly adapt to an unfamiliar world.
- Peterson, Andrew. *On the Edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness*. WaterBrook, 2020. This fantasy adventure follows a trio of siblings and their dog as they escape an evil enemy, search for a lost treasure and use their courage and cleverness to survive in a magical and often hilarious world.
- Phelan, Matt. *Knights vs. Dinosaurs*. Greenwillow, 2018. Merlin sends the Knights of the Round Table on their most exciting and dangerous quest to face dinosaurs! *Series*

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 3 and Grade 4

- Riley, Scott. *The Floating Field: How a Group of Thai Boys Built Their Own Soccer Field*. Millbrook, 2021. There is no room on a small Thai island for a group of soccer-loving teens to play the game they love, so they create a floating field.
- Robinson, Sharon. *The Hero Two Doors Down: Based on the True Story of Friendship Between a Boy and a Baseball Legend*. Scholastic, 2017. Eight-year-old Steve Satlow is thrilled when Jackie Robinson moves into his Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn in 1948, although many of his neighbors are not. When Steve meets his hero, he is even more excited — and worried that a misunderstanding over a Christmas tree could damage his new friendship.
- Russell-Brown, Katheryn. *A Voice Named Aretha*. Bloomsbury, 2020. From a shy girl with a big voice to the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin touched millions across generations, not only with her songs but with her exemplary life, inspiring hope, respect, and freedom.
- Sachar, Louis. *Wayside School Beneath the Cloud of Doom*. Harper, 2020. The kids and teachers at Wayside School are back, but the looming Cloud of Doom has them all in a tizzy as they race to collect toenail clippings and prepare for the Ultimate Test. *Series*
- Saltzberg, Barney. *The Smell of Wet Dog: and Other Dog Poems and Drawings*. Neal Porter, 2024. Twenty-seven poems about man's best friend, including all the good, bad, and stinky smells that go along with owning or knowing a dog, illustrations included.
- Simon, Coco. *Emily's Cupcake Magic!* Simon Spotlight, 2024. Emily Green struggles with changing schools and feeling left out, then faces self-doubt when a baking contest makes her worry about living in her stepsister Katie's shadow. With encouragement to bake "The Emily Way," she learns to believe in herself and embrace her own talents. *Series*
- Sís, Peter. *Nicky & Vera: A Quiet Hero of the Holocaust and the Children He Rescued*. Norton, 2021. In Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia, Nicholas Winston saved the lives of almost 700 children. Vera's family was among those he helped.
- Smith, Emma Bland. *The Gardener of Alcatraz: A True Story*. Charlesbridge, 2022. Prisoner Elliott Michener began tending the gardens at Alcatraz. Through his work, he found new interests and skills, ultimately transforming his life.
- Smith, Emma Bland. *How Science Saved the Eiffel Tower*. Capstone, 2022. The builder of the Eiffel Tower works to save it from demolition by demonstrating its usefulness as a site for cutting-edge scientific experiments.
- Smith, S. D. *The Green Ember*. Story Warren Books, 2014. Two sibling rabbits embark on an adventure to save their family and find their place in a world consumed by tragedy and promise. *Series*
- Stabler, David. *Kid Athletes: True Tales of Childhood from Sports Legends*. Quirk Books, 2015. Hilarious childhood biographies and full-color illustrations show how Tiger Woods, Gabby Douglas, Bruce Lee, Billie Jean King, and other budding sports champions faced kid-sized challenges growing up. *Series*
- Stead, Rebecca and Wendy Mass. *The Lost Library*. Feiwel and Friends, 2023. When a mysterious little free library guarded by a large orange cat appears overnight, eleven-year-old Evan plucks two weathered books from its shelves, never suspecting that his life is about to change.

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 3 and Grade 4

- Stone, Tanya Lee. *Pass Go and Collect \$200: The Real Story of How Monopoly Was Invented*. Holt, 2018. This exciting nonfiction picture book tells the bold and fascinating story behind one of the world's most beloved board games.
- Stremer, Jessica. *Great Carrier Reef*. Holiday House, 2023. A remarkable story chronicling the conversion of the aircraft carrier USS Oriskany from a thriving warship to the world's largest artificial reef.
- Tavares, Matt. *Crossing Niagara: The Death-Defying Tightrope Adventures of the Great Blondin*. Candlewick, 2016. An illustrated account of the daredevil of Niagara Falls, the Great Blondin, who walked from America to Canada across the Niagara River on a rope.
- Tavares, Matt. *Hoops*. Candlewick Press, 2023. Inspired by a true story, in 1976, Judi and her friends led the first girls' basketball team at their school in an undefeated season while creatively raising community support and fighting for equal treatment. *Graphic novel*
- Thomson, Sarah L. *Two Friends, One Dog, and a Very Unusual Week*. Peachtree, 2023. Strait-laced fifth grader Emily's world is turned upside down when a new neighbor and free spirit, Rani, moves in with her dog Otto.
- Tonatiuh, Duncan. *Soldier for Equality: José de la Luz Sáenz and the Great War*. Abrams Books, 2019. Sáenz, a Mexican American World War I hero, fought for equality and founded the oldest Latino civil rights organization in the United States.
- Turk, Evan. *You are Home: An Ode to the National Parks*. Atheneum, 2019. The beauty of all living things, animals, plants, and people is celebrated in rich verse and art in a coast-to-coast tour of the United States, emphasizing the precious nature of all life and experience.
- Wallace, Sandra Neil. *Between the Lines: How Ernie Barnes Went from the Football Field to the Art Gallery*. Simon & Schuster, 2018. The true story of NFL star Ernie Barnes, a man who pursued his lifelong dream of becoming an artist after his football career ended.
- Walsh, Jenni L. *Operation: Happy: A World War II Story of Courage, Resilience, and an Unbreakable Bond*. Zonderkidz, 2024. To keep her family together and deal with the impacts of World War II, a little girl and her best friend, her dog Happy, make a bucket list.
- Wang, Jen. *Stargazing*. First Second, 2019. Growing up in the same Chinese American suburb, perfectionist Christine and artistic, confident, impulsive Moon become unlikely best friends whose friendship is tested by jealousy, social expectations, and illness. *Graphic novel*
- Watson, Renée. *Ways to Make Sunshine*. Bloomsbury, 2020. Ten-year-old Ryan is learning that life means lots of changes, like moving, her father's new job, a frustrating older brother, and her best friend moving away, but Ryan makes sunshine out of it all, shining it back on those around her.
- Watson, Tom. *Trouble at Table Five: The Candy Caper*. HarperCollins, 2020. Molly, Simon, and Rosie will do anything to know how many candies are in Principal Shelton's jar. *Series*

**HASLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 3 and Grade 4**

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Compiled by:

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## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 5

*All book summaries are provided by the publisher or written by committee members.*

*Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.*

Albus, Kate. ***A Place to Hang the Moon***. Holiday House, 2021. In World War II England, orphaned siblings William, Edmund, and Anna are evacuated from London to live in the countryside, where they bounce from home to home in search of someone willing to adopt them permanently. *Historical fiction*

Amos, Shawn. ***Cookies & Milk***. Little, Brown, 2022. Eleven-year-old Ellis discovers family secrets, makes new friends, and adjusts to his parents' recent divorce during a hijinks-filled summer helping his father open the world's first chocolate chip cookie shop in 1976 Hollywood. *Historical fiction*

Bagley, Jessixa. ***Duel***. Simon & Schuster, 2023. Two sisters, Lucy and GiGi, navigate their rivalry and grief over their father's death, culminating in a high-stakes fencing duel that will either mend or further fracture their relationship. *Sports fiction, graphic novel*

Banbury, Steven. ***The Pumpkin Princess and the Forever Night***. Little, Brown, 2024. Attempting to escape from a terrible orphanage on Halloween, Eve is rescued by the Pumpkin King and taken to Hallowell, a secret community of the undead that faces a dark evil from within. *Scary, series*

Barnes, Derrick. ***Who Got Game? Baseball: Amazing but True Stories!*** Workman, 2020. This nonfiction book explores pivotal but lesser-known baseball players, such as Rube Foster, Hank Greenberg, Lizzie Murphy, and Sadaharu Oh, as well as a variety of sensational stories, radical records, and colossal comebacks. *Nonfiction*

Bertman, Jennifer Chambliss. ***Sisterhood of Sleuths***. Little, Brown, 2022. When twelve-year-old Maizy finds a box of vintage Nancy Drew books, along with an old photograph of three women, at her mom's thrift store, she starts to investigate on her own. *Mystery*

Bradley, Fleur. ***Midnight at the Barclay Hotel***. Viking, 2020. Five murder suspects are invited to the haunted Barclay Hotel for a weekend getaway, and it is up to twelve-year-old JJ and eleven-year-old Penny—and a lonely ghost—to figure out who committed the crime. *Mystery*

Calejo, Ryan. ***Charlie Hernández & the League of Shadows***. Aladdin, 2018. The chase is on after Charlie Hernández wakes up mysteriously sporting horns and feathers, which leads him to reexamine his abuela's tall tales of Latin American ghouls and monsters and to solve an ancient mystery that might be at the heart of his parents' disappearance. *Fantasy, series*

Calonita, Jen. ***Isle of Ever***. Sourcebooks, 2025. After moving to New England, Benny receives a surprise visit from a lawyer who informs her that she will inherit a vast estate from a relative, but only if she solves a series of riddles and finds an island that appears on no map. *Mystery, series*

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 5

- Cartaya, Pablo. *A Hero's Guide to Summer Vacation*. Kokila, 2025. After losing his dad, Gonzalo Alberto Sánchez García ends up on an epic cross-country road trip with his grumpy and reclusive abuelo, who also happens to be a famous fantasy author with an upcoming book launch party in Miami. *Action & Adventure, Pura Belpré Children's Author Honor Book*
- Chan, A.Y. *The Legendary Mo Seto*. Aladdin, 2024. Mo Seto can't wait to audition for a martial arts movie and meet her idol, but when she realizes her mom won't let her try out and that she is too short to qualify, she takes matters into her own hands and finds herself learning more about family secrets than she ever expected. *Action & Adventure, series*
- Chan, Ruth. *Uprooted: A Memoir About What Happens When Your Family Moves Back*. Roaring Brook, 2024. When Ruth Chan and her family relocate from Toronto to Hong Kong, her father's stories about family resilience help her navigate the upheaval. *Graphic memoir*
- Connor, Leslie. *Anybody Here Seen Frenchie?* Katherine Tegen, 2022. When eleven-year-old Aurora's best friend, Frenchie, an autistic boy, goes missing in coastal Maine, she sets out to find him. *Realistic fiction*
- Craft, Jerry. *New Kid*. Harper, 2019. Jordan Banks navigates his way through seventh grade as a new African American student at a prestigious school. *Realistic fiction, graphic novel, Newbery Medal*
- Day, Christine. *We Still Belong*. Heartdrum, 2023. Wesley's hopeful plans for Indigenous Peoples' Day (and asking her crush to the dance) go all wrong until she finds herself surrounded by the love of her family and community at the intertribal powwow. *Realistic fiction*
- Day, Nick. *The Mona Lisa Vanishes: A Legendary Painter, a Shocking Heist, and the Birth of a Global Celebrity*. Random House, 2023. This fast-paced true heist story explains how the theft of the Mona Lisa in 1911 made it the most famous painting in the world. *Nonfiction*
- Downing, Erin Soderberg. *When Life Gives You Lemons, Make Peach Pie*. Pixel + Ink, 2021. The Peach kids get a summer they didn't expect when their dad shows up with a food truck and an idea to help them bond after losing their mother. *Realistic fiction, series*
- Eggers, Dave. *The Eyes and the Impossible*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2023. Johannes, a free dog living in an urban park by the sea, acts as the "eyes" of the park and shares his findings with the three bison elders, but some major changes threaten to alter both the park and everything Johannes knows about himself. *Action & Adventure, Newbery Medal*
- Elliot, Laura. *Bea and the New Deal Horse*. Katherine Tegen, 2023. When thirteen-year-old Bea and her sister are abandoned by their father in 1929, they are taken in by a family friend in exchange for farm work and bond with a stubborn horse. *Historical fiction*

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 5

Glaser, Karina Yan. ***A Duet for Home***. Clarion, 2022. After sixth graders June and Tyrell form a friendship over a shared love of classical music in the homeless shelter where they live, they work to oppose the city government's harmful policies. *Realistic fiction*

Gratz, Alan. ***Ground Zero***. Scholastic, 2021. Brandon is visiting his dad on the 107th floor of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, when the attack comes. Reshmina is a girl in Afghanistan who has grown up in the aftermath of that attack but dreams of peace, becoming a teacher, and escaping her village and the narrow role that the Taliban believes is appropriate for women. Both are struggling to survive; both are changed forever by the events of 9/11. *Historical fiction*

Harrington, C.C. ***Wildoak***. Scholastic, 2022. Twelve-year-old Maggie's stutter makes school extremely hard, but life is changed forever when she finds Rumpus, an abandoned snow leopard, in a forest in Cornwall. *Historical fiction*

Hiranandani, Veera. ***The Night Diary***. Dial Books, 2018. Shy twelve-year-old Nisha, forced to flee her home with her Hindu family during the 1947 partition of India, tries to find her voice and make sense of the world falling apart around her by writing to her Muslim mother in the pages of her diary. *Historical fiction*

Holm, Jennifer L. ***The Lion of Mars***. Random House, 2021. A smart and curious boy named Bell lives on Mars with a small group of kids and adults, and when the adults start mysteriously getting sick, it is up to the kids to figure out how to help. *Science fiction*

Johnson, Varian. ***Twins***. Graphix, 2020. When best friends and twin sisters Maureen and Francine start sixth grade, they begin to grow apart and figure out who they are as individuals. *Realistic fiction, graphic novel*

Jurmain, Suzanne. ***Murder on the Baltimore Express: The Plot to Keep Abraham Lincoln from Becoming President***. Yellow Jacket, 2021. This book chronicles the amazing true story of Abraham Lincoln's cross-country train trip for his inauguration, which took Lincoln through some very hostile parts of the country with no protection and a deadly assassination threat. *Nonfiction*

Kadohata, Cynthia. ***Saucy***. Atheneum, 2020. When eleven-year-old Becca, a quadruplet, finds a sick pig on the side of the road, her life is changed forever. *Realistic fiction*

Kelly, Lynne. ***The Secret Language of Birds***. Delacorte, 2024. When Nina goes to an overnight summer camp in Texas for the first time, she navigates new friendships and learns how to protect rare whooping cranes. *Realistic fiction*

Kim, Jessica. ***Stand Up, Yumi Chung!*** Kokila, 2020. Comedy-loving Yumi Chung is faced with a moral dilemma when a case of mistaken identity grants her an exciting opportunity. *Humor*

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 5

- Korman, Gordon. ***Faker***. Scholastic, 2024. With a con artist father, Trey and his sister are in on the con, but when Trey takes an ethics class at his new school, he begins to question his father's schemes. *Realistic fiction*
- Landis, Matthew. ***National Archive Hunters: Capitol Chase***. Pixel + Ink, 2024. Ten-year-old twins Ike and Iris race to catch the thief stealing valuable historical artifacts before their family is framed for the crimes. *Mystery, series*
- Lee, Stacey. ***Winston Chu vs. the Whimsies***. Disney, 2023. Winston Chu saves the owner of a curiosities shop from a robbery, only to be gifted a broomstick and dustpan for his trouble—items that turn out to be more of a curse than a blessing when they sweep away important things, like his baby sister. *Fantasy, series*
- Leigh, Lindsey. ***The Dirt!: Wild Life Under the Soil's Surface***. Penguin, 2025. Dig into the soil and discover a vibrant ecosystem of underground flora and fauna. *Nonfiction*
- Leiren-Young, Mark. ***Octopus Ocean: Geniuses of the Deep***. Orca Book Publishers, 2025. Get to know the often-overlooked geniuses of the high seas – incredible octopuses! *Nonfiction*
- Lyll, Casey. ***Gnome Is Where Your Heart Is***. Greenwillow, 2023. Years ago, Grandpa Walt claimed he met an alien, and when his memory begins to fail him, his granddaughter Lemon decides to carry on the hunt, even though her dad is dead set against it. *Science fiction*
- Marks, Janae. ***From the Desk of Zoe Washington***. Katherine Tegen, 2020. Aspiring baker Zoe Washington reconnects with her father by writing letters to him while he is in prison. *Realistic fiction*
- Messner, Kate. ***History Smasher: Ancient Egypt***. Random House, 2025. Explore the truths and myths about the pharaohs, pyramids, and art of Ancient Egypt. *Nonfiction*
- Nielsen, Jennifer A. ***Words on Fire***. Scholastic, 2019. While Audra is on the run from Cossack soldiers and in search of her missing parents, she realizes the importance of the mission to save the Lithuanian language and culture and puts herself in danger to become part of the resistance in 1893 Russian-controlled Lithuania. *Historical fiction*
- Ponti, James. ***City Spies***. Aladdin, 2020. After hacking into the NYC juvenile justice system, Sara Martinez gets a surprise when a British secret agent rescues her from the detention center and takes her to a secret location in Scotland to join forces with four teenage spies on a mission to outwit an evil genius. *Action & Adventure, series*
- Reeves, Jordan, and Jen Lee Reeves. ***Born Just Right***. Aladdin, 2019. Though Jordan Reeves was born with a “little (left) arm,” her positive attitude and determination led her to invent a prosthetic arm

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 5

at a STEM summer camp and to establish the Born Just Right Foundation to help others fully engage in life. *Memoir*

Richards, Natalie D. *15 Secrets to Survival*. Delacorte, 2023. After disrupting a middle school competition, four classmates are forced to spend winter break together on a wilderness survival expedition that goes awry when their guide disappears. *Action & Adventure*

Rose, Caroline Starr. *The Burning Season*. Nancy Paulsen, 2025. When a wildfire breaks out in the Gila Mountains of New Mexico, Opal must face her fears of fire and use her new training as a lookout to save the forest and her family. *Action & Adventure*

Soontornvat, Christina. *The Last Mapmaker*. Candlewick, 2022. When twelve-year-old Sai joins a celebrated mapmaker as his assistant to chart the southern seas, it turns out she's on a much bigger and more dangerous adventure than she could have ever imagined. *Fantasy, Newbery Honor Book*

Standish, Ali. *The Improbable Tales of Baskerville Hall*. HarperCollins, 2023. Young Arthur Conan Doyle, of Sherlock Holmes fame, is offered a rare spot at the exclusive Baskerville Hall, where he becomes embroiled in a dangerous caper involving a secret society. *Mystery, series*

Sullivan, Tom. *Escape at 10,000 Feet: D.B. Cooper and the Missing Money*. Balzer + Bray, 2021. This gripping nonfiction account details the 1971 airplane hijacking, the only unsolved one in U.S. history. *Graphic nonfiction*

Warga, Jasmine, *A Rover's Story*. Balzer + Bray, 2022. Resilience, a Mars rover, begins to develop human-like feelings as it learns from the NASA scientists who assembled it. *Science fiction*

Warga, Jasmine. *A Strange Thing Happened in Cherry Hall*. Harper, 2024. Someone has stolen a painting from the Penelope L. Brooks Museum, where Rami Ahmed's mother works, supervising the cleaning crew. Will Rami be able to use the help of his classmate, a ghost, and a tortoise to solve the mystery and clear his mother's name? *Mystery*

Wilson, Misty. *Play Like a Girl: A Graphic Memoir*. Balzer + Bray, 2022. Seventh grade is hard enough, but being a girl who loves football creates even more challenges. *Graphic memoir*

Wolf, Allan. *The Day the Universe Exploded My Head: Poems to Take You into Space and Back Again*. Candlewick, 2019. This book of funny, informative poetry about our solar system includes dynamite illustrations and opportunities for readers to perform multi-part poems. *Poetry*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**

**Grade 5**

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## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 6

*All book summaries are provided by the publisher or written by committee members.*

*Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.*

Acampora, Paul. ***In Honor of Broken Things***. Dial Books, 2022. In an introduction-to-clay class, two boys and a girl meet and become friends, sharing an appreciation for art, football, family, and faith. *Realistic fiction*

Anderson, John David. ***The Greatest Kid in the World***. Walden Pond Press, 2023. When Zeke Stahls is chosen to participate in an online contest for the World's Greatest Kid, even though he often gets into trouble at school, Zeke must figure out how to be his best self to win the contest's large cash prize and help his struggling family pay their bills. *Humor*

Anderson, John David. ***Stowaway***. Walden Pond Press, 2021. To save his scientist father after their spaceship is attacked, Leo stows away on a strange ship full of mercenary space pirates and must decide who to trust--human or alien--to stay alive. *Science fiction, series*

Barone, Rebecca E.F. ***Mountain of Fire: The Eruption and Survivors of Mount St. Helens***. Holt, 2024. This narrative nonfiction account of the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens introduces readers to the scientists who tried to sound the alarm about the impending eruption, as well as those who tried to escape the violent blast. *Nonfiction*

Behar, Ruth. ***Letters from Cuba***. Nancy Paulsen, 2020. In 1938, eleven-year-old Esther joins her father in tropical Cuba, where they toil together to rescue the rest of their Jewish family from persecution in Poland. *Historical fiction*

Bridges, Ruby. ***This Is Your Time***. Delacorte, 2020. Written as a letter to the "young peacemakers of America," Civil Rights activist Ruby Bridges recalls her experience as the first Black student to integrate an all-white school in 1960s New Orleans. *Nonfiction*

Brown, Aly. ***The Last Unexplored Place on Earth: Investigating the Ocean Floor with Alvin the Submersible***. Feiwel and Friends, 2023. Dive miles down into the depths of the ocean with Alvin the Submersible, which has been used for everything from science exploration to shipwreck searching, while learning more about the last great frontier on Earth. *Nonfiction*

Bruchac, Joseph. ***Rez Dogs***. Dial Books, 2021. Malian is visiting her grandparents on the Wabanaki reservation when all travel stops, and she must quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Realistic fiction*

Carson, Mary Kay. ***Urban Coyotes***. Clarion, 2024. Scientists with the Urban Coyote Research Project in Chicago study how coyotes have adapted to urban areas and work to promote peaceful coexistence between humans and wildlife. *Nonfiction*

Christmas, Johnnie. ***Swim Team***. HarperAlley, 2022. Middle schooler Bree is not afraid of hard work, but she is afraid of swimming, so when she ends up in Swim 101 for her elective, she tackles this new

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 6

challenge with the help of an elderly neighbor and former swim team captain. *Realistic fiction, graphic novel*

Clayton, Dhonielle. ***The Marvellers***. Holt, 2022. Eleven-year-old Ella Durand is the first Conjuror to attend the Arcanum Training Institute, a magic school in the clouds, but when she falls under suspicion for helping a criminal escape prison, she must, with the help of her new friends and her growing powers, find a way to clear her family's name. *Fantasy, series*

Currie, Lindsay. ***The Mystery of Locked Rooms***. Sourcebooks, 2024. West, Hannah, and Sarah – known for their escape room prowess – enter an off-limits fun house to win the treasure hidden inside and to save Sarah's family's house from foreclosure. *Mystery, series*

Day, Nicholas. ***A World Without Summer: A Volcano Erupts, a Creature Awakens, and the Sun Goes Out***. Random House Studio, 2025. When Mount Tambora, a volcano in Indonesia, erupted in 1815, it caused catastrophic changes in the global climate. *Nonfiction, Robert F. Sibert Honor Book Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist*

Dobbs, Alda P. ***The Other Side of the River***. Sourcebooks, 2022. Twelve-year-old Petra Luna has escaped the Mexican Revolution and has arrived at a refugee camp in Texas, where she tries to build a new life with her abuelita, little sister, and baby brother. *Historical fiction, series*

Gemeinhart, Dan. ***Busted***. Holt, 2025. When twelve-year old Oscar Aberdeen finds out that he and his grandpa might be kicked out of their apartment in a retirement community, Oscar embarks on a wacky adventure to save his home. *Humor*

Gibbs, Stuart. ***Charlie Thorne and the Last Equation***. Simon & Schuster, 2019. The CIA forces twelve-year-old Charlotte "Charlie" Thorne, a rebellious genius, to use her code-breaking skills in an epic global chase to locate Einstein's last equation before dangerous agents discover it and unlock the solution to harnessing energy. *Action & Adventure, series*

Gidwitz, Adam. ***Max in the House of Spies***. Dutton, 2024. In 1939, after eleven-year-old Max is sent to London to escape the danger faced by Jewish children in Berlin, he sets out to become a British spy to help his family. *Historical fiction, series*

Gratz, Alan. ***Two Degrees***. Scholastic, 2022. Fire, ice, and flood create perilous situations for four kids who become committed to helping save the planet in this survival story. *Action & Adventure*

Hartman, Aubrey. ***The Undead Fox of Deadwood Forest***. Little, Brown, 2025. A silver-tailed fox, Clare, is content with his role as the guide of lost souls from Deadwood Forest to the Afterlife until a pesky badger shows up and turns everything upside down. *Fantasy, Newbery Honor Book*

Hiaasen, Carl. ***Wrecker***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2023. When fifteen-year-old Valdez Jones VIII, a.k.a Wrecker, unwittingly becomes entangled with a group of smugglers and grave robbers, he must deep-dive into their shady dealings to escape their twisted net. *Action & Adventure*

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 6

- Higuera, Donna Barba. *Alebrijes*. Levine Querido, 2023. In a barren, futuristic wasteland, thirteen-year-old Leandro is arrested and exiled for stealing and must work with other outcasts to save his sister and uncover dangerous lies told by the corrupt government. *Dystopian, series*
- Hopson, Nasuğraq Rainey. *Eagle Drums*. Roaring Brook, 2023. A young Iñupiat hunter survives an encounter with a magical eagle and gains cultural wisdom meant to strengthen his community. *Folklore*
- Jamieson, Victoria, and Omar Mohamed. *When Stars Are Scattered*. Dial Books, 2020. Brothers Omar and Hassan live together in a Kenyan refugee camp, and when Omar gets the opportunity for more education, he must make some tough decisions. *Graphic memoir, Schneider Family Honor winner*
- Johnson, Janet Sumner. *Final Word*. Pixel+Ink, 2023. Thirteen-year-old twins Hope and Gordon enter a spelling bee in a last-ditch effort to save their family from financial ruin, only to find themselves in a cut-throat competition to uncover a fortune and dark secrets about the wealthy relations they have never known. *Mystery*
- Johnson, Katherine. *Reaching for the Moon: The Autobiography of NASA Mathematician Katherine Johnson*. Atheneum, 2019. Katherine Johnson shares her account of helping to launch Apollo 11 with NASA during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. *Memoir*
- Kelly, Erin Entrada. *The First State of Being*. Greenwillow, 2024. When Ridge, a time-traveling teenager from the future, gets trapped in 1999, he befriends Michael, a lonely 12-year-old boy, and changes the course of their lives forever. *Science fiction, Newbery Medal*
- Kelly, Erin Entrada. *The Last Resort*. Scholastic, 2025. When Lila's estranged Grandpa Clem dies, she and her family move into his creepy Victorian Inn in Ohio, where she suddenly can see ghosts and must solve a supernatural murder. *Scary, series*
- Khan, Hena. *We Are Big Time*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2024. When ninth-grader Aliya moves from Florida to Wisconsin, she joins an all-girls basketball team at her Islamic school and learns about teamwork and her Muslim identity. *Sports fiction, graphic novel*
- Korman, Gordan. *Linked*. Scholastic, 2021. When swastikas start appearing at their middle school in a small Colorado town, three students work together to figure out their origin and create a project to unify their community. *Realistic fiction*
- Kuyatt, Meg Eden. *Good Different*. Scholastic, 2023. A neurodivergent girl named Selah learns to embrace her differences and seeks acceptance from her school after a challenging incident disrupts her life. *Realistic fiction, novel in verse, Schneider Family Book Award Honor Book*
- LeZotte, Ann Clare. *Show Me a Sign*. Scholastic, 2020. When Mary Lambert is kidnapped by a mad scientist who wants to study her deafness, she is pulled away from her home on Martha's Vineyard and is thrust into a world she does not understand. *Historical fiction, series*

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 6

- Lupica, Mike. ***Strike Zone***. Philomel, 2019. Twelve-year-old Nick García dreams of winning MVP of his summer baseball league, finding a cure for his sister, meeting his hero, and no longer living in fear of the government and ICE agents. *Sports fiction*
- Martin, Pedro. ***Mexikid***. Dial Books, 2023. Pedro Martin has grown up in the U.S. hearing stories about his legendary abuelito, but during a family road trip to Mexico, he connects with his grandfather and learns more about his own Mexican identity. *Graphic memoir, Newbery Honor Book, Pura Belpré Youth Illustration and Children's Author Award*
- McNicoll, Elle. ***Like a Charm***. Random House, 2023. When Ramya's estranged but beloved grandpa dies, family secrets begin to spill out, including that her grandpa believed in magic and that Ramya can see through the charms of both friendly and nefarious creatures. *Fantasy, series*
- Messner, Kate. ***The Trouble with Heroes***. Bloomsbury, 2025. After seventh-grader Finn knocks over a gravestone in a fit of anger, his punishment is to climb the 46 peaks of the Adirondacks, which leads to a summer of reflection and redemption. *Realistic fiction*
- Nabi, Zohra. ***The Kingdom Over the Sea***. McElderry Books, 2023. When Yara's mother dies, Yara carries out her mom's final wishes and travels to the magical world of Zehaira on a quest to discover the truth about her mother and her own identity. *Fantasy, series*
- Nannestad, Katrina, ***We Are Wolves***. Atheneum, 2022. At the end of World War II, as three siblings flee Russian soldiers, they become separated from their mother and face new dangers as they fight to survive. *Historical fiction*
- Nielsen, Jennifer A. ***Iceberg***. Scholastic, 2023. Twelve-year-old Hazel stows away aboard the Titanic and, with the help of a porter and a first-class passenger, sets out to explore the great ship, uncovering a haunting mystery, until the ship hits an iceberg and she must fight to save herself and her friends. *Historical fiction*
- Nielsen, Jennifer. ***One Wrong Step***. Scholastic, 2025. On the eve of WWII, Atlas Wade, a 14-year-old mountaineer, attempts to rescue his dad's climbing team after disaster strikes on Mount Everest. *Action & Adventure*
- Palacio, R.J. ***Pony***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2021. When twelve-year-old Silas sees his father taken by three outlaws in the middle of the night, he sets out on a long journey to find his dad, with a ghostly friend and a mysterious pony by his side. *Action & Adventure*
- Paulsen, Gary. ***Northwind***. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022. After sickness destroys his fishing village, orphan Leif flees in a cedar canoe on a journey along the coastline. *Action & Adventure*
- Preto, Nick Prau. ***The Last Hope School for Magical Delinquents***. Viking, 2024. When Vin, a magical delinquent, can't control her magic, she is given one final chance at The Last Hope School, where she and her classmates work to save their school from an evil force beyond their doors. *Fantasy, series*

## HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026

### Grade 6

- Riordan, Rick. ***Daughter of the Deep***. Disney-Hyperion, 2021. Ana Dakkar, a freshman at Harding Pencraft Academy, a high school that graduates the best marine scientists, naval warriors, navigators, and underwater explorers in the world, makes astounding discoveries about her heritage and puts her leadership skills to the test against deadly enemies from a rival school. *Fantasy*
- Rhodes, Jewell Parker. ***Will's Race for Home***. Little, Brown, 2025. In 1889, Will and his father leave Texas to stake a claim to land during the Oklahoma Land Rush, but they face many obstacles along the way. *Historical fiction, Coretta Scott King Author Award*
- Shayne, Ralph. ***Hour of Need: The Daring Escape of the Danish Jews During World War II***. Yellow Jacket, 2023. During World War II, the Danish Resistance worked bravely to save the Jewish population in Denmark by helping them evacuate to Sweden. *Graphic nonfiction*
- Sheinkin, Steve. ***Fallout: Spies, Superbombs, and the Ultimate Cold War Showdown***. Roaring Book, 2021. From espionage to weapons, this account of the Cold War delves into the battle for supremacy between the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1960s. *Nonfiction*
- Smith, Matthew Ross. ***The Million Dollar Race***. Aladdin, 2021. The Babblemoney Sneaker Company is hosting an international competition to discover the fastest kid in the world, and Grant Falloon, a track runner, badly wants to enter the competition, even though his parents never got him a legal birth certificate. *Sports fiction*
- Smith, Roland. ***Descent***. Houghton Mifflin, 2020. Peak Marcello and his infamous mountain-climbing father must navigate the mountains of Tibet to escape the Chinese government. *Action & Adventure, series*
- Sullivan, Tom. ***Jailbreak at Alcatraz: Frank Morris & the Anglin Brother's Great Escape***. Balzer + Bray, 2021. This true-crime nonfiction account highlights the unsolved case of how three inmates escaped Alcatraz in 1962. *Graphic nonfiction*
- Sumner, Jamie. ***One Kid's Trash***. Atheneum, 2021. When his father moves them halfway across Colorado, eleven-year-old Hugo "Shorts" O'Donnell is surprised that his remarkable talent for garbology makes him popular for the first time in his life. *Realistic fiction*
- Supplee, Suzanne. ***Sweetness All Around***. Holiday House, 2023. After Josephine's mother loses her business and they are forced to move, Josephine and her new friend Lisa Marie try to solve the mystery of a girl who was kidnapped from their trailer park. *Mystery, historical fiction*
- Thurman, Brittany J. ***Opal Watson: Private Eye***. Storytide, 2025. Amateur sleuth Opal returns home to Chicago from her summer in New Orleans to reports of strange noises in her apartment building and developers eyeing it as a teardown. *Mystery*
- Wolf, Allan. ***The Vanishing of Lake Peigneur: A Graphic Novel Based on a True Story***. Candlewick, 2025. This graphic nonfiction book explores a mining disaster on November 20, 1980, when a lake in Louisiana completely disappeared. *Graphic nonfiction*

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### Grade 6

Wolk, Lauren. *Candle Island*. Dutton, 2025. After the death of her father, Lucretia and her mom move to Candle Island, off the coast of Maine, where the locals don't get along with the summer residents and secrets abound. *Mystery*

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**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 7 and Grade 8**

*All book summaries are provided by the publisher or written by committee members.*

*Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.*

- Alkaf, Hanna. ***Queen of the Tiles***. Salaam Reads, 2022. A year after her best friend died at a Scrabble tournament, a flurry of social media posts from the dead girl's account prompts 15-year-old Najwa Bakri to investigate what happened to the "Queen of the Tiles." *Mystery, suspense*
- Allen, Crystal. ***Between Two Brothers***. Balzer + Bray, 2024. Isaiah is a 13-year-old whose strong bond with his brother, Seth, is tested when his brother (a promising athlete with a Texas A&M scholarship) is involved in a car wreck. Isaiah, his family, and the community provide hope in this heartfelt novel. *Realistic fiction*
- Anderson, Laurie Halse. ***Rebellion 1776***. Atheneum, 2025. Elsbeth Culpepper, a thirteen-year-old girl, works as a servant for a rambunctious family during Boston's fight for independence from the British. Abandoned by her father, she shows spirit and humor as she navigates the rising rebellion and a smallpox epidemic. *Historical fiction*
- Asimov, Isaac. ***The Stars, Like Dust***. First published in 1951. At the death of his father, Biron Farrill becomes involved in the plot to rebel against the Tyranni, who have conquered many worlds. *Classic science fiction, mystery, series*
- Avery, Annaliese. ***The Immortal Games***. Scholastic, 2024. Consumed with anger and vowing revenge after her sister's death, Ara trains for and then is chosen to participate in the Immortal Games (a competition between the gods); she and eleven others battle to survive a series of deadly challenges. *Fantasy*
- Baptiste, Tracey. ***Boy 2.0***. Algonquin, 2024. When 13-year-old Coal turns invisible after a scary encounter with the police, he immediately sets out to figure out what's happening to him and discovers some family secrets along the way. *Science fiction, series*
- Berry, Julie. ***Lovely War***. Viking, 2019. The Greek goddess Aphrodite recounts two tales of tragic love during World War I. She seeks to answer the age-old question: 'Why are Love and War eternally drawn to one another?' but her quest for a conclusion that will satisfy her jealous husband uncovers a multithreaded tale of prejudice, trauma, and music, revealing that War is no match for the power of Love. *Mythology, magical realism; the audiobook version is highly recommended*
- Bishop, Jenn. ***Free Throws, Friendship, and Other Things We Fouled Up***. Chronicle Books, 2023. Basketball player Rory has just moved to Cincinnati with her father, a Division 1 coach, when she hits it off with the rival college team's daughter, Abby. Still, their friendship is threatened when they realize their dads' rivalry goes deeper than on the court. *Sports fiction*
- Bowen, Fred. ***Hardcourt: Stories from 75 Years of the National Basketball Association***. McElderry Books, 2022. This basketball history presents an exciting overview of the players who made the NBA such a success and includes a brief history of the game's origins and evolution. *Nonfiction*
- Bowling, Dusti. ***The Beat I Drum***. Union Square Kids, 2025. When ninth-grader Connor starts over at a new high school, he has to make new friends, deal with tics caused by his Tourette's syndrome, and navigate family drama. *Realistic fiction, stand-alone in a series*

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**Grade 7 and Grade 8**

- Brashares, Ann and Ben Brashares. **Westfallen**. Simon & Schuster, 2024. In this dual-timeline novel, three kids in 1944 America connect (via radio) with three modern-day kids and inadvertently changed history, resulting in an America under Nazi control. *Science fiction, series*
- Bruchac, Joseph. **Voices of the People**. Reycraft Books, 2022. This collection of poems dramatizes the lives of men and women who contributed to Native American and Indigenous Peoples' histories, and contemporary Native American artworks provide fascinating connections to the poems. *Poetry*
- Choldenko, Gennifer. **The Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman**. Alfred A. Knopf, 2024. With no one else to turn to after being left alone by his mother in their apartment for a week with his three-year-old sister Boo, middle-schooler Hank has no choice but to ask an almost-stranger for help. *Realistic fiction*
- Deuker, Carl. **Shadowed**. Clarion, 2024. After always playing his family's favorite sport, soccer, as expected, Nate comes into his own as a basketball player and a person by playing on a team with his outcast neighbor, Lucas. *Sports fiction*
- DeVillers, Julia. **Meet me at Wonderland**. Aladdin, 2025. Coco is thrilled to be working for her family's amusement park for the summer, even if it means dressing up as the park's moose mascot, but the summer gets even more interesting when she meets a new hire named Henry. *Romance*
- Donnelly, Jennifer. **Stepsister**. Scholastic, 2019. Ella's stepsister, Isabelle, is deemed ugly, wicked, and doomed to a life of misery until she decides to take action to change her fate. *Classic retelling, fantasy*
- Elliott, David. **The Seventh Raven**. Clarion, 2021. A gripping retelling of the Grimms' fairy tale about seven brothers transformed into ravens and a young sister determined to find them and break the spell. Told in verse, the storytelling's rhythm takes on a haunting mood. *Novel in verse, fantasy*
- Fleming, Candace. **Crash from Outer Space: Unraveling the Mystery of Flying Saucers, Alien Beings, and Roswell**. Scholastic, 2022. A strange explosion and scattered debris in the desert outside Roswell, New Mexico leads to a series of UFO stories that escalate into conspiracy tales of government secrecy. *Narrative nonfiction, Margaret A. Edwards Award 2026*
- Freeman, Megan E. **Alone**. Aladdin, 2021. When she decides to have a secret sleepover, twelve-year-old Maddie is accidentally left behind when her whole town is evacuated, leaving her to fend for herself in a world without any other human beings. *Novel in verse, adventure, survival, has a companion novel*
- Goodwin, Doris Kearns, adapted by Ruby Shamir. **The Leadership Journey: How Four Kids Became President**. Simon & Schuster, 2024. The leadership qualities of four Presidents (Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson) are presented, with a discussion of how these individuals met leadership challenges during turbulent times. *Nonfiction*
- Gonzalez, Christina Diaz. **Concealed**. Scholastic, 2021. In this mystery thriller, Katrina and her family have been on the run for years. Still, with the help of a computer whiz named Parker, Katrina searches out the truth about her identity and the danger that has ensnared her family. *Mystery, science fiction*
- Greenwald, Tommy. **The Right Call**. Amulet Books, 2025. Pitcher phenomenon Cal Klondike's baseball career looks bright until it all goes wrong under the pressure of being the best. *Sports fiction, series*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 7 and Grade 8**

- Hale, Shannon. *Friends Forever*. First Second, 2021. Based on the author's own experiences as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, this graphic novel shows the stress of trying to be a "perfect" teenager and the path to self-acceptance and focusing on one's strengths. *Graphic memoir, stand-alone in a trilogy*
- Hardinge, Frances. *The Unraveller*. Amulet Books, 2023. Suspenseful with a dash of horror, this story features a youth who has the power to "unravel" curses; when he links up with a girl who was once cursed, they try to foil a devious organization's plot to gain power by controlling curses. *Dark fantasy*
- Henry, April. *Girl Forgotten*. Little, Brown, 2023. When seventeen-year-old Piper Gray starts a true crime podcast investigating a seventeen-year-old murder case, she puts her life in danger as she digs deep into the mysteries of the past. *Mystery, suspense*
- Higuera, Donna Barba. *The Last Cuentista*. Levine Querido, 2021. When the destruction of Earth by a comet is imminent, Petra Peña and her scientist parents, along with other selected humans, escape via starship. After being put into stasis, they expect to be cared for by volunteer monitors until their arrival on the habitable planet Sagan in 380 years, but things do not go as planned. *Science fiction, Newbery Medal 2022, Pura Belpré Author Award 2022*
- Hirsch, Rebecca E. *Where Have All the Birds Gone? Nature in Crisis*. Twenty-First Century Books, 2022. The bird crisis is explained through stories of extinct birds, as well as environmental hazards that endanger them. *Nonfiction*
- Hood, Susan. *Alias Anna: A True Story of Outwitting the Nazis*. HarperCollins, 2022. The true story of how young Ukrainian Jewish piano prodigies Zhanna and her sister Frina outplayed their pursuers while hiding in plain sight during the Holocaust. *Novel in verse, biography*
- Jackson, Tiffany D. *Blood in the Water*. Scholastic, 2025. When twelve-year-old Kaylani arrives on Martha's Vineyard with some family friends, she expects a summer of beaches, books, and bike rides, but instead, she finds herself trying to solve a murder mystery when a popular teenager is found dead. *Mystery*
- Jarrow, Gail. *Blood and Germs: The Civil War Battle Against Wounds and Disease*. Calkins Creek, 2020. Would you want to be a Civil War surgeon? Before modern medicine, injuries during the war were a grisly, life-and-death matter. Read about the heroes, leaders, and technology of the time in this colorful and surprising nonfiction title. *Nonfiction*
- Jarrow, Gail. *White House Secrets: Medical Lies and Cover-Ups*. Calkins Creek, 2025. The American president holds immense power worldwide, but this work explores the medical ailments that nine presidents have hidden from the American public. *Narrative nonfiction*
- Kelly, Erin Entrada, and Kwame Mbalia. *On Again, Awkward Again*. Amulet Books, 2025. Two teens survive family drama, friendship disasters, and peak awkwardness during their first year of high school—only to discover that sometimes everything going wrong leads to exactly the right person in this laugh-out-loud rom-com. *Romance*
- Kelly, Scott. *Endurance: My Year in Space and How I Got There*. Crown, 2018. Ever wonder what it is like to live in space? NASA astronaut Scott Kelly details his journey from a problem student to a fighter pilot, Space Shuttle commander, and yearlong inhabitant of the International Space Station. *Memoir*
- Korman, Gordon. *Slugfest*. Balzer + Bray, 2024. Considering he is already playing on the high school's JV football team, 8<sup>th</sup> grader Yash can hardly believe he's in summer school taking a PE class; soon, he bonds with other students over their slightly wacky former home economics teacher-turned-coach as

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**Grade 7 and Grade 8**

they compete in a citywide flag football tournament. *Sports, humorous fiction*

Langeland, Deirdre. ***Meltdown: Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Disaster in Fukushima***. Roaring Brook, 2021. It is March 11, 2011, and the fourth-largest earthquake ever measured creates a tsunami that not only hits northeast Japan but also results in the meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, one of the worst nuclear disasters on record. *Nonfiction*

Larsen, Mylisa. ***Playing through the Turnaround***. Clarion, 2022. Can a handful of jazz band students take a stand to help save student clubs and enrichment classes that are threatened by school budget cuts? *Realistic fiction*

Larson, Hope. ***Salt Magic***. Margaret Ferguson Books, 2021. Twelve-year-old Vonceil Taggart, willing to risk everything to set things right, leaves her family's Oklahoma farm in 1919, seeking the salt witch who cast a spell that turned their spring to saltwater. *Fantasy, historical fiction, Maverick Award 2023*

Lim, Elizabeth. ***Six Crimson Cranes***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2021. The exiled Princess Shiori must unravel the curse that turned her six brothers into cranes, and she is assisted by her spurned betrothed, a capricious dragon, and a paper bird brought to life by the power of her magic. *Fantasy, series*

Lin, Ann Sei. ***Rebel Skies***. Tundra Books, 2024. When the airship where Kurara lives is destroyed by a dangerous creature created by Crafters who can form and control paper, her life of servitude ends, but she also learns her best friend, Haru, is not who she thought he was. *Fantasy, series*

Marianayagam, Maria. ***No Purchase Necessary***. Harper, 2025. Ajay Anthonipillai, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at a new school, faces a choice when a stolen candy bar turns out to contain a million-dollar prize, forcing him to grapple with fitting in, helping his struggling family, and being true to himself. *Realistic fiction*

Marsh, Katherine. ***The Lost Year***. Roaring Brook, 2023. Struggling with loneliness during the pandemic shutdown, 13-year-old Matthew finds an old photo of his grandmother and starts to uncover family secrets about her experiences during the Holodomor (Ukrainian famine). *Historical fiction, National Book Award Finalist*

Meadows, Jodi. ***Bye Forever, I Guess***. Holiday House, 2024. When shy 8<sup>th</sup> grader Ingrid, who loves video games, fantasy books, and her popular, anonymous social media account, stands up to a mean “frenemy,” she inadvertently starts drama at school. *Realistic fiction, romance*

Mejia, Tehlor Kay. ***It Happened to Anna***. Delacorte, 2024. For as long as she can remember, Sadie has been haunted by a sinister ghost, so when she finds a new friend and her ghost disappears, she hopes her life will finally improve. *Horror*

Messner, Kate. ***Tracking Pythons: The Quest to Catch an Invasive Predator and Save an Ecosystem***. Millbrook, 2020. Wade through South Florida with scientists dedicated to finding and controlling the Burmese python population, an invasive species from Southeast Asia. This nonfiction title is full of photos and fascinating facts for snake and nature lovers, as well as just plain curious readers. *Nonfiction*

Monsef, Kiyash. ***Once There Was***. Simon and Schuster, 2023. When Marjan’s father, a veterinarian to magical creatures, dies, Marjan must take on his caseload and help preserve the world order. *Fantasy*

Morrison, Laurie. ***Keeping Pace***. Abrams Books, 2024. Grace and Jonah have an intense rivalry in school and on the running trail, but is always winning always worth it? *Realistic fiction*

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**Grade 7 and Grade 8**

- Newman, Patricia. ***Giant Rays of Hope: Protecting Manta Rays to Safeguard the Sea***. Millbrook, 2024. The magnificence of Giant Manta Rays is explored by combining fascinating science with an environmental message, showing how a single individual inspired a movement that began with educating children and the community. *Nonfiction*
- Nott, Dan. ***Hidden Systems: Water, Electricity, the Internet, and the Secrets Behind Systems We Use Every Day***. Random House Graphic, 2023. Discover the history, development, and engineering challenges posed by society's most essential infrastructures. *Nonfiction, graphic novel*
- Oh, Axie. ***The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea***. Feiwel & Friends, 2022. In this retelling of a Korean folktale, Mina is swept away to the spirit realm to awaken the sleeping sea god and save her family and homeland from deadly storms. *Fantasy*
- Oppel, Kenneth. ***Bloom: The Overflow***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2020. Anaya, Petra, and Seth race to save their family, friends, and island community against a mysterious, deadly plant invasion, only to discover that part of the mystery lies deep within themselves. *Science fiction, thriller, trilogy*
- Paulsen, Gary. ***Gone to the Woods: Surviving a Lost Childhood***. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021. In this riveting and inspiring memoir, the author of *Hatchet* and other wilderness survival stories tells his own true-life survival story beginning at age five and continuing through young adulthood. *Memoir*
- Ponti, James. ***The Sherlock Society***. Aladdin, 2024. Twelve-year-old Alex Sherlock and his friends spend their summer in Miami investigating the many "cold cases" their grandfather accumulated during his years as a reporter--first up, Al Capone and a buried treasure. *Mystery, series*
- Reynolds, Jason. ***Coach***. Atheneum, 2025. Set in the 1990s, all Otie Brody wants is to run track and try the long jump like his hero Carl Lewis, but worries arise when his dad and his prized Air Jordans go missing. *Sports fiction, series*
- Reynolds, Justin A. ***Miles Morales Shock Waves: A Spider-Man Graphic Novel***. Graphix, 2021. Except for having special powers such as turning invisible and shooting webs from his wrists, Miles is a normal kid juggling typical teenage problems, but when an earthquake hits his mother's hometown in Puerto Rico, and a classmate's father disappears, Miles must kick things into high gear. *Graphic novel, series*
- Rhodes, Jewell Parker. ***Black Brother, Black Brother***. Little, Brown, 2020. Biracial Donte and his brother attend Middlefield Prep, and Donte presents as black while his brother, Trey, presents as white. Their school experiences couldn't be more different, especially when Donte gets unjustly arrested. *Realistic fiction*
- Rundell, Katherine. ***Impossible Creatures***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2024. When the creatures of the Archipelago, a haven for magical beings, start dying, Christopher and Mal must race to save both the magical creatures and their entire world. *Fantasy, series*
- Sanderson, Brandon. ***Skyward***. Delacorte, 2018. Branded as the daughter of a coward after her father abandons his team and is killed in battle, young Spensa sets her sights on claiming the stars by becoming a pilot and seeking retribution for her father's death by taking on their age-old enemy, the Krell. *Science fiction, trilogy, novellas*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 7 and Grade 8**

- Sandler, Martin W. **1919: The Year That Changed America**. Bloomsbury, 2019. Sandler shows the many shockwaves hitting the country in 1919: the end of World War I and the resulting race riots, the Great Molasses Flood, the Red Scare, labor unrest, and the temperance movement all brought significant changes to American society. He compares those trends with what is happening now to show how history affects the current situation. *Nonfiction*
- Sandler, Martin W. **Shipwrecked! Diving for Hidden Time Capsules on the Ocean Floor**. Astra Young Readers, 2023. Three million shipwrecks lie beneath the waves, holding time capsules to human history. Explore seven wrecks and the people, technology, and marine archeology that goes into finding and recovering them. *Narrative nonfiction*
- Schmidt, Gary D. **The Labors of Hercules Beal**. Clarion Books, 2023. When Hercules Beal's teacher assigns him a project to explore the Twelve Labors of the mythological Hercules in real life, the seventh grader ends up learning a lot about himself and his community. *Realistic fiction*
- Schu, John. **Louder than Hunger**. Candlewick, 2024. Jake, a 13-year-old boy recently admitted into a treatment facility for anorexia nervosa, battles with the voice in his head urging him to eat less while learning to reconnect with what brings him joy, such as his grandmother, musical theater, and the poetry of Emily Dickinson. *Realistic fiction, Schneider Family Book Award Honor 2025*
- Schwab, V.E. **Gallant**. Greenwillow, 2022. Olivia Prior has grown up in Merilance School for Girls with no past except for her one treasure, her mother's journal so when a letter arrives inviting her to come home to the ruinous manor, Gallant, she seizes the chance to find out about her family. *Dark fantasy*
- Sepetys, Ruta. **The Bletchley Riddle**. Viking, 2024. Siblings Jakob and Lizzie find themselves at Bletchley Park, the home of WWII codebreakers working to decrypt the Nazi's Enigma cipher, where the two struggle to unravel a mystery surrounding their mother's disappearance against the backdrop of the Battle of Britain and Hitler's feared invasion. *Historical fiction*
- Sepetys, Ruta. **I Must Betray You**. Philomel, 2022. 17-year-old Cristian Florescu is forced to spy on an American ambassador's teenage son, but how does one survive in a Romanian society that is surrounded by suspicion and treachery? *Historical fiction*
- Sheinkin, Steve. **Bomb, Graphic Novel: The Race to Build and Steal the World's Most Dangerous Weapon**. Roaring Brook, 2023. Combining historical facts with the pacing of a thriller, this graphic novel adapts Sheinkin's award-winning book Bomb using three storylines—spies, sabotage, and scientific breakthroughs—leading up to the historic creation of the atomic bomb in Los Alamos, New Mexico. *Graphic novel, nonfiction*
- Siegel, Rebecca. **Loch Ness Uncovered: Media, Misinformation, and the Greatest Monster Hoax of all Time**. Astra Young Readers, 2024. The sightings and media frenzy surrounding the Loch Ness Monster are explored in this fast-paced story of the people and events that influenced the legends of Scotland's "monster." *Narrative nonfiction*
- Springer, Nancy. **Enola Holmes and the Black Barouche**. Wednesday Books, 2021. The witty, independent, and clever Enola Holmes jumps on a case with her older brother Sherlock Holmes when Flossie, the wife of the Earl of Dunhynch, is suspiciously reported dead. *Mystery, series*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 7 and Grade 8**

- Strange, Lucy. *Sisters of the Lost Marsh*. Chicken House, 2023. Willa Fernsby must navigate her family's future after her bitter Dadda, believing in the curse of the six daughters, gives her older sister Grace away in exchange for a horse just as the seasonal Full Moon Fayre arrives in town. *Mystery, Odyssey Audiobook Honor 2024*
- Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit, or, There and Back Again*. First published 1937. Bilbo Baggins, a respectable, well-to-do hobbit, lives comfortably in his hobbit-hole until the day the wandering wizard Gandalf chooses him to take part in an adventure from which he may never return. *Classic fantasy, series*
- Warga, Jasmine. *Other Words for Home*. Balzar + Bray, 2019. Jude and her mother flee Syria as violence erupts in neighboring towns. As Jude tries to navigate a new home, school, and friendships, she discovers inner courage as she becomes her own person. *Novel in verse, contemporary historical fiction, Newbery Honor 2020*
- Willis, Sarah Clawson. *Band Nerd*. HarperAlley, 2025. When 12-year-old Lucy starts at a new arts-focused middle school, she must navigate new friendships and band battles while dealing with problems at home. *Graphic novel*
- Wilson, Kip. *White Rose*. Verify, 2019. Based on true events, this novel in verse tells the compelling story of Sophie Scholl, an activist in World War II Nazi Germany who refused to be a bystander and instead risked everything to stand up against injustice. *Novel in verse, historical fiction*
- Wolf, Allan. *Junius Leak and the Spiraling Vortex of Doom*. Candlewick, 2025. Sent to stay on his uncle's houseboat in Louisiana while his parents "figure things out," Junius Leak finds a lot of surprises—pirates, feuds, and even a vanishing lake. *Adventure*
- Wolkenstein, M. Evan. *Turtle Boy*. Delacorte, 2020. Seventh-grader Will's Bar Mitzvah community service project, visiting an incurably ill older boy in the hospital, leads to a life-changing friendship for them and those around them. *Realistic fiction*
- Woodson, Jacqueline. *Remember Us*. Nancy Paulsen, 2023. The Bushwick neighborhood is known as "The Matchbox," because arsonists set fire to buildings. Sage is fighting her own "fires"—wanting to excel in basketball and torn between leaving neighborhood friends with the prospect of a fresh start by moving to a safer neighborhood. *Realistic fiction*
- Yang, Gene Luen. *Lunar New Year Love Story*. First Second, 2024. Like everyone else in her family, Val is unlucky in love and is convinced she is cursed until a chance encounter with a pair of lion dancers makes her reconsider her stance on love. *Graphic novel, romance*
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Compiled by:

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Ashleigh Manion, *Second Baptist School*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 7 and Grade 8**

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Aaryn Silva, *The Kinkaid School*

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**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 9 and Grade 10**

*All book summaries are provided by the publisher or written by committee members.*

*Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.*

- Abawi, Atia. ***A Land of Permanent Goodbyes***. Penguin, 2019. After their home in Syria is bombed, Tareq, his father, and his younger sister seek refuge, first with extended family in Raqqa and then abroad. *Realistic fiction*
- Azar, Kiera. ***Thorn Season***. Storytide, 2025. The royal debutante "Rose Season" has begun, forcing Alissa into a treacherous web of intrigue, danger, and unexpected love, where she must conceal her forbidden powers and survive long enough to discover who she truly wants to be. *Fantasy*
- Barnes, Jennifer. ***The Inheritance Games***. Little, Brown, 2020. Avery Grambs' fortunes change instantly when billionaire Tobias Hawthorne dies and leaves Avery virtually his entire fortune, but Avery has no idea why -- or even who Tobias Hawthorne is. *Mystery, series*
- Biles, Simone, with Michelle Burford. ***Courage to Soar: A Body in Motion, A Life in Balance***. Zondervan, 2016. Olympic gold medalist Simone Biles describes how she overcame early difficulties with the help of her family and God to realize her dream of becoming an elite gymnast. *Nonfiction*
- Bowen, Natasha. ***Skin of the Sea***. Random House, 2021. Transformed by the goddess Yemoja into a Mami Wati, an African mermaid charged with collecting the souls of those who die at sea, Simi goes against the gods to save a living boy, Kola, from drowning. *Fantasy, series*
- Brody, Jessica. ***The Chaos of Standing Still***. Simon Pulse, 2017. Ryn, eighteen, trapped by a massive blizzard in the Denver airport, meets some unique characters who help her cope with survivor's guilt on the first anniversary of her best friend's death. *Realistic fiction*
- Brooks, Nick. ***Promise Boys***. Holt, 2023. Everyone inside and outside the prestigious Urban Promise Prep School, a school for low-income students with college aspirations, has an opinion on who killed principal Moore, but J.B., Ramon, and Trey, the students and the main suspects, know things about the school and the principal that could upset everything. *Mystery*
- Chokshi, Roshani. ***The Gilded Wolves***. Wednesday Books, 2019. Paris, 1889: In this city, no one keeps tabs on secrets better than treasure hunter and wealthy hotelier Séverin Montagnet-Alarie. But when the all-powerful society, the Order of Babel, seeks him out for help, Séverin is offered a treasure that he never imagined: his true inheritance. *Fantasy, series*
- Collins, Suzanne. ***Sunrise on the Reaping***. Scholastic, 2025. During the 50th Hunger Games Quarter Quell, twice as many tributes are taken, and when Haymitch Abernathy is chosen from District 12, he is torn from the girl he loves and forced into a brutal arena where he realizes he's been set up to fail but decides to fight in a way that will echo far beyond the Games. *Science fiction, dystopia, series*
- Crews, James, ed. ***How to Love the World: Poems of Gratitude and Hope***. Storey, 2021. This poetry collection invites you to be still for a moment and reflect on the beauty and joy found, no matter what is going on in your life. *Poetry*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 9 and Grade 10**

- Crouch, Blake. ***Recursion: A Novel***. Crown, 2019. When investigating a suicide, New York City police officer Barry Sutton discovers an outbreak of a memory-altering disease caused by a new technology created to preserve treasured memories. *Science fiction*
- Dass, Sarah. ***Where the Rhythm Takes You***. Balzer + Bray, 2021. Set in Trinidad and Tobago and loosely based on Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, it is a story about second-chance love, loss, and finding one's way. *Romance*
- Dayton, Arwen Elys. ***Stronger, Faster, and More Beautiful***. Delacorte, 2018. Six interconnected stories in near-future and far-future settings explore how far humans will go to stand out while continuing to fit in on the path to perfection. *Science fiction*
- Doty, James R. ***Into the Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart***. Penguin, 2016. James Doty, a distinguished neurosurgeon, reflects on his impoverished childhood, his alcoholic father, and his career in medicine to show readers how it is fundamentally possible to change the thinking patterns in one's brain. *Nonfiction*
- Ewing, Eve L. ***Electric Arches***. Haymarket, 2017. A visually explosive collection of poetry and narrative prose that explores black girlhood and womanhood. *Alex Award 2018, poetry*
- Faizal, Hafsa. ***A Tempest of Tea***. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2024. Arthie Casimir, a criminal mastermind, transforms her tearoom into an illegal bloodhouse for vampires, but when her establishment is threatened, she forms an unlikely alliance and assembles a misfit crew to infiltrate vampire society and uncovers a world-threatening conspiracy. *Fantasy, series*
- Forna, Namina. ***The Gilded Ones***. Delacorte 2021. When sixteen-year-old Deka undergoes the Ritual of Purity, everything goes disastrously wrong as her blood runs gold—the mark of impurity. Forced to choose between certain death or joining the emperor's army of elite alaki warriors, who defend the empire from the terrifying death shrieks, Deka soon discovers that nothing is as it appears. *Fantasy, series*
- Garber, Stephanie. ***Once upon a Broken Heart***. Flatiron Books, 2021. Desperate to stop her beloved from marrying another, sixteen-year-old Evangeline Fox strikes a deal with the mythic Prince of Hearts, leading her down a dangerous path that may ultimately end in her destruction. *Fantasy, series*
- Gervais, Alison. ***The Silence Between Us***. Blink, 2019. Deaf teen Maya Harris must navigate a new life and love in this #OwnVoices novel. When Maya is forced to attend a hearing school, she sets out to prove that her lack of hearing will not stop her from pursuing her dreams. *Realistic fiction*
- Grace, Adalyn. ***All the Stars and Teeth***. Imprint, 2020. Princess Amora Montara has spent her entire life training to be High Animancer—the master of souls. To secure her place as heir to the throne, she must prove her mastery of the monarchy's dangerous soul magic. She strikes a deal with Bastian, a mysterious pirate: he'll help her prove she's fit to rule if she'll help him reclaim his stolen magic. But sailing the kingdom holds more wonder—and more peril—than Amora anticipated. *Fantasy*
- Gray, Ayana. ***Beasts of Prey***. Putnam's, 2021. Sixteen-year-old indentured Beastkeeper Koffi and seventeen-year-old warrior candidate Ekon forge an unusual alliance and venture into the Greater Jungle to hunt down a monster that has been menacing their city for a century. *Fantasy, series*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 9 and Grade 10**

- Grolleau, Fabien. *Audubon: On the Wings of the World*. Nobrow, 2017. In the early 1800s, John James Audubon, an ornithologist, traversed America studying birds. Despite challenging weather and wildlife, he persevered to create beautiful illustrations that are still admired today. *Graphic novel*
- Harrow, Alix E. *The Ten Thousand Doors of January*. Orbit, 2019. A young woman embarks on a fantastical journey of self-discovery with the help of a mysterious book, good friends, and a bad dog. *Fantasy, historical fiction*
- Hitchcock, Bonnie-Sue. *The Smell of Other People's Houses*. Wendy Lamb, 2016. In quite possibly the best-titled novel in recent years, this redemptive coming-of-age story is told by four unique teen voices living in 1970s Alaska. *Historical fiction*
- Hunter, C. C. *This Heart of Mine: A Novel*. Wednesday Books, 2018. After a heart transplant, seventeen year-old Leah is plagued with dreams of the donor's suicide . . . or was it murder? Leah sets out to unravel the secret with the help of the donor's twin brother. *Realistic fiction*
- Ibañez, Isabel. *What the River Knows*. Wednesday Books, 2023. Set in 1884, nineteen-year-old Inez travels to Egypt after the sudden death of her parents to uncover the truth about their deaths, and as she attempts to unravel the mysteries her parents sought, she becomes a pawn in a larger game that threatens to kill her. *Fantasy, historical fiction, series*
- Katz, Jon. *Saving Simon: How a Rescue Donkey Taught Me the Meaning of Compassion*. Random House, 2015. In this heartfelt, thoughtful, and inspiring memoir, the author tells the story of his beloved rescue donkey, Simon, and the wondrous ways that animals make us wiser and kinder people. *Nonfiction*
- Klune, TJ. *The House in the Cerulean Sea*. Tor Books, 2020. A magical island. A dangerous task. A burning secret. Linus Baker lives in a tiny house with a devious cat and his old records. As a Case Worker at the Department in Charge of Magical Youth, he spends his days overseeing the well being of children in orphanages. He is unexpectedly given a curious and highly classified assignment: travel to Marsyas Island Orphanage, where six dangerous children reside. *Alex Award 2021, fantasy*
- Kooser, Ted. *Delights & Shadows: Poems*. Copper Canyon Press, 2004. This collection of poems by a former Poet Laureate of the United States describes the habits and struggles of daily life. *Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry 2005, poetry*
- Krosoczka, Jarrett. *Hey, Kiddo*. Graphix, 2018. In his deeply personal graphic novel memoir, Krosoczka illustrates the devastating impact his mother's addiction had on his childhood and how his supportive grandparents and his love of art ultimately saved his life. *Harvey Award, Black-Eyed Susan Award, graphic novel*
- Lee, Shannon, and Fonda Lee. *Breath of the Dragon*. Wednesday Books, 2025. Sixteen-year-old Jun, determined to restore his father's honor despite not being breathmarked, secretly enters the elite Guardian's Tournament, where he discovers he is fighting for the country's fate. *Fantasy*
- Lee, Stacey. *The Downstairs Girl*. Putnam's, 2019. Set in 1890, seventeen-year-old Jo Kuan serves as a lady's maid to the harsh Caroline Payne, the daughter of one of Atlanta's wealthiest men. In secret, she writes an advice column for high-society women under the pen name "Miss Sweetie." *Historical fiction*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 9 and Grade 10**

- Lim, Elizabeth. ***Six Crimson Cranes***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2021. The exiled Princess Shiori must unravel the curse that turned her six brothers into cranes. She is assisted by her spurned betrothed, a capricious dragon, and a paper bird brought to life by her own magic. *Fantasy*
- Limón, Ada. ***The Hurting Kind: Poems***. Milkweed Editions, 2022. Beautiful, simple language brings to life profound thoughts about life and our connections to self, others, and the world of nature we live within. *Poetry*
- Little Badger, Darcie. ***A Snake Falls to Earth***. Levine Querido, 2021. Fifteen-year-olds Nina and Oli come from different worlds--she is a Lipan Apache living in Texas, and he is a cottonmouth from the Reflecting World--but their lives intersect when Oli journeys to Earth to find a cure for his ailing friend, and they end up helping each other save their families. *Newbery Honor Book 2022, fantasy*
- Lowham, Elizabeth. ***Casters and Crowns***. Shadow Mountain, 2024. After Crown Princess Aria attempts to prevent war by negotiating with the magic-wielding Widow Morton, her failed bargain leaves her cursed to endure one hundred sleepless days that will end in her death—unless the charming Baron Reeves can break the spell. *Fantasy*
- Lucier, Makiia. ***Dragonfruit***. Clarion, 2024. Exiled after her father steals a legendary seadragon egg, Hanalei returns home years later, crossing paths with Prince Sam, who seeks a cure for his ailing mother. As they battle enemies and search for redemption, they discover the greatest danger may be the dragonfruit itself. *Fantasy*
- Marquis, Kristen. ***The Davenports***. Dial Books, 2023. The Davenports are one of the few Black families of immense wealth and status in 1910 Chicago, and the two daughters, Olivia and Helen, are finding their way and finding love--even where they are not supposed to. *Historical fiction*
- Méndez, Yamile Saied. ***Furia***. Algonquin, 2020. Seventeen-year-old Camila Hassan, a rising soccer star in Rosario, Argentina, dreams of playing professionally, in defiance of her father's wishes and at the risk of her budding romance with Diego. *Pura Belpre Author Award, 2021, realistic fiction*
- McGee, Katharine. ***American Royals***. Random House, 2019. An exciting glimpse into a speculative future where the heirs of George Washington reign in a court filled with intrigue, drama, and romance. *Romance, series*
- McNamee, Graham. ***Defender***. Wendy Lamb, 2016. Seventeen-year-old Tyne and her boyfriend Stick investigate a decades-old murder after she finds the body of a girl in the basement wall of her apartment building. *Mystery*
- McWilliams, Kelly. ***Mirror Girls***. Little, Brown, 2022. Biracial twin girls are separated at birth, one is white-passing. They reunite as teenagers in the 1950s in the state of Georgia and must navigate the horrors and ghosts of the past to end the family curse. *Historical fiction*
- Menon, Sandhya. ***When Dimple Met Rishi***. Simon Pulse, 2017. When Dimple Shah and Rishi Patel meet at a Stanford University summer program, Dimple is avoiding her parents' obsession with "marriage prospects," but Rishi hopes to woo her into accepting an arranged marriage with him. *Realistic fiction*
- Meyer, Marissa. ***Gilded***. Feiwel and Friends, 2021. After saving two magical maidens from the hellhounds of Erlking, Serilda, a poor miller's daughter with a talent for storytelling, is abducted by the demon and whisked away to his castle, where she is ordered to spin straw into gold, which she cannot do until a mysterious young man offers to help for a price. *Fantasy, series*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 9 and Grade 10**

- Montgomery, Sy. *The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness*. Atria Books, 2015. Explores the emotional and physical world of the octopus, a surprisingly complex, intelligent, and spirited creature -- and the remarkable connections it makes with humans, revealing what octopuses can teach us about consciousness. *Nonfiction*
- Moulite, Maika, and Maritza Moulite. *Dear Haiti, Love Alaine*. Inkyard Press, 2019. After an incident at school, seventeen-year-old Alaine is spending spring break in a "volunteer immersion project," toiling away under the ever-watchful eyes of Tati Estelle and her eagle-eyed mother at a new nonprofit in Haiti. *Realistic fiction*
- Nazemian, Abdi. *The Authentics*. HarperCollins, 2017. Daria, an Iranian-American teenager, is tired of the sameness of the school cliques, so she and her friends form the Authentics because they are unique and real. When a school project forces her to trace her family roots, unexpected secrets emerge. *Realistic fiction*
- Otis, Cindy L. *True or False: A CIA Analyst's Guide to Spotting Fake News*. Feiwel and Friends 2020. In *True or False*, former CIA analyst Cindy Otis takes readers through the history and impact of fake news over the centuries, sharing stories from the past and insights that readers today can gain from them. *Nonfiction*
- Pandian, Gigi. *Under Lock & Skeleton Key*. Minotaur, 2022. Following an accident, Tempest Raj returns home seeking the comfort and familiarity of family. While visiting a project for her family's renovation business, the body of Tempest's former stage double is discovered. Believing she was the intended target, Tempest is determined to unravel the mystery of this unsolvable crime. *Mystery, series*
- Padian, Maria. *How to Build a Heart*. Algonquin, 2020. When Izzy Crawford's father, a marine, dies in Iraq, her family moves to Virginia where she attends a private school on a scholarship. Fortunately, her family is selected for a new home by Habitat for Humanity, near where the very attractive Sam lives. Izzy grapples with accepting this new opportunity without leaving behind her old neighbor and best friend just when she's needed most. *Realistic fiction*
- Park, Patricia. *What's Eating Jackie Oh?* Crown, 2024. A Korean American teen defies her family's cultural expectations and immerses herself in the competitive cooking world. Read along for a story set in NYC with a feast of tv drama and side of domestic discoveries. *Realistic fiction*
- Pessl, Marisha. *Darkly*. Delacorte, 2024. "Dia" Gannon has long admired Louisiana Veda, the genius behind Darkly, a game company with a loyal fanbase. So, when Dia is unexpectedly selected for a highly competitive internship alongside six other teens from around the world, she's taken aback. She has never been the type of person who wins anything. Could it be too good to be true? *Mystery*
- Reynolds, Jason. *Ain't Burned All the Bright*. Atheneum, 2022. A smash-up of Jason Reynold's poetry and Jason Griffin's art that reflects upon our need for oxygen and what it means to breathe post pandemic. *Caldecott Honor Book 2023, Poetry and Art*
- Reynolds, Justin A. *Opposite of Always*. Katherine Tegen, 2019. Jack King, a high school senior, is determined to save Kate, a girl he fell hard for at a party, even though he is caught in a time loop in which she dies, and he wakes up the moment they first met. *Realistic fiction*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 9 and Grade 10**

- Roat, Sharon Huss. *How to Disappear*. HarperTeen, 2017. When Vicki's best friend moves away, she is consumed by loneliness and anxiety until, on a whim, she invents an Instagram account that forces her out of the shadows. *Realistic fiction*
- Roux, Madeleine. *A Girl Walks into the Forest*. Quill Tree Books, 2025. A journey through the dangerous Gottyar Wood on her way to marry a mysterious count leaves Valla disfigured and rejected, forcing her to find inner strength to survive and reclaim her life. *Fantasy, horror*
- Saedi, Sara. *Americanized: Rebel Without a Green Card*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2018. In this memoir set in the 1990s, teenage Sara keeps a diary of life as an Iranian American and her discovery that she and her family entered the United States as undocumented immigrants. *Nonfiction*
- Sedoti, Chelsea. *The Hundred Lies of Lizzie Lovett*. Sourcebooks, 2017. Seventeen-year-old Hawthorn, an endearing and awkward loner, becomes obsessed with the mysterious disappearance of the beautiful and popular Lizzie Lovett. *Mystery*
- Sepetys, Ruta. *The Fountains of Silence*. Philomel, 2019. At the Castellana Hilton in 1957 Madrid, eighteen-year-old Daniel Matheson connects with Ana Moreno through photography - and fate as Daniel discovers the incredibly dark side of the city under Generalissimo Franco's rule. *Historical fiction*
- Sharma, Nisha. *Radha & Jai's Recipe for Romance*. Crown, 2021. While attending the Princeton Academy of the Arts, dancer Radha is determined to invent herself from scratch and, after much convincing, helps Jai, the captain of the Bollywood Beats dance team, have a show-stopping senior year. *Realistic fiction*
- Sheinkin, Steve. *Impossible Escape: A True Story of Survival and Heroism in Nazi Europe*. Roaring Brook, 2023. From award-winning author Steve Sheinkin, a true story of two Jewish teenagers racing against time during the Holocaust--one in hiding in Hungary, and the other in Auschwitz, plotting escape. *Nonfiction*
- Shepherd, Peng. *The Cartographers*. William Morrow, 2022. When Nell's father is found dead in the New York Public Library, she sets out on a dangerous journey to uncover dark family secrets with the help of a mysterious, magical map. *Thriller, magical realism*
- Shusterman, Neal. *Scythe*. Simon & Schuster, 2016. In a Utopian world where there is no war, no unhappiness, and the creation of nanites has eliminated death, overpopulation is the only challenge facing the world. Scythes have been given the power to selectively kill or "glean" the population to keep growth in check. Rowan and Cirta, the newly selected apprentice scythes, internally struggle with "gleaning" and find that the world is no utopia. *Science fiction, series*
- Smith, Colby Cedar. *Call Me Athena: Girl from Detroit*. Andrews McMeel, 2021. This enchanting novel in verse captures one woman's struggle for equality, independence, and identity as a Greek immigrant in troubled 1930s America. *Historical fiction, novel in verse*
- Stevenson, Noelle. *Nimona*. HarperTeen, 2015. Nimona, a young shapeshifter with a knack for villainy, and Lord Ballister Blackheart, a villain with a vendetta, set out to prove that Sir Ambrosius Goldenloin and his friends are not the heroes everyone thinks they are. But Lord Blackheart soon realizes that Nimona's powers are as murky and mysterious as her past, and her unpredictable wild side might be more dangerous than he is willing to admit. *Eisner Award for Best Graphic Album 2016, graphic novel*

**HAI SLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 9 and Grade 10**

- Stone, Nic. ***Dear Martin***. Crown, 2017. Writing letters to the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., seventeen-year-old college-bound Justyce McAllister struggles to face the reality of race relations today and how they are shaping him. *William C. Morris Award Finalist, realistic fiction, series*
- Takei, George. ***They Called Us Enemy***. Top Shelf Productions, 2019. Actor George Takei, best known for his role as Hikaru Sulu on *Star Trek*, reveals how, at the age of five, his family was forced into Japanese-American internment camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. *Asian/Pacific American Award for Young Adult Literature 2020, graphic memoir*
- Tamani, Liara. ***All the Things We Never Knew***. Greenwillow, 2020. Carli and Rex have an immediate connection and an understanding that must mean first love, but family secrets, disappointments, and basketball, which holds center stage in both their lives, all create complications. *Realistic fiction*
- Taylor, Emily. ***The Otherwhere Post***. Putnam, 2025. To investigate her father's past crimes, eighteen-year-old Maeve poses as a scriptomancy apprentice, which allows her to send letters between worlds. *Fantasy, mystery*
- Treuer, Anton. ***Where Wolves Don't Die***. Levine Querido, 2024. Ezra Cloud, an Ojibwe boy living in Northeast Minneapolis, is sent to a remote part of Canada to live and work with his grandfather after the local bully's house burns down and Ezra is named the prime suspect. *Minnesota Book Award, American Indian Youth Literature Honor 2026, realistic fiction*
- West, Jacqueline. ***Last Things***. Greenwillow, 2019. Anders Thorson, frontman of his metal band, Last Things, is unusually gifted, but strange things in the Minnesota woods near his hometown are threatening him, and then Thea, the new girl in town, shows up to protect him. *Horror, fantasy*
- Yang, Gene Luen. ***Dragon Hoops***. First Second, 2020. At the high school where Gene now teaches, the men's varsity basketball team, the Dragons, is having a phenomenal season that's been decades in the making. Each victory brings them closer to their ultimate goal: the California State Championships. Once Gene gets to know these young all-stars, he realizes that their story is just as thrilling as anything he's seen on a comic book page. *Graphic novel*
- Yang, Gene Luen. ***Superman Smashes the Klan***. D.C. Comics, 2020. When Dr. Lee moves his family to Metropolis, his son Tommy adjusts to the new neighborhood while his daughter Roberta feels out of place, so when the evil Klan of the Fiery Cross begins a string of terrorist attacks on the city, Superman fights them, and Roberta and Tommy soon learn to embrace the unique features that set them apart. *Graphic novel*
- Yoon, Nicola. ***Instructions for Dancing***. Delacorte, 2021. After picking up a book from the library, Evie, who has given up on love, gains the ability to see how other people's romantic relationships will end. *Realistic fiction, romance*
- Zentner, Jeff. ***In the Wild Light***. Crown, 2021. Attending an elite prep school in Connecticut on scholarship with his best friend from their small town in East Tennessee (and secret love), science genius Delaney Doyle, sixteen-year-old Cash Pruitt, deals with emotional pain and loss by writing poetry. *Realistic fiction*

**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 9 and Grade 10**

Zoboi, Ibi, and Yusef Salaam. *Punching the Air*. HarperCollins, 2020. Amal Shahid has always been an artist and a poet. But even in a diverse art school, he's seen as disruptive and unmotivated because of a biased system. Then, one fateful night, an altercation in a gentrifying neighborhood escalates into tragedy. "Boys just being boys" turns out to be true only when those boys are white. *Walter Award, Novel in verse*

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**HAISLN RECOMMENDED READING LIST 2026**  
**Grade 11 and Grade 12**

*All book summaries are provided by the publisher or written by committee members.*

*Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.*

- Acevedo, Elizabeth. ***With the Fire on High***. HarperTeen, 2019. Teen mother Emoni Santiago struggles to finish high school while pursuing her dream of becoming a chef. *Realistic fiction*
- Allen, Sarah Addison. ***Other Birds***. St. Martin's Press, 2022. When Zoey comes to claim her deceased mother's apartment on Mallow Island, she meets her quirky and secretive neighbors, including a girl on the run, two estranged middle-aged sisters, a lonely chef, a legendary writer, and three ghosts. *Realistic fiction*
- Arden, Katherine. ***The Bear and the Nightingale***. Del Rey, 2017. After Vasilisa's new stepmother forbids her family from honoring the household spirits at the edge of the wilderness in medieval Russia, misfortune stalks the village and evil creatures of the forest creep nearer. *Fantasy, series*
- Bardugo, Leigh. ***The Familiar***. Flatiron. 2024. In 16th-century Madrid, Luzia, a young kitchen servant, secretly uses magic to cope with her difficult circumstances while dreaming of a better life. When her magic is discovered, she's drawn into a competition where she must rely on her wits and an immortal familiar to survive the contest, the Spanish Inquisition, and a world where everyone has a secret agenda. *Fantasy*
- Bauermeister, Erica. ***The Scent Keeper***. St. Martin's Press, 2020. Growing up on a small island that only she and her father inhabit, Emmeline longs to understand the mysterious scents her father has stored in the little drawers lining the cabin walls. After her father's sudden death, Emmeline must learn to live in the real world and face secrets from her father's past. *Realistic fiction*
- Bennett, Brit. ***The Vanishing Half***. Riverhead Books, 2020. The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical, but after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different; it's everything. Ten years later, one sister lives with her black daughter in the same town she once tried to escape. The other secretly passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. Still, their fates remain intertwined. *Historical fiction*
- Boulley, Angeline. ***Firekeeper's Daughter***. Holt, 2021. Daunis, who is part Ojibwe, puts her college dreams on hold at the University of Michigan to care for her mother and reluctantly becomes involved in the investigation of a series of drug-related deaths. *American Indian Youth Award 2022, Printz Award 2022, William C. Morris Award 2022, mystery, series*
- Boulley, Angeline. ***Warrior Girl Unearthed***. Holt, 2023. Perry Firekeeper-Birch gets more than she bargained for during a summer internship when she is propelled into a mystery involving the disappearance and murder of Indigenous women and a heist to repatriate the remains of her tribal ancestors. *Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards 2023, mystery, series*
- Cameron, Sharon. ***Bluebird***. Scholastic, 2021. In 1946, teen Eva travels from the rubble of Berlin to America to seek justice and find the Nazi behind a horrific experiment called Project Bluebird. *Historical fiction*

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- Choo, Yangsze. ***The Night Tiger***. Flatiron, 2019. In 1930s Malaysia, a plucky dance-hall girl longing for adventure and a young houseboy seeking to fulfill his dead master's dying wish cross paths over the discovery of a severed finger that is shrouded in Chinese superstition and that may be connected to a series of grisly "tiger" attacks. *Historical fiction*
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi. ***The Water Dancer***. Random House, 2019. Hiram Walker lost his mother and all memory of her when he was a child, but he is gifted with a mysterious power. Hiram almost drowns but is saved from the depths by a force, a blue light that lifts him and lands him a mile away. So begins an unexpected journey into the covert war on slavery that takes Hiram from the corrupt grandeur of Virginia's plantations to desperate guerrilla cells in the wilderness, from the coffin of the deep South to dangerously idealistic movements in the North. *Historical fiction*
- Contreras, Ingrid Rojas. ***Fruit of the Drunken Tree***. Doubleday, 2018. Two girls, one rich and one the maid of the rich girl's family, become friends despite their backgrounds and the violence that surrounds them in Colombia during the 1990s. *Historical fiction*
- Crane, Rebekah. ***The Upside of Falling Down***. Skyscape, 2018. Struggling with amnesia after surviving a plane crash, Clementine Haas escapes from the hospital where her father sits in the waiting room. She decides to abandon her old identity and hide out in the sleepy town of Waterville, Ireland, as she searches for herself in the company of Kieran O'Connell. *Realistic fiction*
- Deonn, Tracy. ***Legendborn***. McElderry Books, 2020. To discover the truth behind her mother's mysterious death, a teenage girl infiltrates a magical secret society called the Legendborn, which claims to be the descendants of King Arthur and his knights. *Coretta Scott King-John Steptoe Award for New Talent 2021, Ignite Award-Young Adult-Best Novel 2021, NCETA Ragan-Rubin Award for Literary Achievement 2021, fantasy*
- Dimaline, Cherie. ***The Marrow Thieves***. Cormorant Books, 2017. Frenchie, an orphan from the Métis tribe, and his found family members have been on the run from the Recruiters, people intent on stealing Indigenous people to harvest their bone marrow to cure dreamlessness. *Amy Mathers Teen Book Award 2017, CODE Burt Award for First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Young Adult Literature 2017, Dystopia*
- Durand, Élodie. ***Parenthesis***. Top Shelf Productions, 2021. A triumphant graphic memoir, *Parenthesis* narrates the author's experience with tumor-related epilepsy—losing herself and finding herself again. *Graphic novel*
- Dylan, Kate. ***Mindwalker***. Hodder & Stoughton, 2022. Sil Sarrah is a Syntex Corporation "Mindwalker" with a brain-implanted supercomputer that lets her remotely control field agents' minds, keeping them out of danger, but she finds herself caught between the corporation and anti-corporate rebels who want to take it down. *Science fiction, series*
- Eberhardt, Jennifer L. ***Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do***. Viking, 2019. A scientific, investigative, and personal look at bias in different aspects of our lives and what we can do about it. *Nonfiction*
- Elle, J. ***House of Marionne***. Razorbill, 2023. Quell, a 17-year-old girl who has been on the run for most of her life to stay ahead of the Dragun, hunters intent on killing those like Quell with dark magic, hides in plain sight at her grandmother's magical finishing school where she learns to be a debutante while navigating her feelings for her mentor—a Dragun in training. *Fantasy*

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- Finlay, Adrienne. *Your One and Only*. Houghton Mifflin, 2018. In a perfect world where only clones exist after humanity and human imperfections have died off, Jack, the only genuine human in existence, longs for acceptance. *Science fiction*
- Garmus, Bonnie. *Lessons in Chemistry*. Doubleday, 2022. Elizabeth Zott is not an average woman of the 1960s; she's a chemist who ends up hosting her own cooking show, where her unusual approach to cooking and her independent streak teach women to shake up a lot more in their lives than just their recipes. *Historical Fiction, humor*
- Girma, Tigest. *Immortal Dark*. Little, Brown, 2024. Orphaned heiress Kidan Adane infiltrates Uxlay University to find her missing sister, where she encounters vampire-like creatures called draniacs. The university is filled with morally grey figures, each hiding dangerous truths. As Kidan unravels its mysteries and navigates a simmering, perilous romance, she must confront her own violent nature and a looming threat that could upend the fragile balance between humans and vampires. *Horror*
- Green, John. *Everything is Tuberculosis: The History and Persistence of Our Deadliest Infection*. Penguin Crash Course Books, 2025. In 2019, John Green met Henry, a young tuberculosis patient in Sierra Leone, and their friendship inspired Green to advocate for better treatment, access, and awareness of healthcare inequities. *Everything Is Tuberculosis* tells Henry's story alongside the scientific and social history of TB, highlighting how human choices influence its impact and future. *Nonfiction*
- Gregson, Marc. *Sky's End*. Peachtree, 2024. Sixteen-year-old Conrad enters a deadly competition to restore his power and rescue his sister from their devious uncle. *Fantasy*
- Haig, Matt. *Midnight Library*. Viking, 2020. Nora Seed finds herself faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, and realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place. *Fantasy*
- Hannah, Kristin. *The Great Alone*. St. Martin's Press, 2018. In Alaska during the 1970s, teenager Leni observes her parents cope with her father's PTSD and its effect on their relationship. As the family struggles to survive the brutal cold and dark landscape, Leni falls in love, discovers a supportive community, and copes with her family's difficult dynamics. *Historical fiction*
- Harmel, Kristin. *The Book of Lost Names*. Gallery Books, 2020. A historical novel about a young woman with a talent for forgery who helps hundreds of Jewish children flee the Nazis. Inspired by a true story from World War II. *Historical fiction*
- Harpman, Jacqueline. *I Who Have Never Known Men*. Transit Books, 2022. Thirty-nine women and one young girl, held captive in a closely guarded underground bunker, must learn to navigate life using their friendships with one another in this dystopian novel. Originally published in 1997. *Dystopia*
- Heller, Peter. *The River*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2019. An idyllic summer canoe trip down a Canadian river turns into a race for survival when a wildfire is spotted. The two young men overhear a violent argument in the woods, and the woman they overheard goes missing. *Adventure fiction*

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- Ishiguro, Kazuo. ***Klara and the Sun***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2021. Here is the story of Klara, an Artificial Friend with outstanding observational qualities, who, from her place in the store, watches carefully the behavior of those who come in to browse and of those who pass on the street outside. She remains hopeful that a customer will soon choose her. *Klara and the Sun* offers a look at our changing world through the eyes of an unforgettable narrator, one who explores the fundamental question: what does it mean to love? *Science fiction*
- Kingfisher, T. ***A House with Good Bones***. Tor Nightfire, 2023. In *A House with Good Bones*, Sam Montgomery returns to her mother's home in North Carolina, only to discover unsettling changes in the once-charming house. As she investigates her mother's fearful behavior, Sam uncovers hidden secrets that challenge the family's idyllic facade, leading her to confront a dark and buried truth. *Horror*
- Krueger, William Kent. ***This Tender Land***. Atria Books, 2019. Four orphans flee from heartless, ruthless caretakers and travel down the Gilead River in a canoe during the Great Depression in search of self and home. *Historical fiction*
- Kuang, R. F. (Rebecca F.). ***Babel***. Harper, 2022. Robin, a Chinese orphan raised in Great Britain, must decide between spying for an underground resistance movement or continuing his education and work in the great linguistic center, Babel, which dispenses the magical silver that powers the colonial systems of the world. *Alex Award 2022, Historical fantasy*
- Lee, Kristen R. ***Required Reading for the Disenfranchised Freshman***. Ember, 2023. At the request of her mother, seventeen-year-old Savannah Howard begins attending Wooddale University, a predominantly white, Ivy League school, where she deals with multiple racial incidents that cause her to step up and act. *Realistic fiction*
- Lehmann, Kat. ***Small Stones from the River: Meditations and Micropoems***. 29 Trees, 2017. Includes 180 original micropoems, haikus, tanka, and short prose entries that reflect on the beauty and wondrous nature of life. *Poetry*
- Liggett, Kim. ***The Grace Year***. Wednesday Books, 2019. Tierney James dreams of a better life—but as her own grace year draws near, she quickly realizes that there's more to fear about the grace year than the brutal elements and the poachers in the woods. *Science fiction, dystopia*
- Limón, Ada. ***Bright Dead Things***. Milkweed Editions, 2015. *Bright Dead Things* examines the chaos that is life, the dangerous thrill of living in a world you know you have to leave one day, and the search to find something that is disorderly and marvelous. *Poetry*
- Lockhart, E. ***Genuine Fraud***. Delacorte, 2017. Jule is on the run and hiding out in a resort in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. Her story is told in reverse, with unpredictable twists that will keep readers guessing until the very end. *Mystery*
- Mandel, Emily St. John. ***Sea of Tranquility***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2022. "The award-winning, best-selling author of *Station Eleven* and *The Glass Hotel* returns with a novel of art, time, love, and plague that takes the reader from an island off Vancouver in 1912 to a dark colony of the moon three hundred years later, unfurling a story of humanity across centuries and planets. *Carnegie Medal for Excellence Nominee, science fiction*
- Marrs, John. ***The Passengers***. Berkley, 2019. Just as self-driving cars become the trusted, safer norm, eight people are in a terrifying situation. Suddenly, the doors lock, the cars have been completely taken over, and a mysterious voice informs them they are being driven to their death. Their panic is being

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broadcast to millions around the world while the mysterious voice calls on the public to decide which person to save. *Mystery*

Mastai, Elan. ***All Our Wrong Todays***. Dutton, 2017. In a twist of fate, Tom Barren travels from a utopian society to a dystopian wasteland. Will he go back to the idealistic world he came from or stay in the alternate reality that finally feels like home? *Science fiction*

McCrina, Amanda. ***Traitor***. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020. In the bloody ethnic fighting between Poles and Ukrainians during World War II that has claimed the lives of almost all of Tolya's loved ones, it's almost impossible for him to know who to believe in and even harder for him to know who to trust. *Historical fiction*

McManus, Karen M. ***One of Us is Lying***. Delacorte, 2017. A modern-day Breakfast Club in which four students become murder suspects when the ruthless high school gossip blogger dies mysteriously in detention; they were the only ones in the room and everyone wants to know...who killed Simon Kelleher. *Mystery, series*

Miller, Madeline. ***Circe***. Little, Brown, 2018. This is the intimate story of Circe, daughter of the sun god Helios, who could transform her enemies into wild beasts and was banished by Zeus to a deserted island, as she crosses paths with several famous mythological figures such as Odysseus, Daedalus, Icarus, Athena, and the Minotaur. *Fantasy*

Miranda, Megan. ***The Last Guest House***. Simon & Schuster, 2019. A suspenseful novel about an idyllic town in Maine dealing with the suspicious death of one of their own--and her best "summer" friend, who is trying to uncover the truth...before fingers point her way. *Mystery*

Moreno-Garcia, Silvia. ***Mexican Gothic***. Del Ray, 2020. A darkly enchanting reimagining of Gothic fantasy in which a spirited young woman discovers the haunting secrets of a beautiful old mansion in 1950s Mexico. *Horror*

Nezhukumatathil, Aimee. ***World of Wonders: In Praise of Whale Sharks, Fireflies, and Other Astonishments***. Milkweed Editions, 2020. A collection of essays by an award-winning poet on the natural world and how it can teach and inspire us all. *Nonfiction*

Noah, Trevor. ***Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood***. Spiegel & Grau, 2015. Born the son of a Swiss white father and a black Xhosa mother during South Africa's tyrannical white rule, Trevor Noah's existence was forbidden and punishable by law. Noah's remarkable story is told with an honesty that is refreshing, moving, and laugh-out-loud funny. *Nonfiction*

Nuila, Ricardo. ***The People's Hospital: Hope and Peril in American Medicine***. Scribner, 2023. Through the heart-wrenching stories of five of his patients, Dr. Ricardo Nuila reveals the brokenness of America's healthcare system and how Ben Taub Hospital in Houston, Texas, a publicly funded hospital, is making a difference by emphasizing people over payments. *Nonfiction*

O'Farrell, Maggie. ***The Marriage Portrait: A Novel***. Alfred A. Knopf, 2022. A novel set in Renaissance Italy, and centering on the captivating young duchess Lucrezia de' Medici. *Historical fiction*

Parks, Carrie Stuart. ***Woman in Shadow***. Thomas Nelson, 2021. Darby Graham, a forensic linguist in need of a vacation, heads to a remote ranch in Idaho. Her rest is shattered before it even begins after an earthquake strikes and fires mysteriously appear around the town. With danger seemingly around

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every corner, can Darby use her skills to reveal an arsonist, and can she trust the one man who seems to understand her? *Mystery*

Philippe, Ben. *The Field Guide to the North American Teenager*. Balzer + Bray, 2019. When Norris, a Black French Canadian, starts his junior year at an Austin, Texas, high school, he views his fellow students as clichés from "a bad 90s teen movie." *Morris Award, realistic fiction*

Quinn, Kate. *The Rose Code*. William Morrow, 2021. Joining the elite Bletchley Park code-breaking team during World War II, three women from very different walks of life uncover a spy's dangerous agenda years later against the backdrop of the royal wedding of Elizabeth and Philip. *Alex Award List 2022, historical fiction*

Reid, Taylor Jenkins. *Carrie Soto Is Back*. Ballantine Books, 2022. The year is 1989, and Carrie Soto, the "Battle Axe" of women's tennis, is thirty-two when she retires as the women's champion of professional tennis. Six years later, Carrie comes out of retirement determined to defend her title against the up-and-coming young star Nikki Chan. Can she overcome her aging body, her critics, and the strained relationship with her trainer father to reclaim her status as the greatest champion of all time? *Realistic fiction*

Rice, Waubgeshig. *Moon of the Crusted Snow*. ECW Press, 2018. Fear and panic grip the residents of the remote Anishinaabe reservation after prolonged power outages and dwindling food supplies. Turning to the ancient ways, the residents and their unlikely leader hope to restore order amid the chaos. *Dystopia*

Richardson, Kim Michele. *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek*. Sourcebooks, 2019. Cussy's story is set in the Appalachian Mountains in the 1930s and is inspired by the true lives of the blue-skinned people of Kentucky. With courage and determination, she sets out on her pack mule to deliver books and hope to families who desperately need both. *Historical fiction*

Roe, Robin. *A List of Cages*. Hyperion, 2017. Adam, a high school senior, rescues Julian, a freshman who happens to be his former foster brother, from an abusive situation. *Realistic fiction*

Ross, Rebecca. *Divine Rivals*. Wednesday Books, 2023. As gods awaken and war once again engulfs the world, rival journalists Iris Winnow and Roman Kitt form a secret bond through magically delivered letters that draw them from newsroom competition to the front lines, where love, family, and the fate of mankind hang in the balance. *Fantasy, series*

Schwab, V. E. *Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*. Tor Books, 2020. Making a Faustian bargain to live forever but never be remembered, a woman from early eighteenth-century France endures unacknowledged. 300 years later, she meets a man in a hidden bookstore who remembers her name. *Fantasy*

See, Lisa. *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*. Scribner, 2017. Three generations of women living in rural China adapt to life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Li-yan leaves a part of herself there as she embarks on a career as a businesswoman and tea expert, but finds more of a "home" in the USA than she ever expected. *Historical fiction*

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- Shusterman, Neal, and Jared Shusterman. **Dry**. Simon & Schuster, 2018. A lengthy California drought escalates to catastrophic proportions, turning Alyssa’s quiet suburban street into a war zone, and she is forced to make impossible choices if she and her brother are to survive. *Science fiction, dystopia, survival, adventure*
- Stamper, Vesper. **A Cloud of Outrageous Blue**. Alfred A. Knopf, 2020. When Edyth loses everything in an instant, she is sent to live in the priory where she bumps into a boy from her past and learns to navigate her new life while falling in love during the Great Plague of 1348. *Magical realism, historical fiction*
- Stanton, Doug. **12 Strong: The Declassified True Story of the Horse Soldiers**. Scribner, 2017. Immediately after 9/11, a small unit of the elite Special Forces was sent to Afghanistan to defeat the Taliban, using horses rather than tanks. *Nonfiction*
- Tahir, Sabaa. **All My Rage**. Razorbill, 2022. A family extending from Pakistan to California deals with generations of young love, old regrets, and forgiveness. *Realistic fiction*
- Turton, Stuart. **The 7½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle**. Sourcebooks, 2018. Every day Aiden wakes up in a different body on the day of a large party where Evelyn Hardcastle will die at the end of the night. Every day is a new chance to save her, but each host has unique ways of preventing him from solving the mystery. *Costa Book Award, mystery*
- Van Pelt, Shelby. **Remarkably Bright Creatures**. Ecco, 2022. Tova Sullivan is a widow who befriends Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus, while working the night shift at Sowell Bay Aquarium. The unlikely friendship just may help Tova solve the 30-year mystery of her only son’s disappearance and heal the wounds of her past. *Realistic fiction*
- Weir, Andy. **Project Hail Mary: A Novel**. Ballantine Books, 2021. While the Earth’s sun is dimming at an alarming rate, high school science teacher Ryland Grace wakes up alone on a spacecraft millions of miles away from home and tries to save humankind with the help of an unexpected ally in this exhilarating thrill ride of a novel. *Science fiction*
- Westover, Tara. **Educated: A Memoir**. Random House, 2018. Growing up in Idaho in a Mormon survivalist family that values hard work over public education, the author shares stories about her nontraditional family life. With a desire to attend college, Ms. Westover prepares independently for entrance exams to enroll at Brigham Young and, eventually, at Cambridge for a Ph.D. *Alex Award 2019, nonfiction*
- Yoon, Daniel. **Frankly in Love**. Putnam, 2019. High school senior Frank Li creates a foolproof plan to “fake date” a fellow Korean American so he can date a girl his parents won’t accept, but all does not go smoothly as he comes to question everything he knows about love, his family, and himself. *Realistic fiction*
- Zentner, Jeff. **Goodbye Days**. Crown, 2017. “Where are you guys? Text me back.” Carver did not know his text would be the last his three best friends would see. He blames himself for the accident. As Carver deals with his grief, his friend’s grandmother requests that he spend a “goodbye day” with her to share memories and say a proper farewell to her grandson. Carver questions whether he is mentally ready for a “goodbye day” as other families begin asking for one, too. *Realistic fiction*

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Zevin, Gabrielle. *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2022. Sam and Sadie, video game designers, reconnect in college to launch a hit game that catapults them to superstar fame in the gaming industry, only to face rivalry, betrayal, tragedy, and love amid the spotlight. *Realistic fiction*

Zusak, Markus. *Bridge of Clay*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2018. Full of imagery, symbolism, and descriptive language, Zusak crafts a story about five Australian brothers, their pets, their parents, and a bridge. The novel's themes revolve around loss, grief, family, journey, and redemption. *Realistic fiction*

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