

# Grade 6 Summer Reading List

Grade Six

2008-2009

Visiting Author

Jack Gantos



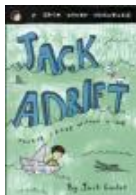
Jack Gantos, award-winning author of the *Joey Pigza* and the *Jack Henry* books, will return in the 2009 school year for his ninth annual visit to Weston Middle School.

During his visit, Mr. Gantos will meet with sixth grade students to discuss his experiences as a writer, as well as the craft of writing memoirs and fiction.

In anticipation of this visit, incoming sixth graders are encouraged to read one or more of Mr. Gantos' works.

**Books by Jack Gantos:**

- *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*
- *Joey Pigza Loses Control*
- *What Would Joey Do?*
- *Jack's Black Book*
- *Heads or Tails: Stories from the Sixth Grade*
- *Jack's New Power*
- *Jack Adrift*



## To students entering Grade 6 September 2008

Dear Sixth Grade Reader,

The sixth grade English/Reading teachers present you with this list of great summer reading books. You are expected to read 3 – 5 books during the summer break because only through sustained reading do you maintain and improve your reading skills.

These books represent some of the best contemporary works by award-winning authors; they also dovetail with the sixth grade English/Reading curriculum.

### Historical Fiction

**Curtis, Christopher Paul – *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* 1963**

The ordinary interactions and everyday routines of the Watsons, an African-American family living in Flint, Michigan, are drastically changed after they go to visit Grandma in Alabama in the summer of 1963.

**Curtis, Christopher Paul – *Bud, not Buddy***

After losing his mother and being shuffled around to various foster homes, ten year old Bud sets out on a journey to find his long lost father.

**Cushman, Karen – *Rodzina***

Orphaned, 12-year-old Rodzina, boards a train on a cold day in March 1881 heading for the West. She expects to be adopted, but fears being turned into a slave. Worst of all she is afraid of not being adopted at all.

**Taylor, Mildred – *Song of the Trees; The Gold Cadillac; Mississippi Bridge***

These short novels open windows for the reader on the Logan Family. The Logans are proud, educated landowners who challenge injustice - factors that threaten them as African-Americans in 1933 Mississippi.



**Taylor, Mildred—*The Land***

The prequel to Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. In it, Paul Edward Logan, the son of a white father and a black mother, finds himself caught between worlds as he pursues his dream of owning land in the years following the Civil War.

**Salisbury, Graham – *Under the Blood-red Sun***

Tomikazu Nakaji's biggest concerns are baseball, homework, and a local bully, until life with his Japanese family in Hawaii changes drastically after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

**Yolen, Jane - *Girl in a Cage***

The year is 1306 and the English army invades Scotland. Princess Marjorie, daughter of the new Scottish king, Robert-the-Bruce, is captured by the English and King Edward Longshanks has her imprisoned in a cage in the center of town. Exposed to the elements and to the scorn and taunts of the English, Marjorie holds fast to the knowledge that she must make her country proud, as a true princess should, even if she is in a cage.

## Poetry



**Clinton, Catherine, ed.** – *I, Too, Sing America: Three Centuries of African American Poetry* (illustrated by Stephen Alcorn)

**Driscoll, Michael, ed.** – *A Child's Introduction to Poetry*

This charming anthology introduces students to the joy of all kinds of poetry including limericks, haiku, sonnet and free verse, with biographical overviews of famous poets from Homer, Shakespeare and Wordsworth to Robert Frost and Langston Hughes. This lush volume includes a CD of all of the poetry contained within the collection.

**Janecko, Paul** – *A Poke in the I: a Collection of Concrete Poems* (illustrated by Chris Rachka)

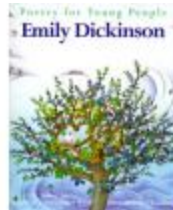
Chris Rachka's amusing and clever illustrations make this book a favorite.

**Janecko, Paul, ed.** – *Seeing the Blue Between: Advice and Inspirations for Young Poets*

Great inspirational advice for young people from 32 of today's best poets.

**Nye, Naomi Shihab** - *The Space Between Our Footsteps*

Poems and Paintings from the Middle East



**Poetry for Young People Series** – Published by Sterling Press. This is a series of beautifully illustrated books of poetry by poets such as Emily Dickinson, William Carlos Williams and Walt Whitman.

**Sandburg, Carl** – *Poems for Children Nowhere Near Old Enough to Vote*

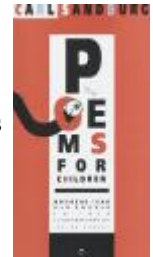
**Stevenson, James** – *Sweet Corn (and other "corn" anthologies)*

Stevenson's illustrations complement his poems of everyday contemporary life, including such topics as ketchup, a lost dog and bike riding.

**Winter, Jeanette** – *Emily Dickinson's Letters to the World*

A sweet book that humanizes Dickinson while incorporating her poetry

**Additional recommendations:** Any titles written for young people by Janet Wong, Walter Dean Myers with illustrations by Chris Myers, Nikki Grimes, and David McCord.



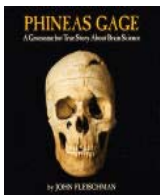
## Non-Fiction and Biography

**Asgedom, Mawi** - *Of Beetles and Angels: A True Story of the American Dream.*

This is the true story of a young man's journey from Ethiopia to a refugee camp in Sudan, and eventually to the U.S. Through family love and faith, he finds success in America.

**Fleischman, John** – *Phineas Gage*

The gruesome but true story of Phineas Gage, a man who is horribly injured when a steel rod is driven through his skull during a railroad construction accident, helped scientists better understand the workings of the brain and the effects of brain injuries on personality. (Not for the squeamish.)



**Morrison, Toni** - *Remember: The Journey to School Integration*

Morrison imagines the thoughts and feelings of students living during the time

of school integration in the South. The fictional text is paired with archival photos,

**Murphy, Jim** – *Blizzard; The Great Fire; Inside the Alamo and An American Plague*

Murphy examines events in history through the experiences of the people living through these events. Through meticulous research, he finds the people behind the headlines and humanizes non-fiction. Always riveting!

**Niven, Penelope** – *Carl Sandburg: Adventures of a Poet*

A biography that shows Sandburg as "The Poet of the People." Mixes scenes from his life with excerpts from his work and historically detailed illustrations.

**Rummell, Jack** - *Langston Hughes: Poet*

Discusses the life of this twentieth century poet and leading figure in the Harlem Renaissance.

**Tillage, Leon Walter** - *Leon's Story*

A black custodian reminisces about growing up as a sharecropper's son in the South and about being a civil rights protestor.



**Additional recommendations:** Any biography written by Russell Freedman.

## Realistic Fiction

**DiCamillo, Kate** – *Because of Winn-Dixie*

Opal Buloni, new to Naomi, Florida, where her father has accepted a position as a minister of the Baptist Church, finds her life changing even more drastically once she encounters and adopts a smiling mongrel named Winn-Dixie.

**Hiaasen, Carl** – *Hoot*

When Roy and his family move to Florida, he finds a new role and purpose when he joins a friend in attempting to save an environmentally threatened colony of owls.

**Henkes, Kevin** – *Olive's Ocean*

On a summer visit to her grandmother's cottage, twelve-year-old Martha deals with the death of a classmate, her relationship with her grandmother, and her plans to be a

writer. This is a haunting but gentle story about a young girl's coming of age.

**Giff, Patricia Reilly** – *Pictures of Hollis Wood*

Hollis Wood struggles to fulfill her dream of finally belonging to a family after a series of disappointing foster care placements. Hollis is a survivor whose courage, talents, and hopefulness help her fulfill her dream.

**Ellis, Deborah** – *Parvana's Journey*

Following the death of her father, Parvana sets out to find the rest of her family. Along the way, she meets other children who join her. The second book in the Breadwinner trilogy, Parvana's Journey is a story of hope and courage in the

face of horrific challenges

**Naidoo, Beverly** – *Journey to Jo'burg*

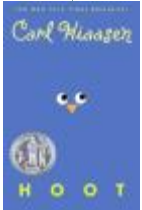
Two South African children, alarmed by their sister's illness begin a journey to Johannesburg to find their mother. The children struggle to survive the journey as well as the harsh realities of apartheid in South Africa.

**Selznick, Brian** - *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*

A charming graphic novel about a boy's need to solve a mystery in honor of his beloved dead father.

**Additional recommendations:**

Any books by Andrew Clements, Jack Gantos, or Richard Peck.



## Fantasy

**Colfer, Eoin** – *Artemis Fowl Series*

The faerie world meets twelve year-old Artemis Fowl, a mortal whose brilliance and desire for gold may destroy their magic forever. Also read *The Wish List* and *The Supernaturalist* by the same author.

**DiCamilla, Kate** - *Tale of Despereaux*

Despereaux is a mouse who falls in love with a princess and tries to show that though small, he is chivalrous.

**Ferris, Jean** - *Once Upon a Marigold*

A quirky and adventurous tale of a commoner named Chris who befriends a lonely princess, and ultimately must find a way to save her life

**Funke, Cornelia** - *Thief Lord*

*Thief Lord* is an adventure – fantasy in which two brothers, running away from an aunt and uncle who plan to separate them, flee to Venice. Like the bridges and canals of Venice, there are bountiful twists and turns in this this lively novel.

**Oppel Kenneth** – *Airborn*

A winner of the Michael J. Printz Award, this is a swashbuckling fantasy with airships, pirates and exotic creatures. Matt Cruse is a cabin boy on the airship Aurora. Share Matt's adventures aboard the Aurora as he sails the skies across the world.

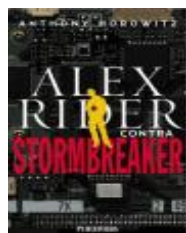
**Tolkien, J.R.R.** – *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (advanced readers)

**Additional recommendations:** Any books by Susan Cooper, Gail Levine, Garth Nix, Tamora Pierce, Brian Jacques, Jonathan Stroud, or Rick Riordan.

## Action and Adventure

**Horowitz, Anthony** - *Alex Rider Adventures, Volumes 1-6*

Follow fourteen year old Alex Rider as he continues his late uncle's work as a spy for the British Intelligence Agency, M16



**Paulsen, Gary** - *How Angel Peterson Got His Name and Other Outrageous Tales About Extreme Sports*

Gary Paulsen relays outrageous tales from his childhood in Minnesota. Readers will laugh along as Paulsen attempts ridiculous stunts, just to see what might happen. A book that many 13 year old boys can relate to.

