

Sixth Grade Honors Language Arts:

If you will be enrolled in Honors Language Arts, your requirement is different:

- Read one of the fiction books listed below.
- Read one of the nonfiction books listed below.
- A third book of your choice from any of the books listed in this packet.

Make sure you have a parent sign off on your choices, and be ready to discuss your books upon your return to school.

Honors Fiction

The Call of the Wild by Jack London

The Call of the Wild, considered by many, London's greatest novel, is a gripping tale of a heroic dog that, thrust into the brutal life of the Alaska Gold Rush, ultimately faces a choice between living in man's world and returning to nature. Adventure and dog-story enthusiasts will find this classic work a thrilling, memorable reading experience.

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

Esperanza thought she'd always live with her family on their ranch in Mexico--she'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home, and servants. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California during the Great Depression, and to settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard labor, financial struggles, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When their new life is threatened, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances--Mama's life, and her own, depend on it.

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH by Robert C. O'Brien

Mrs. Frisby, a widowed mouse with four small children, is faced with a terrible problem. She must move her family to their summer quarters immediately, or face almost certain death. But her youngest son, Timothy, lies ill with pneumonia and must not be moved. Fortunately, she encounters the rats of NIMH, an extraordinary breed of highly intelligent creatures, who come up with a brilliant solution to her dilemma. And Mrs. Frisby in turn renders them a great service.

White Bird by R. J. Palacio

In R. J. Palacio's *Auggie & Me* readers were introduced to Julian's grandmother, Grandmère. *White Bird* tells Grandmère's heartrending story: how she, a young Jewish girl, was hidden by a family in a Nazi-occupied French village during World War II; and how the boy she and her classmates once shunned became her savior and best friend. Grandmère's harrowing experience movingly demonstrates the power of kindness to change hearts, build bridges, and even save lives. As Grandmère tells Julian, "It always takes courage to be kind, but in those days, such kindness could cost you everything."

Leviathan by Scott Westerfeld

It is the cusp of World War I, and all the European powers are arming up. The Austro-Hungarians and Germans have their Clankers, steam-driven iron machines loaded with guns and ammunition. The British Darwinists employ fabricated animals as their weaponry. Their *Leviathan* is a whale airship, and the most masterful beast in the British fleet.

Aleksandar Ferdinand, prince of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, is on the run. His own people have turned on him. His title is worthless. All he has is a battle-torn Stormwalker and a loyal crew of men. Deryn Sharp is a commoner, a girl disguised as a boy in the British Air Service. But her secret is in constant danger of being discovered. With the Great War brewing, Alek's and Deryn's paths cross in the most unexpected way...taking them both aboard the *Leviathan* on a fantastical, around-the-world adventure. One that will change both their lives forever.

My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George

Terribly unhappy in his family's crowded New York City apartment, Sam Gribble runs away to the solitude and danger of the Catskill Mountains. Eventually, Sam adjusts, learns much about himself and becomes a true backwoodsman, eating off the land, making deerskin clothes, hollowing out the base of a large tree to live in and becoming part of the wilderness environment. He steals a baby peregrine falcon from its nest and adopts the bird he names Frightful and finds a side of himself he never knew.

Murder is Bad Manners by Robin Stevens

Daisy Wells and Hazel Wong are best friends who share an interest in mysteries. In fact, outspoken Daisy is a self-described Sherlock Holmes, and she appoints wallflower Hazel as her own personal Watson when they form their own detective agency. The only problem? They have nothing to investigate. That changes once Hazel discovers the body of their science teacher, Miss Bell—and the body subsequently disappears. Hazel and Daisy are certain a murder must have taken place. Determined to get to the bottom of the crime before the killer strikes again, Hazel and Daisy must hunt for evidence, spy on their suspects, and use all the cunning, scheming, and intuition they can muster.

The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate by Jacqueline Kelly

Calpurnia Virginia Tate is eleven years old in 1899 when she wonders why the yellow grasshoppers in her Texas backyard are so much bigger than the green ones. With a little help from her notoriously cantankerous grandfather, an avid naturalist, she figures out that the green grasshoppers are easier to see against the yellow grass, so they are eaten before they can get any larger. As Callie explores the natural world around her, she develops a close relationship with her grandfather, navigates the dangers of living with six brothers, and comes up against just what it means to be a girl at the turn of the century.

Code Talker by Joseph Bruchac

Throughout World War II, in the conflict fought against Japan, Navajo code talkers were a crucial part of the U.S. effort, sending messages back and forth in an unbreakable code that used their native language. They braved some of the heaviest fighting of the war, and with their code, they saved countless American lives. Yet their story remained classified for more than twenty years. Author Joseph Bruchac brings their heroism to life through the fictional tale of Ned Begay, a sixteen-year-old Navajo boy who becomes a code talker. His grueling journey is eye-opening and inspiring.

New Kid by Jerry Craft

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one.

Honors Nonfiction

Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team by Steve Sheinkin

Proclaimed "the greatest all-around athlete in the world" by legendary football coach Glenn "Pop" Warner, Jim Thorpe dominated sports in the early 1900s. His natural athleticism, in tandem with Warner's innovative coaching style, helped establish the Carlisle Indian Industrial School's football program as one of the nation's best, eclipsing perennial gridiron powerhouses Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Despite the fame and attention Carlisle received because of its winning team, a stark reality existed: the cultures of these same young men were being systematically eradicated by the school. Operating under the premise that the "Indian problem" could be solved by stripping students of their cultural identities, Carlisle founder and superintendent Richard Henry Pratt, a U.S. Army captain, vowed to "Kill the Indian; Save the Man" through any means necessary.

Taking Flight by Michaela DePrince

Michaela DePrince was known as girl Number 27 at the orphanage, where she was abandoned at a young age and tormented as a "devil child" for a skin condition that makes her skin appear spotted. But it was at the orphanage that Michaela would find a picture of a beautiful ballerina en pointe that would help change the course of her life. At the age of four, Michaela was adopted by an American family, who encouraged her love of dancing and enrolled her in classes. She went on to study at the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at the American Ballet Theatre and is now the youngest principal dancer with the Dance Theatre of Harlem. She has appeared in the ballet documentary *First Position*, as well as on *Dancing with the Stars*, *Good Morning America*, and *Nightline*. In this engaging, moving, and unforgettable memoir, Michaela shares her dramatic journey from an orphan in West Africa to becoming one of ballet's most exciting rising stars.

I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education.

On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize.

I AM MALALA is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons.

They Called Us Enemy by George Takei

In 1942, at the order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, every person of Japanese descent on the west coast was rounded up and shipped to one of ten "relocation centers," hundreds or thousands of miles from home, where they would be held for years under armed guard. *They Called Us Enemy* is George Takei's firsthand account of those years behind barbed wire, the joys and terrors of growing up under legalized racism, his mother's hard choices, his father's faith in democracy, and the way those experiences planted the seeds for his astonishing future.

Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream by Tanya Lee Stone

What does it take to be an astronaut? Excellence at flying, courage, intelligence, resistance to stress, top physical shape — any checklist would include these. But when America created NASA in 1958, there was another unspoken rule: you had to be a man. Here is the tale of thirteen women who proved that they were not only as tough as the toughest man but also brave enough to challenge the government. They were blocked by prejudice, jealousy, and the scrawled note of one of the most powerful men in Washington. But even though the Mercury 13 women did not make it into space, they did not lose, for their example empowered young women to take their place in the sky, piloting jets and commanding space capsules. *ALMOST ASTRONAUTS* is the story of thirteen true pioneers of the space age.

Tom Thumb: The Remarkable True Story of a Man in Miniature by George Sullivan

When Charles S. Stratton was born in 1838, he was a large baby, perfect in every way. But then he stopped growing. At age four, though a happy and mischievous child, he was just over two feet tall and weighed only fifteen pounds—the exact same size he had been as a seven-month-old baby. It was then that the notorious showman P.T. Barnum dubbed him Tom Thumb and put him on display, touring him around the world as a curiosity. A natural performer, Charley became enormously popular and wealthy, more so than any other performer before him. In this spirited biography—the first on its subject—George Sullivan recounts the fascinating adventures of Tom Thumb, and raises challenging questions about what constitutes exploitation—both in the 19th century and today.

The Journey That Saved Curious George by Louise Borden

In 1940, Hans and Margret Rey fled their Paris home as the German army advanced. They began their harrowing journey on bicycles, pedaling to Southern France with children's book manuscripts among their few possessions. Louise Borden combed primary resources, including Hans Rey's pocket diaries, to tell this dramatic true story. Archival materials introduce readers to the world of Hans and Margret Rey while Allan Drummond dramatically and colorfully illustrates their wartime trek to a new home. Follow the Rey's amazing story in this unique large format book that resembles a travel journal and includes full-color illustrations, original photos, actual ticket stubs and more. A perfect book for Curious George fans of all ages.

Bad Boy by Walter Dean Myers

Into a memoir that is gripping, funny, heartbreaking, and unforgettable, Walter Dean Myers richly weaves the details of his Harlem childhood in the 1940s and 1950s: a loving home life with his adopted parents, Bible school, street games, and the vitality of his neighborhood. Although Walter spent much of his time either getting into trouble or on the basketball court, secretly he was a voracious reader and an aspiring writer. But as his prospects for a successful future diminished, the values he had been taught at home, in school, and in his community seemed worthless, and he turned to the streets and his books for comfort. Here in his own words is the story of one of the strongest voices in children's and young adult literature today.

Outcasts United by Warren St. John

For readers who followed *Enrique's Journey*, *Outcasts United* is another equally moving account of refugees finding a new life in the U.S. Based on the adult bestseller, *Outcasts United: An American Town, a Refugee Team, and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference*, this young people's edition is a complex and inspirational story about the Fugees, a youth soccer team made up of diverse refugees from around the world, and their formidable female coach, Luma Mufleh. Clarkston, Georgia, was a typical southern town until it became a refugee resettlement center. The author explores how the community changed with the influx of refugees and how the dedication of Luma Mufleh and the entire Fugees soccer team inspired an entire community.

American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang

Jin Wang starts at a new school where he's the only Chinese-American student. When a boy from Taiwan joins his class, Jin doesn't want to be associated with him. Jin just wants to be an all-American boy, because he's in love with an all-American girl. Danny is an all-American boy: great at basketball, popular with the girls, but his obnoxious Chinese cousin Chin-Kee's annual visit is such a disaster that it ruins Danny's reputation at school, leaving him with no choice but to transfer somewhere he can start all over again. The Monkey King has lived for thousands of years and mastered the arts of kung fu and the heavenly disciplines. He's ready to join the ranks of the immortal gods in heaven. But there's no place in heaven for a monkey. Each of these characters cannot help himself alone, but how can they possibly help each other? They're going to have to find a way if they want to fix the disasters their lives have become.

