Summer Reading Grade 6 High Rock School
Be Yourself: Become a Community

Be Yourself: Historical Fiction

In 1946, during the Great Migration Langston leaves his life in Alabama behind after his mother dies and struggles to adjust to city living in Chicago. The one silver lining is the library. In the north, he is allowed to enter. He discovers another Langston in a poetry book. *Leaving Lymon* is a companion book, the story behind Langston’s greatest tormentor.

In Mississippi in 1955, Rosa lives with her sharecropper grandparents near where Emmett Till is murdered. Their stories intertwine as Rosa faces choices about her future. Should she stay in the South or look for new opportunities in the North? The sequel is *A Sky Full of Stars* (2018)

Kadohata, Cynthia. *A Place to Belong* (2019)
Now that World War II is over, twelve year old Hanako follows her family away from the detention camps where they had spent the war across the ocean to Japan, to her grandparents who live outside Hiroshima. She finds the love of her grandparents but also conditions that make it hard to start a new life.

Equal rights and the baseball field in the 1950’s, following Katy Gordon and her fight for girls to get a chance to play Little League.

Hannah and her father look for a new start in LaForge, Dakota Territory. Hannah wants a chance to go to school and hopes to be able to be a seamstress in her father’s shop. Hannah is half Chinese and knows that she may not be accepted. The author reimagines *Little House on the Prairie*, her favorite childhood book.
Parsons, Karyn. *How High the Moon* (PB 2020)
Henry, Myrna, and Ella live with their grandparents in Jim Crow South. Ella jumps at the chance to live with her mother in Boston, hoping it will give her clues to her father’s identity. A highly acclaimed portrait of how kids experienced race and justice; many reviews compare the book to the classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Paterson, Katherine. *My Brigadista Year* (PB 2019)
Thirteen year old Lora volunteers to teach people to read as part of Fidel Castro’s national literacy campaign. A short, powerful perspective on the individual efforts of one girl and the rise of communism in Cuba.

Rose, Caroline Starr. *May B.* (PB 2014)
May’s father sends her fifteen long prairie miles away to help a newly married couple with their homestead. This verse novel becomes a survival story as May is left to cope on the homestead alone.

Schlitz, Laura Amy. *A Drowned Maiden’s Hair* (PB 2007)
“On the morning of the best day in my life, I was locked in the outhouse singing The Battle Hymn of the Republic at the top of my lungs.” Maud is rescued from her temporary imprisonment by a woman who needs her skills to help her run her séance business. Will she find the family she longs for?

Smith, Roland. *Elephant Run* (PB 2009)
Nick’s parents want to keep him safe from the bombing in London during World War II, so they send him to their plantation in Burma. Little do they know that the Japanese army is about to invade, and Nick must rely on the skills of old friends and on their elephants to escape to safety.

Yelchin, Eugene. *Breaking Stalin’s Nose* (PB 2013)
Sasha strives to be a good communist, following all of the rules of his leader, Stalin. The night before he is to become a Young Pioneer, however, his illusions shatter. A short book, providing a glimpse into the lives of children in the Soviet Union.

*Spy Runner* (2019)
A cold war action spy thriller. Jake is convinced that the Russian man who has just moved into the extra room in his house is a spy.
Become a Community: Historical Fiction

Nine year old Ada has been kept inside all her life due to her clubfoot and her mother’s shame. When the children in London are evacuated, she escapes to join her little brother and to get a new chance at life. The sequel is just as satisfying.

In New York in 1971, Jamila and Josie are bused across Queens where they try to fit in at a new, integrated junior high school while their best friend, Francesca, tests the limits at a private school.

Grace’s family warns her to keep quiet when she starts work as a slave in the Big House. When she rebels, they need to flee quickly. This verse novel tells of their journey to the Great Dismal Swamp, a refuge for runaway slaves.

It is D Day: June 6, 1944, on the beach of Normandy as the Allied troops and French resistance fighters join to combat the German forces. One day, many voices, different perspectives, all intent on the same mission.

Hayles, Marsha. *The Breathing Room* (PB 2013)
It is 1940, and Evvy has contracted tuberculosis. She is sent to a Sanatorium to be cured, and her world becomes the small ward of girls who are sharing their hope for recovery.

Four boys. One deadly mission. During World War I, a team of boys too young to be soldiers tunnel under the battleground on the Western front, looking for lost soldiers.
The new postmaster has a daughter, not a son - bad luck for Dit who is looking for a new best friend. Emma does learn how to play baseball, and she teaches Dit new skills as they form an alliance that becomes necessary to save a man’s life in Alabama, 1917.

*Lions of Little Rock* (PB 2013)
It is 1958, and Marlee’s new best friend helps her find her voice. When Liz vanishes without a word, Marlee wants to find her but instead finds danger in trying to cross the color lines in the segregated south.

Gerta, her mother, and her older brother live on the Soviet side of the Berlin wall, and her father and middle brother are on the German side. When Gerta spies her father on the observation deck, she decodes his message that it is time for them to attempt a dangerous escape. An historical thriller. In *Words on Fire* Audra discovers her parents were involved in a dangerous mission: transporting books written in their native Lithuanian language, trying to preserve their heritage in defiance of the Russian government. When her parents are murdered, she takes on their cause.

Panteleakos, Nicole. *Planet Earth is Blue* (PB 2020)
12 year old Nova is with a foster family who works hard to understand her needs. She is nonverbal, a fan of the space program, and eagerly anticipating the Space shuttle Challenger liftoff when she is sure that her sister Bridget will find her again.

Bok Chitto River divides the Choctaw Nation from the Mississippi plantation territory. Martha Tom crosses the river despite her family's warnings that she would be in danger from the slave owners. She becomes friends with Lil Mo, an enslaved child, and then is able to help his family flee when his mother is about to be sold. Choctaw storyteller Tingle previously wrote about this historical tale in the picture book Crossing Bok Chitto.

Williams-Garcia, Rita. One Crazy Summer. (PB 2011), P.S. Be Eleven (PB 2015), Gone Crazy in Alabama (PB 2016)
In 1968, three sisters fly across the country to meet their mother, an artist who at first has little interest in her children. The three sisters respond to their mother in different ways as they spend their summer at the neighborhood community center run by the Black Panthers.

Yang, Kelly. Front Desk (PB 2019)
Mia’s family struggles to make enough money to live in the United States where they have moved from China. Given a chance with a struggling motel, Mia takes on the front desk, realizing that it is the one job she is equipped to do. A community story, based on the author’s own experiences.

Be Yourself: Science Fiction

Fforde, Patricia. The List (PB 2018)
In this dystopian book, residents of the Ark are required to speak using only 500 approved words. As apprentice to the Wordsmith, Lette can record words that are retired and prepares the lists of words for teachers. When the Wordsmith disappears, Lette starts to investigate what happened to him and to ask important questions about her community.

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. Double Identity (PB 2007)
Beth’s overprotective parents are acting strange. First, they start whispering to each other, and then they drive Beth to a new town and leave her with a stranger. What is going on? Why are some people staring at her?

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. Under Their Skin (PB 2017)
Twins Nick and Erynn investigate why their mother and new stepfather are keeping secrets. They aren’t allowed to meet their new step siblings. What is it about them that is dangerous? The adventure ends with the second book: In Over Their Heads.
L’Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time.* (available in paperback)
Meg is awkward and unhappy, brilliant but struggling at school. She is convinced that her missing father will return, and in this Newbery award winning book, she gets to test her talents as she goes on an adventure to rescue him.

Cog, short for “cognitive development,” is a robot built to learn. After an accident separates him from his creator, he wakes up in a lab where scientists are trying to dismantle him. He gathers four robot accomplices and heads off on his mission to find her. Wall-E meets *The Wild Robot.*

Westerfeld, Scott. *Leviathan* (PB 2010) Also *Behemoth* and *Goliath*
In this Steampunk version of World War I, Alek escapes from his castle in a Clanker, a machine that moves like a beast, and his parents’ servants try to hide the prince on a mountain. When the airship Leviathan crashes nearby, the two sides of the war meet and become unusual allies in this action adventure book, the first of a trilogy.

**Become a Community: Science Fiction**

Angleberger, Tom and Paul Dellinger. *Fuzzy* (2016)
Max is happy to help the robot Fuzzy adjust to Vanguard Middle School. Vanguard is a school of the future, run by robots and committed to UpGrade scores. Their friendship is more important than they first imagined as they learn why Fuzzy is being trained to learn human emotions. A robot for the imagined future, as funny as the Origami Yoda books.

In Robin Hood style, five gifted kids perform Random Acts of Kindness. They may have met their match in pursuing Proteus, an evil computer that can steal data from anywhere and wants to take over the world. Technical wizardry, fast paced action. There are now five in the series. Fans of Alex Rider will appreciate the series.

*Can a robot survive in the wilderness?* When robot Roz opens her eyes for the first time, she discovers that she is alone on a remote, wild island. She has no idea how she got there or what her purpose is--but she knows she needs to survive.


At first, Elodee is glad that her family has moved to Eventown. After a difficult year, it is good to be in a place where everything feels happy. But why do they only sing one song in music class? Why are there only three ice cream flavors? Is there a price to be paid for everything being happy?

Holyoke, Polly. *The Neptune Project* (PB 2014)

Nere knows that she loves the ocean and swimming with her dolphin friends. When the government orders everyone to leave the ocean colonies, she discovers that she has been genetically modified to live in the ocean. Will she survive the journey to find the Neptune colony? Followed by *The Neptune Challenge* (PB 2016) and *The Neptune Promise* (PB 2017)

Lee, Yoon Ha. *Dragon Pearl* (PB 2020)

Min wishes she could join her brother in the space force and leave her boring life behind. She doesn’t believe the official who tells her that her brother has illegally left the ship training course, and she goes to uncover what really happened. She has to hide her true identity, a fox, and her ability to shape shift. (Rick Riordan Presents)

Messner, Kate. *Wake Up Missing* (PB 2014)

Cat agrees to go to a special hospital in Florida in order to treat her concussion. She gradually realizes that she and everyone there is in danger.
Four children are selected by mysterious exams to enter the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened, and they must work together to save the world from an evil man.

**Be Yourself: Realistic Fiction**

Verse novels for sports fans. In *Booked*, twelve year old Nick lives for soccer. His life off the field is more complicated. His linguistics professor father wants him to memorize words from his dictionary, his mother is leaving to pursue her dream job, and a couple of bullies pay too much attention to him. The rapping librarian with a Mohawk is a help, and readers will be interested to check out the books he recommends. *Crossover* (2014) Jordan and Josh Bell, twin basketball players, find their lives are less in sync as they are getting older. *Rebound* (2018) features their father, Chuck, and how his mistakes as a kid led him to a summer with his grandparents and a chance to learn to love basketball.

Baron, Chris. *All of Me* (2019)
Moving is hard, making new friends is hard, but being teased about his weight is the hardest of all. In this book, Ari has to learn to stand up for who he is, no matter how much space he takes up in the world.

Suzy is convinced that the Medusa jellyfish was the reason her friend drowned. She stops speaking and pursues her scientific study as she tries to make sense of the tragedy as well as her connections to others in middle school.

Blake, Ashley. *Ivy Aberdeen’s Letter to the World* (PB 2019)
A tornado damages Ivy’s house, and in the aftermath she loses her sketchbook which contains feelings that she isn’t ready to share with the world. A book about friendship, the importance of family, and first love.
Bowling, Dusti. *Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus* (PB 2019)  
*Momentous Events in the Life of a Cactus* (2019)  
When Aven moves with her parents to help run a rundown western theme park, she also has to adjust to a new school where kids aren’t used to her, a girl with no arms.

Zoey wishes she were an octopus. She needs more hands to take care of little brother and sister, and she would like to hide the way an octopus can. Despite Zoey’s attempts not to be noticed, her teacher welcomes her to the debate club, a first step towards being seen.

Brosgol, Vera. *Be Prepared* (PB 2018)  
Vera wants to go to summer camp, and she is excited that there is one her family can afford: Russian camp. At last, a place where she might fit in. If only it were as easy as she wished! A graphic novel about friendship.

Cartaya, Pablo. *Marcus Vega Doesn’t Speak Spanish* (PB 2019)  
Marcus is a big kid with a big heart; he advocates for his brother and runs a side business walking kids to school. The school bully manipulates the system to get him unfairly suspended, and his mother finally allows the family to go back to their native Puerto Rico where he wants to find his father. There, he gets the chance to reconnect with family and life on the island.

Cherry, Kathleen, *Everyday Hero* (PB 2016) Always available on Sora!  
Alice likes rules, order, quiet. Her new teachers don’t know she has Asperger’s Syndrome, and she ends up in detention. There she meets Megan, a tough kid who nevertheless stands up for Alice. A book about the power of friendship and what people can do for each other.
Attending a fancy private school wasn’t Jordan's idea. His new school has different rules than his neighborhood, and it is tough to be one of the few black kids. An important book about being new in school, the importance of friends, and navigating differences in race and privilege. A highly recommended graphic novel. Newbery Winner, 2020!

Day, Christine. *I Can Make This Promise* (2019)
Edie has always known her mother had been adopted by a white couple, but her discovery of a box in the attic gives her some clues that help her start to uncover her the story of her Native American family.

Draper, Sharon. *Blended* (PB 2020)
The worst time in Isabella’s week is the pass off at the mall when she is shuttled between her two families, her white diner waitress mother and her black lawyer father. Managing microaggressions, standing up for herself, and finding her voice are challenges that are as important for readers as they are for the main character.

Green, Tim. *Football Genius* (PB 2008)
Troy is a football genius. He can look at the field and predict what the opposing team is going to do next. On his own team, however, he does not get a chance to play. His mother has started a new job with the Atlanta Falcons, and Troy knows that he can help his favorite team win. Will Troy be able to use his gifts? The first in a series by Tim Green, a professional football player. Also, *Baseball Great* and sequels.

Grimes, Nikki. *Garvey’s Choice* (PB 2018)
A verse novel about the year Garvey learns to follow his passions. His father likes sports; Garvey prefers reading, astronomy, and eating junk food. When his friend convinces him to join chorus, he gets a chance to be truly good at something.
Hunt, Lynda Mullaly. *One for the Murphys* (PB 2013)
Casey knows how to be tough. She does not know how to be a member of a loving family. When she joins the Murphy family as their foster daughter, she learns that she too deserves kindness in her life.

Astrid thinks the perfect summer will be attending Roller Derby camp with her best friend Nicole. Instead, Nicole chooses to attend ballet camp, and skating is much harder than Astrid had anticipated. A graphic novel about friendships and perseverance.

Kadohata, Cynthia. *Checked* (PB 2019)
Conor is a hockey kid. Every day is filled with practice, clinics, and workouts in the pursuit of making an elite team. He and his dad don’t have the money other kids have, and when his beloved dog gets cancer, he sacrifices all the extra hockey in order to pay for treatment. A book that is passionate about hockey but is also about family, neighborhood, and the love of a great dog.

Kehret, Peg. *Stolen Children* (PB 2010)
The babysitting class Amy takes does not tell her what to do if the child she is watching is kidnapped and the kidnappers take her along.

Makeda questions who she is, especially when she leaves her only black friend behind and has trouble fitting in when her parents move the family across the country. Written by an author who was also black, raised in a white family.

Lupica, Mike. *Strike Zone* (2019)
Nick Garcia has many dreams - for a chance to pitch in the major leagues, for a cure for lupus to help his sister, and for a time when he can stop living in fear of the government deporting his parents.
A lightning strike gives Lucy genius level brilliance, but being smart doesn’t mean that middle school is easy. Lucy’s grandmother is making her attend a year of middle school, and Lucy needs to learn how to manage middle school friendships. High Rock students give this book rave reviews.

A bag of Legos and the chance to build his city become the path to healing after Lolly’s brother is murdered. An ALA Notable book with many starred reviews.

Patterson, James and Chris Grabenstein. *I Funny* (2012)
James Grimm wants to be the funniest standup comedian. The problem? He is in a wheelchair and can not stand up. The secret to his past unfolds gradually as he works toward his dream of becoming a comedian. Good for graduates of the Wimpy Kid series.

Perez, Celia. *The First Rule of Punk* (PB 2018)
Malu loves punk rock, skateboarding, and zines. She does not like starting over at a new school, being far from her father, or cilantro. Pages are decorated with some of the artwork from Malu’s zines. Recommended for fans of *Roller Girl*.

Ramee, Lisa Moore. *A Good Kind of Trouble* (PB 2020)
Shayla wants to follow the rules. When her sister starts to participate in the Black Lives Matter campaign, she keeps her distance at first. But what is the right thing to do?

Lucy wants to play basketball. She does not want to go to Chinese school, and she does not want to share her room with her great-aunt who has just come from China.
Sloan, Holly Goldberg. *Counting by 7s* (PB 2014)
Willow, a gifted student, struggles to make friends at school. Her one connection is Mai, the girl she meets while waiting for the guidance counselor. When Willow’s parents are killed, Mai’s mother takes her in. Willow’s gift for bringing people together ultimately changes lives. Fans of *Wonder* may want to read this book.

Abby Wu isn't sure about middle school. She knows about being in the middle; she is a middle child, and she hates riding in the middle seat in the car. Why would middle school be any better than the other middles? Her only favorite class is lunch. With pages similar in format to *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, Abby describes how she finds her way in middle school. Also, *Frazzled 2: Ordinary Mishaps and Inevitable Catastrophes* (2017) and *Frazzled: Minor Incidents and Absolute Uncertainties* (2019)

Moon is everything Christine isn't. She's confident, impulsive, artistic...and though they both grew up in the same Chinese-American suburb, Moon is somehow unlike anyone Christine has ever known. But after Moon moves in next door, these unlikely friends are soon best friends, sharing their favorite music videos and painting their toenails when Christine’s strict parents aren't around.

Warga, Jasmine. *Other Words for Home* (2019)
Jude and her pregnant mother flee Syria for the safety of her uncle’s home in the United States. Adjusting to a new country is difficult, as is missing her father and brothers who are still in Syria. A verse novel. Newbery Honor Book.

All Amara wants for her birthday is to visit her father’s family in New York City—Harlem, to be exact. She can't wait to finally meet her Grandpa Earl and cousins in person, and to stay in the brownstone where her father grew up. Maybe this will help her understand her family--and herself--in new way.
Williams, Alicia D. *Genesis Begins Again* (2019)
There are 96 things on the list Genesis keeps about things she hates about herself. #95, skin so dark she is called charcoal or eggplant, #61, getting evicted from her house when her father gambles away the rent money. Her father finds a house in a neighborhood with a welcoming school, potential friends, and a chance to begin again. Winner of multiple awards, a powerful book.

**Becomes a Community: Realistic Fiction**

Allen, Kate. *The Line Tender* (PB 2020)
Kate’s best friend is her constant companion, the person who knows her best, especially as she misses her mother, a marine biologist who died when she was seven. The two start to investigate a whale that was washed to shore and then another tragedy happens. Good for fans of Ali Benjamin’s *The Thing About Jellyfish*

Cooking is the key to becoming part of a community, Foster McFee has learned. Foster can memorize a recipe, but she is not able to read; she dreads starting a new school. Will the reclusive movie star who is hiding in town really be able to help her?

In *Almost Home*, Sugar Mae Cole and her mother become homeless. The adorable puppy on the cover helps keep Sugar grounded as she copes with the many changes in her life.

In *Soar*, Jeremiah is a huge baseball fan even though his health issues don’t allow him to play. When his new town abolishes the baseball team due to a scandal, he makes it his mission to help the town build a team.

Burt, Jake. *Greetings from Witness Protection* (PB 2018)
The FBI wants to put Nicki’s resilience and attitude to good use. Rather than being placed in yet another foster home, she is sent to a family in witness protection to help them avoid detection. Adventure, suspense. A fast, compelling read.

Buyea, Rob. *Because of Mr. Terupt* (PB 2011) *Mr. Terupt Falls Again* (PB 2013) *Saving Mr. Terupt* (PB 2016)
The new teacher figures out the class quickly and gently encourages the students to be themselves. When he is hurt in an accident, the class must find a way to continue without him. Told from the perspectives of seven of the students.
Cheng, Jack. *See You in the Cosmos* (PB 2018)
Alex dreams of launching his golden iPod into space like his hero, Carl Sagan. Told in a series of podcast entries, he recounts the journey to rocket camp with his dog Carl Sagan, launching a road trip where he finds friends and family.

Efren adores his mother, especially her cooking and the way she makes her house feel like home. His worst fears are realized when she is picked up by immigration officials and sent to Mexico. Ernesto can’t take care of his siblings and keep the house running for his father; he needs help to find her again.

Connor, Leslie. *The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle* (PB 2020)
Mason Buttle tells the truth. The police officer who comes around to talk to him often doesn’t believe him. His best friend died in his orchard a year ago, and the town thinks he must have done something wrong. A story of empathy, good for fans of *Wonder*.

Dowell, Frances O’Rourke. *The Class* (available on Sora, PB in fall of 2020)
Twenty sixth graders, twenty points of view. Why is the teacher’s pet suddenly being a rebel? Why are they catching glimpses of Sam, a classmate who had moved away. Where are the teacher’s precious mementos she usually keeps on her desk? The people in the class start to notice each other as they become a community.

Coyote and her father have been traveling on a school bus around the country. Where do they really need to go? First, Coyote brings a small cat on board, and slowly more people join on the journey as they all figure out their destination.

Teddy Youngblood is in a coma following an incident at football camp. Told through texts, letters, and newspaper articles, the cause of the injury unfolds. The reading goes quickly, the message is important. A favorite, recommended by High Rock’s reluctant readers.
A free verse novel about Kevin, bully turned victim, whose unique brand of poetry (created from library books) will appeal to Diary of a Wimpy Kid readers.

Jacobson, Jennifer. *Small As an Elephant*. (PB 2013)
Jack’s unpredictable mother leaves him at a campsite in Acadia National Park. Unwilling to ask for help, Jack tries to find his way home by himself in this survival story.

Making the greatest chocolate chip cookie and living in the greatest city in the world - Tris’s two great claims to fame. Then his parents move to a small town where the fabled special doughnuts aren’t even made any more. It turns out that Tris has a talent for making doughnuts - and in the sequel he learns more about himself when he appears on a cut throat cooking show.

Amina is a Pakistani-American who loves to sing but does not want to be in the spotlight. Sixth grade brings changes in friendships and a visit from her uncle who disapproves of her piano playing. Her community must work together when there is fire at her mosque. *More to the Story* is an homage to *Little Women*, set in Georgia with a modern American Muslim family. Jameela, the writer, wants to prove her worth as a journalist by writing an important story, but her sister’s illness and her father’s six month business trip away from the family make her wonder where her priorities should be.

Klass, David. *Losers Take All* (PB 2016)
At a school where winners reign, a rebel JV soccer team decides to lose. They didn’t expect to gain more fans than the winning teams!

Chase loses his memory after falling from a roof. When he goes back to school, he has to figure out who his classmates are. Why are some people scared of him? What kind of person did he used to be, and what choices will he make now?
Caleb and Bobby Gene are looking for adventure. They encounter their 16 year old neighbor, Styx and ask for his help in trading a bag of fireworks that they are not supposed to have. He sets them up for a season of discovery, managing their trades and opening their worlds.

Medina, Meg. *Merci Suarez Changes Gears* (PB 2020)
Merci is starting sixth grade in a private school where she is a scholarship student. She is worried about her grandfather who is not seeming like himself, and she struggles to fit in at school. The Newbery Medal winner, 2019.

Ally, Bree, and Jack become a team when they share a common goal at the one place in the United States where people can see a total solar eclipse.

*A Mango Shaped Space* (PB 2005)
Mia has learned not to talk about the colors she sees when she looks at numbers, especially after her class laughed at her for using color to describe a math problem.

Twenty minutes between school and home, the time middle school kids are completely on their own. Ten intertwining stories within the ten blocks.

Saeed, Aisha. *Amal Unbound* (PB 2020)
A short, powerful book. Amal angers the local tribal leader and is forced to pay her debt by working for him, becoming an indentured servant with no end to her contract. Set in modern day rural Pakistan, but with conditions that feel very distant to readers who are used to fairness and social justice.
Sumner, Jamie. *Roll With It* (2019)
Ellie has a big personality and amazing cooking skills. Fitting in at a new school - and fitting her wheelchair into her grandparents' trailer - are challenges she is not sure she is ready for. A book championed by R. J. Palacio, the author of Wonder.

Venkatraman, Padma. *The Bridge Home* (PB 2020)
Runaway sisters find themselves on the streets of Chennai, India, with no food or place to stay. Small kindnesses and a makeshift shelter with two street boys create a home in their space on a bridge.

On the last hour of school on Friday afternoon, students in 6B are given an hour to talk to each other with no adult to set an agenda. They begin to tell each other their stories and become for each other a safe harbor, protection from the world around them.

**Be Yourself: Mystery and Adventure**

Serafina lives in the shadows of the castle with her father, the keeper of the furnace. She observes the visitors and castle life, but does not become involved until she witnesses an evil figure in a black cloak enveloping a young girl in a yellow dress.

Ted and Kat see their cousin walk onto the London Eye, the largest ferris wheel in the world, but they do not see him get off. Where is he? It is up to them to find the clues and rescue their cousin.
The famous hippo, mascot of the megazoo FunJungle, is belly up in his exhibit. How did Harry die? Teddy is convinced that Harry was murdered, and his investigation turns up intrigue and danger.

“Charlie Thorne is a genius. Charlie Thorne is a thief. Charlie Thorne isn’t old enough to drive. And now it’s up to her to save the world…” Only she can crack the code to find Einstein’s secret equation before the villains use it to destroy the world. A fast-paced thriller by a favorite author, first in a new series.

Horowitz, Anthony: *Stormbreaker* (PB 2006) and other Alex Rider titles
After Alex Rider’s uncle dies, the M16 British Intelligence agency recruits Alex to take over his uncle’s dangerous work.

Alchemists are disappearing throughout the city, leaving the apprentices to wonder what evil force is lurking. Christopher Rowe was happy as an apprentice, but now he must use his skills to unravel complex codes to solve the mystery and save the world.

Smith, Roland. *Peak* (PB 2008)
Peak gets busted for scaling a building in New York City. His estranged father rescues him from juvenile detention and brings him to Nepal where he has a chance to climb Mount Everest. *Edge* PB 2016 is a thriller, his next adventure, on a mountain in Afghanistan.
Smith, Roland. *IQ Independence Hall* (PB 2008) (Six total in the series)
IQ and his new stepsister Angela are touring the country with their newly married parents and their popular band, Match. A year off from school in a deluxe motorhome, what could go wrong? Former Secret Service agents, international spies, and mysterious circumstances round out the adventure.

Stevens, Robin. *Poison is Not Polite* (PB 2017)
A birthday party turns into a crime scene when a guest becomes suddenly and mysteriously ill. A storm makes it impossible to leave. Reminiscent of Agatha Christie.

Scoob is in trouble. He is suspended from school which will bring even more punishment from his strict father. Grandma comes to the rescue with a road trip in a brand new motorhome. With the help of her old Green Book, they will retrace the steps she had taken with grandpa years before. But why is Grandma turning off the phone? Why are they stopping at certain places? A road trip through a history of race relations in the American South that will reveal some of the hidden mysteries of Scoob’s family.

Wolk, Lauren. *Beyond the Bright Sea* (PB 2018)
Crow lives on a small island with the people who found her as an infant, floating in a tiny boat. Crow has always been curious about the world around her, but it isn’t until the night a mysterious fire appears across the water that the unspoken question of her own history forms in her heart. Soon, an unstoppable chain of events is triggered, leading Crow down a path of discovery and danger.

**Become a Community: Mystery and Adventure**

“Avoid large spaces. Keep to small.” The advice of the bus driver becomes increasingly creepy. The bus has stopped, scarecrows seem to be chasing the kids. Ollie’s ghost story seems to be coming real. For readers who like scary stories.
Berry, Julie. *The Scandalous Sisterhood of Prickwillow Place* (PB 2016)
“Pocked, Stout, Dour, Dear, Disgraceful, Dull, Smooth” - the seven adjectives describing the seven students attending St. Etheldreda’s School for Young Ladies. When their teachers are inconveniently poisoned at dinner, the seven proper young ladies choose to continue at their school, pretending nothing is wrong while they try to solve the mystery and hope the killer won't strike again.

There is a gun on the playground, and Thelonius is accused of bringing it. He has a reputation for crazy stunts, but he is not a criminal. He needs to find out where that gun came from.

Twelve lucky essay winners spend the night in the fantastic new library and then are given the challenge of finding the secret escape route. In the Library Olympics, teams from around the country compete in a contest that helps determine the true value of a library.

Hopkinson, Deborah. *The Great Trouble* (PB 2015)
Equal parts medical mystery, historical novel, and survival story about the 1854 London cholera outbreak. Follow Eel as he tries to help his friend and gets pulled into the detective work of the historical figure Dr. Snow.

A letter describes a hidden fortune and a historical mystery. Two kids on summer vacation take on the challenge of unraveling town history to solve the puzzle. For fans of *The Westing Game* and other puzzle mysteries.
Ghosts are appearing throughout London, and only young people can see and destroy them. Lucy becomes the third member of Lockwood & Company, a Psychic Detective Agency run entirely by teenagers who are highly talented, often distracted, and have strategy meetings over cookies and tea.

In a small southern town where everyone knows everyone, Mo has a summer agenda of hanging out at the cafe run by the folks who are raising her, playing with her best friend, and trying to learn more about where she came from. Mysteries begin to pile up with a mysterious car, a murder, and out of town detectives. Good thing Mo is three times lucky.

The Ancient World: Good preview for sixth grade social studies

Connie moves in with her aunt and thinks she will be in yet one more place where she does not fit in. She does not know that her unique talents will make her important to the Preservation of Mythical Creatures. Sirens, medusas, and other mythical beasts play a role in this series, excellent for Harry Potter fans.

Hennessey, Carolyn. *Pandora Gets Jealous* (PB 2008) plus sequels
Pandora does not mean to open the box that lets all the disaster into the world. She is just trying to bring in a project for school that will impress her friends. Now she must go on a journey to recover the ills she has set loose. Accompanied by her friends and their “shell phones,” the setting feels like middle school in ancient times.
This beautiful graphic novel tells the famous story of Odysseus as he tries to return home after the Trojan War.

A beautifully illustrated collection of the classic stories in Egyptian mythology.

Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief*, *The Red Pyramid* or any in the series
Percy Jackson does not fit in at school. Reading is difficult for him, and disaster follows in his wake. When he is accused of stealing Zeus’s thunderbolt, he must go on a quest with his new friends to discover who really stole it.

Urdu, Anne. *The Shadow Thieves* (PB 2007) plus sequels
If you liked *The Lightning Thief*, you might like another adventure into the world of the Greek Gods. Children are getting sick, losing their shadows. Charlotte and her cousin Zee have to adventure into the Underworld to find out who is stealing them and must confront the grandson of Hades who is trying to take over the world. First of a trilogy.

**Be Yourself: Fantasy**

It is hard for Joshua to keep a low profile in sixth grade because he is hiding two secrets. First, his parents are supervillains, and second, he seems to be developing super powers as well. Does he have to use it for evil? Good for readers looking for a funny, action packed book.
Every year the village elder chooses the youngest child to sacrifice to the witch, and every year the witch rescues the baby, wondering who would leave a child alone on the road. When the witch accidentally lets the baby drink moonlight, the baby gets magical powers. The witch decides to raise this special child herself. (Newbery 2017)

Aru tries to impress her school friends by lighting the Lamp of Baratu in the museum where she lives with her mother. Immediately, everyone around her is frozen in time; she has unleashed the Sleeper, an Indian demon who is going to awaken the God of Destruction. Aru discovers that she is a Pandava, a recreation of one of the five Pandava brothers from the Mahabharata. She and the other Pandava, Miri, must rescue the world. Hindu mythology is the basis for this quest by two unlikely heroes. (Rick Riordan Presents)

On her twelfth birthday, Kiranmala does not expect to be attacked by a rakkosh, rescued by a pair of princes, and launched on a quest to rescue her parents. Percy Jackson with Indian folklore - fast paced adventure. (Rick Riordan Presents)

Will has lived in the castle since he was an infant, but now it is time for him and his peers to begin their next stage of training. He wants to be a knight as he imagines his father was, but instead he is chosen to be the apprentice of the mysterious Ranger. Also *The Brotherband Chronicles*

Hale, Shannon. *The Goose Girl* (PB 2009) and others in the Bayern series
As in the Grimms’ Fairy Tale, the evil handmaiden pretends to be the true princess while the princess must tend the geese. In this twist, however, Ani discovers her true talents as she takes care of the geese. Controlling the wind helps her begin to take control of her future.
Lackey, Lindsay. *All the Impossible Things* (2019)
When Red gets mad, the wind starts to blow. Foster families have decided that she isn’t safe to have around, and she is finally taken to a new family, the Grooves, where her life feels better. Then her mother blows back in. For fans of *One for the Murphys* with a twist of fantasy.

Lin, Grace. *When the Sea Turned to Silver* (PB 2017)
When the Emperor’s soldiers kidnap her grandmother, Pinmai must go on a quest to find the Luminous Stone to trade for her freedom. The third in this companion series, weaving Chinese folklore and thrilling adventure.

Seventh grader Tristan clings to his friend’s journal. It is the only thing he has from his friend except his memory of not being able to save him in the bus accident. Then Gum Baby steals the journal, and Tristan is off to another world to get it back where he confronts the mythology of West Africa and the folk heroes of the South. Rick Riordan Presents.

Sophie is transported from her family to the world of elves where she belongs, but questions remain. Why was she raised in California? Who wanted to keep her safe, and who is after her now? The first book in a fantasy series, for fans of *The Unwanteds*. Shannon Messenger’s visit to High Rock was a highlight, and the series is by far the most popular at school.

Sage and three other boys are captured by Connor, a noble who wants to overthrow the king. As Connor’s evil plans unfold, the boys realize the danger they are in. Sage is more than just an unfortunate orphan, and layers of deceit unfold in this exciting adventure.

In Aster’s family, boys are shapeshifters and girls are witches. The problem is that Aster is interested in witchcraft and has no power to shape shift. First in a series. A graphic novel.

All of the town’s troubles are blamed on Morrigan Crow, the unlucky girl whose bad luck affects the lives of all those around her according to the townspeople. Then on her 11th birthday, when her fate says she is doomed to die, Jupiter North comes to whisk her away. Parallels to Harry Potter. (Book 3 is released in August)
Become a Community: Fantasy

Applegate, Katherine. *The One and Only Bob* (sequel to *The One and Only Ivan*) 2020
Bob is back! With the help of his friends, he sets off on a journey to find his long lost sister. Be on the lookout for the movie of *The One and Only Ivan*, originally scheduled to premiere in August.

Harry Potter fans will be thrilled to read a new series of a magician in training. Callum Hunt has fled from magic all his life, and his father does not want him to be accepted into the Magisterium. He tries valiantly to fail every test so that he is not admitted into the school. First of the Magisterium series: *Copper Gauntlet* (PB 2016), *Bronze Key* (PB 2017) *Silver Mask* (PB 2018) *Golden Tower* (PB 2019)

Hansel and Gretel walk through eight tales in this book. As the author frequently warns the reader, these tales are not for young children and they should go to bed “Because this is where things start to get, well . . . awesome.”

When her mother comes down with an incurable disease, Lalani knows she must be the one to find a cure. None of the men who have left the island have returned, but Lalani knows she must brave the journey. Inspired by Filipino folklore, the story of one girl’s courage.

Teamwork, magic, and saving the town from the villainous clutches of B. B. Bosso and his crew of crooked carnies. The start of a best selling series, perfect for summer reading. Hints on creating magic tricks included.

Machale, D. J. *Merchant of Death* (PB 2009) Pendragon series
Bobby may look like just a normal boy, but he is going to save the world. Not just this world. All worlds, past and future. A great choice for someone who wants to read an entire series.
Magoon, Kekla. *Shadows of Sherwood: A Robyn Hoodlum Adventure* (PB 2016)
The night Robyn’s parents are captured, she flees to the forest. Soon a cast of misfits band together to find them, to right the wrongs of the government, and to protect the poor. A dystopian twist on the Robin Hood story. Trilogy.

McMann, Lisa. *The Unwanteds* (PB 2012) or sequels
The Hunger Games meets Harry Potter. At age 13, the children in Quill are sorted into three categories: Wanted, Necessary, and Unwanted. Any hint of imagination or creativity can send someone to the Eliminators. The Unwanteds are carted out of town only to discover the fantastic world of Artime where their talents are embraced.

Older, Daniel Jose. *Dactyl Hill Squad* (PB 2019)
Action, adventure, humor, dinosaurs. In 1863, a group of orphans is on a field trip when the Draft Riots break out. Their school is burned, and they must escape to the Dactyl Hill neighborhood, a refuge for the black and brown skinned New Yorkers. On almost everyone’s Best Books list of 2018, a combination of adventure, action, and humor. The Civil War but with dinosaurs!

**Be Yourself: Memoir and Biography**

In May of 1942, at the age of eighteen, Ashley Bryan was drafted to fight in World War II. For the next three years, he would face the horrors of war as a black soldier in a segregated army. For the next forty years, Ashley would keep his time in the war a secret. But now, he tells his story.

Jimmy was one of the most popular kids in his class until he got chicken pox, missed the championship basketball game, and dared to convince his teacher that comic books were valuable literature. A graphic novel memoir.
Tim Howard’s uplifting memoir about how he grew from being a hyperactive kid from New Jersey with Tourette syndrome to becoming one of the world’s premier soccer goalkeepers.

You may have read Peg Kehret’s exciting adventure books. This book is her personal adventure of how she survived polio, a disease that paralyzed her from the neck down. It was only through hard work that she was able to walk again.

This is the story of the first semester of Rex Ogle’s sixth grade. He was hungry, he wore hand me down clothes, and he got Free Lunch - an embarrassment every time he went through the cafeteria line. See also Quaran-Teen, the book he has been writing in serial format, one week at a time, this spring.

Stone, Tanya Lee. *Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream*. Follow thirteen women as they try to become NASA’s first women astronauts in the early 1960’s. (PB 2009)

Takei, George. *They Called Us Enemy* (PB 2019)
“In a stunning graphic memoir, Takei revisits his haunting childhood in American concentration camps, as one of over 100,000 Japanese Americans imprisoned by the U.S. government during World War II.”

A memoir in verse of growing up in the 1960’s and 1970’s in the south and in New York City in the midst of Jim Crow Laws, Civil Rights, and family. Winner of a Newbery Honor, American Book Award, and a Coretta Scott King Award.
Become a Community: Memoir and Biography

Bragg, Georgia. *How They Croaked: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous.* (PB 2012)
A celebration of the endings of 19 historical figures for those readers who appreciate the gory details.

Hoose, Phillip. *Attucks! Oscar Robertson and the Basketball Team that Awakened a City*
The award winning account of a star basketball player and how he led his high school basketball team to victory in 1955 and 1956, the first all black team to win the state championship. An important perspective on the Civil Rights movement and how basketball teams help to end segregation. An award winning book.

Jamieson, Victoria and Omar Mohamed. *When Stars are Scattered* (PB 2020)
Jamieson, author of *Roller Girl*, pairs with Somali refugee Omar Mohamed to tell his story of growing up in a refugee camp in Kenya. Details of day to day life, taking care of his nonverbal brother, being hungry, and wanting a chance to have an education.

Pinkney, Andrea. *Martin Rising: Requiem for a King*
A series of poems tell the story of Martin Luther King’s last months, focusing on the winter and spring of 1968. Illustrations by Brian Pinkney amplify the meaning of the poems. Winner of many awards including best Book of the Year from the School Library Journal and New York Public Library

Be Yourself: Nonfiction

Dendy, Leslie and Mel Boring. *Guinea Pig Scientists* (PB 2014)
Read true stories of scientists who did experiments on themselves. For example, in the chapter Baked British Gentlemen, the scientists withstood temperatures up to 200 degrees to see what happens to the body’s core temperature. Fascinating and a little gross.

Hendrix, John. *The Faithful Spy: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Plot to Kill Hitler*
An amazing blend of graphic novel and compelling historical narrative. The words play across the page, their placement, size, and color adding meaning to the text.
The how-to guide for kids who need to learn to make their own fun this summer.

Must read for students interested in graphic design. Made for kids by Chip Kidd, a graphic designer best known for his creative book covers.

Another masterpiece by Macaulay with his famous colored pencil illustrations. Fans of *The Way Things Work* will be interested in discovering how their bodies work.

Montgomery, Heather L. *Something Rotten: A Fresh Look at Roadkill* (PB 2019)
You see something flattened on the side of the road. Do you turn away, or do you go closer to investigate? Insights into the scientific process from a scientist who can't pass up an opportunity to learn.

Introduces the relevance of coding and shares down-to-earth explanations about coding principles and real-life stories of women programmers who work at such places as Pixar and NASA.

**Become a Community: Nonfiction**

Aronson, Marc. *Rising Water: The Story of the Thai Cave Rescue.* (PB 2020)
The incredible true story of the twelve boys trapped with their coach in a flooded cave in Thailand and their inspiring rescue.
As the glaciers change and melt, bodies trapped inside the ice reveal information about history. From the author of *Bodies from the Ash* and *Bodies from the Bog.*

World War II enthusiasts will be fascinated by these accounts of the US submarine war. Primary sources including official Naval documents, photographs and first person accounts vividly demonstrate the heroics of the small submarine force.

Follow the trail of the epidemiologist who was challenged to discover the cause of seemingly random typhoid outbreaks and who discovered “Typhoid Mary,” the cook who did not want to believe that she could make anyone sick.

Why did Americans panic when they heard the now famous radio broadcast? An account of the ultimate fake news story, retold with carefully researched details. Winner of many nonfiction awards.

Tells the amazing story of the children involved in the protests and then the walk from Selma to Montgomery to give black citizens the right to vote in 1965.

The New York Times bestseller adapted for younger readers. Decades of field research on elephants and whales combined with new discoveries about the brain give readers new insight into animals.
Stories of codes used in history, and examples of code you can try yourself. Winner of the 2020 AAAS/Subaru SB&F Prize for Excellence in Science Books

The opening line is: “They were the kinds of kids who jumped off roofs of buildings.”
“These awe-inspiring stories culminate in a suspenseful, nail-biting race across the country that brings to life the glory and grit of the dangerous and thrilling early days of flying.” Mrs. Vaccaro’s favorite nonfiction book of the year

For those who like their crime thrillers to be true stories. A group of counterfeiters plotted to take Lincoln’s body from his grave in order to trade it to get their leader out of jail. By Steve Sheinkin, the Newbery and Seibert award winning author,

Swanson, James L. *Chasing Lincoln’s Killer* (2009)
John Wilkes Booth was on the loose for twelve days after he killed Lincoln. This historical thriller follows Booth’s journey in detail.

Swanson, James L. *Chasing King’s Killer* (PB 2018)
James Earl Ray was running away from the law for more than a month after he killed Martin Luther King, Jr. This book begins with King’s life, and then it describes how Ray began his pursuit of King and the work of the detectives to find him.

Woolet, Laura E. *Big Top Burning: The Story of an Arsonist, a Missing Girl, and the Greatest Show on Earth* (PB 2019)
What really happened on July 6, 1944 that caused one of the worst fire disasters in our history? Read the stories, evaluate the evidence, and draw your own conclusions about the cause of the great fire in this disaster story that is still a mystery.