5th-6th Grade Reads
New, Upcoming, & Recommended for Winter 2018
Chelmsford Public Library

Genre Key

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Becoming Kareem
by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar
Biog/Abdul-Jabbar

At one time, Lew Alcindor was just another kid from New York City with all the usual problems: He struggled with fitting in, with pleasing a strict father, and with overcoming shyness that made him feel socially awkward. But with a talent for basketball, and an unmatched team of supporters, Lew Alcindor was able to transform and to become Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

Castle in the Stars: The Space Race of 1869
by Alex Alice
Y/Comix/Alice

In search of the mysterious element known as aether, Claire Dulac flew her hot air balloon toward the edge of our stratosphere—and never returned. Her husband, genius engineer Archibald Dulac, is certain that she is forever lost. Her son, Seraphin, still holds out hope. One year after her disappearance, Seraphin and his father are delivered a tantalizing clue: a letter from an unknown sender who claims to have Claire’s lost logbook. The letter summons them to a Bavarian castle, where an ambitious young king dreams of flying the skies in a ship powered by aether. But within the castle walls, danger lurks—there are those who would stop at nothing to conquer the stars.

The Player King
by Avi
J/Fic/Avi

England, 1486. King Henry VII has recently snatched the English Crown and now sits on the throne, while young Prince Edward, who has a truer claim, has apparently disappeared. Meanwhile, a penniless kitchen boy named Lambert Simnel is slaving away at a tavern in Oxford—until a mysterious friar, Brother Simonds, buys Lambert from the tavern keeper and whisks him away in the dead of night. But this is nothing compared to the secret that the friar reveals: You, Lambert, are actually Prince Edward, the true King of England!
The Wonderling
by Mira Bartok
Y/Fic/Bartok

Welcome to the Home for Wayward and Misbegotten Creatures, an institution run by evil Miss Carbunkle. Part animal and part human, the groundlings toil in classroom and factory, forbidden to enjoy anything regular children have. For No. 13, an innocent-hearted, one-eared, fox-like eleven-year-old with only a number rather than a name, it is the only home he has ever known. But unexpected courage leads him to acquire the loyalty of a young bird groundling named Trinket. Using Trinket's ingenious invention, the pair escape and embark on an adventure that will take them out into the wider world and ultimately down the path of true destiny.

Goldeline
by Jimmy Cajoleas
J/Fic/Cajoleas

In the wild, free woods of the Hinterlands, where magic is as real as stories are, there lives a girl named Goldeline. Goldeline has hair as white as summer snow and gold-flecked eyes, and she travels from camp to camp with Gruff and his bandits, getting by on the things they steal from carriages that pass through the woods. But someone is after Goldeline. The Preacher—the man who wants to cleanse the Hinterlands of anyone who’s different, the man who turned the Townies against Goldeline’s momma for being a witch—thinks that Goldeline must be a witch, too. Now Goldeline will have to summon all the courage and magic she got from her momma to escape the Preacher, save her friends, and, maybe, if she’s lucky, find a place to call home.

Clutch
by Hether Camlot
J/Fic/Camlot

Something incredible is happening in Montreal. Jackie Robinson is playing for the Royals, the Brooklyn Dodgers' Triple-A team. As the first black man to sign a contract in modern organized baseball, Jackie's going to change the world. Just a short distance away, 12-year-old Joey Grosser has big plans, too. He's going to break out of the Plateau, his poor Jewish dump of a neighborhood, and make a better life for his mother and little brother on the other side of Park Avenue, where the rich people live. All he needs is money, and he's got plenty of ideas on how to get it. But every step forward is two steps back, and he turns to the wrong man for help. One decision will determine Joey's fate—and whether he'll live long enough to see Jackie Robinson make baseball history.

Like Vanessa
by Tami Charles
Y/Fic/Charles

Vanessa Martin's real-life reality of living with family in public housing in Newark, New Jersey is a far cry from the glamorous Miss America stage. She struggles with an incarcerated mother she barely remembers, a grandfather dealing with addiction and her own battle with self-confidence. But when a new teacher at school coordinates a beauty pageant and convinces Vanessa to enter, Vanessa’s view of her own world begins to change. Vanessa discovers that her own self-worth is more than the scores of her talent performance and her interview answers, and that she doesn't need a crown to be comfortable in her own skin and see her own true beauty.
Aru Shah and the End of Time
by Roshani Chokshi
Y/Fic/Chokshi

Twelve-year-old Aru Shah has a tendency to stretch the truth in order to fit in at school. While her classmates are jetting off to vacations in exotic locales, she’ll be spending her break at home, waiting for her mom to return from their latest archeological trip. One day, three schoolmates show up at Aru’s doorstep to catch her in a lie. They don’t believe her claim that the museum’s Lamp of Bharata is cursed, and they dare Aru to prove it. But lighting the lamp has dire consequences. She unwittingly frees the Sleeper, an ancient demon whose duty it is to awaken the God of Destruction. Her classmates and beloved mother are frozen in time, and it’s up to Aru to save them.

Suspect Red
by L.M. Elliott
Y/Fic/Elliott

It’s 1953, and the United States has just executed an American couple convicted of spying for the Soviet Union. Everyone is on edge as the Cold War standoff between communism and democracy leads to the rise of Senator Joe McCarthy and his zealous hunt for people he calls subversives or communist sympathizers. Richard and his family believe deeply in American values and love of country, especially since Richard’s father works for the FBI. Yet when a family from Czechoslovakia moves in down the street with a son Richard’s age named Vlad, their bold ideas about art and politics bring everything into question. But as the nation’s paranoia spirals out of control, Richard longs to prove himself a patriot, and blurred lines between friend and foe could lead to a betrayal that destroys lives.

TBH, This is So Awkward
by Lisa Greenwald
Y/Fic/Greenwald

To be honest, middle school is rough! Cecily, Gabby, and Prianka have been BFFAE since pre-K, so it’s totally natural when they don’t include the new girl, Victoria, in their plans and group texts. Between organizing the school Valentine’s Day dance, prepping for their first boy-girl party, and trying to keep their texts so boring their moms won’t use spy apps to read them, the friends only have time for each other. But when Victoria is accidentally sent a hurtful text message, the entire sixth grade gets called out for bullying, cell phones are confiscated, and the trio known as CPG4Eva is forced to figure out just how strong their friendships are IRL.

Falcon Wild
by Terry Lynn Johnson
Y/Fic/Johnson

Karma is desperate to become a certified falconer. At her dad’s bird education center, she helps give demonstrations to guests and can fly the birds. But when her favorite rescued falcon, Stark, hurts Karma, her parents insist that they return the bird to its previous owner in Canada. On the way to bring Stark back, a car accident in the middle of nowhere leaves Karma’s dad trapped, and it’s up to Karma to find a way to rescue him and her younger brother. When Karma loses her way trying to get help, she crosses paths with Cooper, a troubled teenage boy. Lost for three days, the two figure out how to survive, and Karma must teach Stark to hunt like an actual bird of prey.
The Lost Kingdom of Bamarre
by Gail Carson Levine
Y/Fic/Levine

Peregrine strives to live up to the ideal of her people, the Latki—and to impress her parents: affectionate Lord Tove, who despises only the Bamarre, and stern Lady Klausine. Perry runs the fastest, speaks her mind, and doesn’t give much thought to the castle’s Bamarre servants, whom she knows to be weak and cowardly. But just as she’s about to join her father on the front lines, she is visited by the fairy Halina, who reveals that Perry isn’t Latki-born. She is Bamarre. The fairy issues a daunting challenge: against the Lakti power, Perry must free her people from tyranny.

Watchdog
by Will McIntosh
J/Fic/McIntosh

Thirteen-year-old twins Vick and Tara have built an incredible machine—a loyal robotic watchdog named Daisy. But, when local crime boss Ms. Alba schemes to add Daisy to her robot army, Vick and Tara must go to great lengths to protect their prized pet. Because Daisy is more than just any robot—she’s their constant protector, and together the three make a great team. Vick and Tara are determined to stop the mob from tearing their family apart. And they might just succeed! Sure, the evil Ms. Alba has more robot watchdogs, but none are as smart as their Daisy. Plus, if things get too dangerous, Tara could always upgrade their pet.

Bet You Didn’t Know
by National Geographic Kids
J/031.02 BET

Did you know that the first stop signs were black and white? Or that a litter of kittens is called a kindle? There’s a lot to know and we bet you’ll have fun learning these fun, far-out facts in the next super series from National Geographic Kids! Based on a favorite department in Nat Geo Kids magazine, this book is chock-full of fascinating facts, silly stats, and catchy little knowledge nuggets in all kinds of cool categories, from astronomy and dinosaurs to revolutions and breakfast.

Auma's Long Run
by Eucabeth A. Odhiambo
Y/Fic/Odhiambo

Auma loves to run. In her small Kenyan village, she's a track star with big dreams. A track scholarship could allow her to attend high school and maybe even become a doctor. But a strange new sickness called AIDS is ravaging the village, and when her father becomes ill, Auma’s family needs her help at home. Soon more people are getting sick—even dying—and no one knows why. Now Auma faces a difficult choice. Should she stay to support her struggling family or leave to pursue her own future? Auma knows her family is depending on her, but leaving might be the only way to find the answers to questions about this new disease.
**Dragonfly Song**
by Wendy Orr
J/Fic/Orr

The little girl found under a bush has no name and cannot speak. Is she a miracle child who escaped the raiders, or is she a bad-luck child, the one who called the Bull King's ship to the island? No one sees the mama-stone around her neck, with the sign of the dragonfly. And only Luki, in training to leap the bulls, knows that she charmed the viper who would have killed him. When the girl turns twelve, she discovers her name—Aissa—and she knows that her one chance to live freely is to become a bull dancer, and be taken away to the island of the Bull King.

**Tentacle and Wing**
by Sarah Porter
J/Fic/Porter

Twelve-year-old Ada is a Chimera, born with human and animal DNA thanks to a genetic experiment gone wrong. Because being a “kime” is believed to be contagious, she has kept her condition—complete with infrared vision—hidden. But a surprise test outs her, and Ada is shipped off to a quarantined school for kimes. There Ada meets kids of many different shapes, stripes, and appendages, such as a girl with dragonfly wings and a seal-boy. As she adjusts to her new life, Ada senses that the facility is keeping a secret that could upend everything the world knows about Chimeras. But will someone put a stop to her efforts to uncover the truth?

**Mez’s Magic (The Lost Rainforest #1)**
by Eliot Schrefer
J/Fic/Schrefer

Caldera has forever been divided into those animals who walk by night and those who walk by day. Nightwalker panthers, like young Mez and her beloved sister, have always feared daywalkers as creatures of myth and legend. Until the eclipse. Now Mez has discovered that she can cross the Veil and enter the daylight world. Her magical power has unknown depths, but she must rush to discover it after a mysterious stranger arrives at her family’s den, bearing warnings of a reawakened evil. Saving Caldera means Mez must leave her sister behind and unite an unlikely group of animal friends to unravel an ancient mystery and protect their rainforest home.

**Betty Before X**
by Ilyasah Shabazz, Renee Watson
J/Fic/Shabazz

In Detroit, 1945, eleven-year-old Betty’s house doesn’t quite feel like home. She believes her mother loves her, but she can’t shake the feeling that her mother doesn’t want her. Church helps those worries fade, if only for a little while. The singing, the preaching, the speeches from guest activists like Paul Robeson and Thurgood Marshall stir African Americans in her community to stand up for their rights. Betty quickly finds confidence and purpose in volunteering for the Housewives League, an organization that supports black-owned businesses. Soon, the American civil rights icon we now know as Dr. Betty Shabazz is born.
**Wicked Bugs**
by Amy Stewart  
J/632.7/STE

Amy Stewart’s *Wicked Bugs: The Meanest, Deadliest, Grossest Bugs On Earth* features profiles of the world’s scariest, deadliest, and grossest bugs, from the most painful hornet to flies that transmit deadly diseases to millipedes that stop traffic, to bookworms that devour libraries.

**Click’d**
by Tamara Ireland Stone  
Y/Fic/Stone

Allie Navarro can’t wait to show her best friends the app she built at CodeGirls summer camp. CLICK’D pairs users based on common interests and sends them on a fun (and occasionally rule-breaking) scavenger hunt to find each other. By the second day of school, everyone is talking about CLICK’D. Watching her app go viral is amazing. And with all the data Allie is collecting, she has an even better shot at beating her archenemy, Nathan, at the upcoming youth coding competition. But when Allie discovers a glitch that threatens to expose everyone’s secrets, she has to figure out how to make things right, even if that means sharing the computer lab with Nathan.

**Smart Cookie**
by Elly Swartz  
Y/Fic/Swartz

Frankie knows she’ll be in big trouble if Dad discovers she secretly posted a dating profile for him online. But she’s determined to find him a wife, even if she ends up grounded for life. Frankie wants what she had before Mom died. A family of three. Two is a pair of socks or the wheels on a bicycle or a busy weekend at the B&B where Frankie and Dad live. Three is a family. And Frankie’s is missing a piece. But Operation Mom is harder to pull off than Frankie expects. None of the Possibles are very momish, the B&B’s guests keep canceling, Frankie’s getting the silent treatment from her once best friend, and there’s a maybe-ghost hanging around. Worst of all, Gram and Dad are definitely hiding secrets of their own. If a smart cookie like Frankie wants to save the B&B and find her missing piece, she’s going to have to figure out what secrets are worth keeping and when it’s time to let go.

Read, loved, and recommended by your teen librarian, Sara.  
Check them out at the public library today!

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