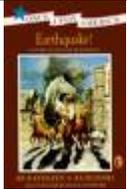


Suggested Books for Going into 5th Grade



Earthquake! A Story of Old San Francisco
by Kathleen Kudlinski

Phillip MacMillan, 12, wakes with an uneasy sense that something isn't right. He goes to check on the family's livery stable, and within minutes his world turns topsy-turvy. It's the 1906 earthquake and, through Phillip (who stays to care for the horses while his father takes the rest of the family to safety), the reader is there--for the heaving that knocks horses to the ground, for the collapse of his house, for the parade of fleeing, panic-stricken San Franciscans, for the fire, for the bombing intended to stop its spread. Phillip succeeds both as a witness and as a character (he has a way with animals and is the kind of boy who can be trusted with a gun); the immediacy of his experience makes this an exciting historical sidebar. Two caveats: the realism may disturb younger readers; and it's not clear why Phillip's father doesn't take him, and the horses, when he leaves the first time--or why he almost leaves the horses a second time, after Phillip has risked his life for them.



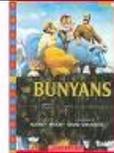
Rain Player
by David Wisniewski

Wisniewski's (Elfwyn's Saga) latest, inspired by ancient Mayan culture, takes full advantage of his penchant for original folktales rooted firmly in well-researched fact. This interest, together with his instantly recognizable cut-paper artwork (vibrantly colored, its dramatic lighting and photography result in sharply three-dimensional images), have helped him carve a niche in the picture book realm. Here, a boy named Pik challenges Chac, the god of rain, to a game of "pok-a-tok"--a cross between soccer and basketball--in order to avert a foretold drought that would devastate his people. Pik's father gives him three talismans to help in the play-off against the fierce sky god, and with their aid the boy is victorious. It's a satisfying tale, and Pik--a sort of Magic Johnson of the Yucatan--is the kind of impetuous hero with whom young readers will enjoy identifying.



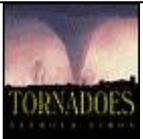
The Big Bike Race
by Luay Jane Bledsoe

Grade 3-5? In eight fast-paced chapters, Bledsoe tells the story of an African American boy growing up with his practical grandmother and pest of a little sister in Washington, D.C. Since Ernie is turning 10 and is on his way to becoming someone, he feels it's more appropriate that he be called Ernest. Grandmother, who's holding the family together on a "no frills" budget since the children's parents were killed in a car accident, feels Ernie's dreams are merely "delusions of grandeur." Ernest longs for a racing bike for his birthday, but is disappointed and embarrassed by the "huge, clunky, yellow" second hand one Grandmother is able to afford.



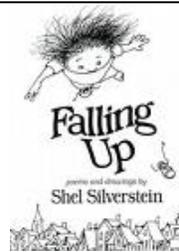
The Bunyans by Audrey Wood

One of the rootin'-est, tootin'-est, riproarin'-est heroes of American tall tales is given a whole new lease on life as Wood imagines an entire family of Bunyans. When Paul, the legendary lumberjack, meets Carrie McIntie, a giantess "banging a behemoth pickax against a wall," it's love at first sight. They produce two children, a "jumbo boy" named Little Jean and a "gigantic girl" named Teeny. Wood (The Napping House) exuberantly blends outrageous exaggeration with fantastical geography lessons: Pa Bunyan scoops out Niagara Falls to enable Teeny to shower an infestation of pesky bears from her maple syrup-ridden hair; Ma Bunyan creates Old Faithful by poking holes in Wyoming with her pickax to release hot water for the laundry and dishes; and so on. Shannon (The Amazing Christmas Extravaganza) joins Wood in this rollicking ride with archly humorous illustrations. Who can resist a retired Ma and Pa Bunyan, for example, dressed in leisure wear and playing croquet in the desert? Author and artist clearly had fun here, and readers undoubtedly will, too.



Tornadoes
by Seymour Simon

The newest in Simon's excellent series on natural disasters, which includes books on volcanoes, earthquakes, and lightning, is as dramatic and informative as the previous titles. Simon explains how and why tornadoes form, how they behave, how scientists predict and track them, and what safety measures should be taken if a tornado is sighted. Incredible full-color photographs and diagrams, clearly portraying the different formations and devastating power of the windstorms, complement the text perfectly. A must for middle-grade students researching the subject, the book is sure to appeal to



Falling Up by Shel Silverstein

Poor Screamin' Millie is just one of the unforgettable characters in this wondrous new book of poems and drawings by the creator of *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and *A Light in the Attic*. Here you will also meet Allison Beals and her twenty-five eels; Danny O'Dare, the dancin' bear; the Human Balloon; and Headphone Harold.

Suggested Books for Going into 5th Grade

Samuel's Choice

by Richard Berleth

Fact and fiction are woven together seamlessly to create this richly textured story of a 14-year-old black slave during the early days of the American Revolution. Samuel works from dawn to dark in the Brooklyn flour mill owned by the stingy, strict Isaac van Ditmas. When ferrying his master's wife and daughter to Staten Island, Samuel gazes at the soaring seagulls and wonders what it would be like to be free. A very effective parallel emerges as Samuel and van Ditmas's other slaves hear the sounds of drums, fifes and cannons drifting across the water from Manhattan, signaling the colonists' determination to win their freedom from England. Samuel seizes an opportunity to come to their aid, and performs a heroic act that enables General Washington's weary troops to escape from the victorious British after the Battle of Long Island. Samuel's first-person narrative is at once affecting and informative, making this a history lesson that readers will absorb with their hearts as well as their minds. Filled with the strife of wartime, Watling's dramatic paintings enhance the story's power. Ages 8-11

Thank You, Jackie Robinson

by Barbara Cohen

You will miss out on a great read if you think this story is just about baseball. This is a compelling novel about an interracial friendship between a young Jewish boy and an older African American man. They find their common interest in a love for Jackie Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers. The story takes place in the 50's and the author, in subtle ways, shows the reader how things are different for the African Americans in the U.S. at this time. Their friendship is believable and the story touching (I choke up every time I read it aloud). Although kids who enjoy sports will certainly appreciate the details, all kids will enjoy the message of friendship beyond racial barriers. I highly recommend this for every 4th-6th grader.

My Name is York

by Elizabeth Van Steenwyck

This is a wonderful source of information with a powerful storyline in the content area of American History. It deals with issues of slavery and longing to be free. An African- American slave by the name of York feels loyal to his master yet desires a life of his own. As a classroom teacher this is a for sure book choice for my classroom in teaching history to students. I highly recommend it to others.

The Phantom Tollbooth

by Norton Juster, Jules Feiffer (illus.)

This ingenious fantasy centers around Milo, a bored ten-year old who comes home to find a large toy tollbooth sitting in his room. Joining forces with a watchdog named Tock, Milo drives through the tollbooth's gates and begins a memorable journey. He meets such characters as the foolish yet lovable Humbug, the Mathemagician, and the not-so-wicked "Which," Faintly Macabre, who gives Milo the "impossible" mission of returning two princesses to the Kingdom of Wisdom. Along his journey, Milo learns the importance of words and numbers -- and learns to appreciate life.

Charlotte's Web

by E. B. White

An affectionate, sometimes bashful pig named Wilbur befriends a spider named Charlotte, who lives in the rafters above his pen. A prancing, playful bloke, Wilbur is devastated when he learns of the destiny that befalls all those of porcine persuasion. Determined to save her friend, Charlotte spins a web that reads "Some Pig," convincing the farmer and surrounding community that Wilbur is no ordinary animal and should be saved. In this story of friendship, hardship, and the passing on into time, E.B. White reminds us to open our eyes to the wonder and miracle often found in the simplest of things.

***In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord, Marc Simont (illus.)**

Shirley Temple Wong sails from China to America with a heart full of dreams. Her new home is Brooklyn, New York. America is indeed a land full of wonders, but Shirley doesn't know any English, so it's hard to make friends. Then a miracle -- baseball -- happens. It is 1947, and Jackie Robinson, star of the Brooklyn Dodgers, is everyone's hero. Jackie Robinson is proving that a black man, the grandson of a slave, can make a difference in America. And for Shirley as well, on the ball field and off, America becomes the land of opportunity.

***Wait Till Helen Comes, A Ghost Story* by Mary Downing Hahn**

Molly and Michael dislike their spooky new stepsister Heather but realize that they must try to save her when she seems ready to follow a ghost child to her doom.

Suggested Books for Going into 5th Grade

Holes by Louis Sachar

As further evidence of his family's bad fortune, which they attribute to a curse on a distant relative, Stanley Yelnats is sent to a hellish boys' juvenile detention center in the Texas desert. As punishment, the boys here must each dig a hole every day, five feet deep and five feet across. Ultimately, Stanley "digs up the truth" -- and through his experience, finds his first real friend, a treasure, and a new sense of himself. HOLES is a wildly inventive, darkly humorous tale of crime and punishment -- and redemption.

Dear Mr. Henshaw by Beverly Cleary, Paul O. Zelinsky (illus.)

When fourth grader Leigh Botts asks Mr. Henshaw to write to him personally, he gets more than he bargained for. Mr. Henshaw's letters are full of questions, and Leigh is getting tired of answering them. But as he continues his correspondence with his favorite author, he not only gets plenty of tips on writing, but he also finds a wise and thoughtful friend to whom he can tell his troubles.

Chasing Redbird by Sharon Creech

Zinnia Taylor lives in Bybanks, Kentucky, with too many brothers and sisters -- a mess of "tadpoles" and "pumpkins" is what her uncle Nate calls them. When Zinny discovers a mysterious, overgrown trail that begins on her family's farm, she's determined to clear it, from start to finish. For she's finally found a place of her own, a place where she can go, away from her family, to hear herself think. But what Zinny didn't realize is that the mysteries of the trail are intertwined with her own unanswered questions and family secrets, and that the trail -- and her passion to uncover it -- is leading her on a journey home. CHASING REDBIRD is a powerful, beautifully crafted story about a young girl discovering that life is a tangle of mysteries, surprises, and everyday occurrences -- a journey that often needs unravelling and that sometimes must be traveled alone.

Frindle by Andrew Clements, Brian Selznick (illus.)

When he decides to turn his fifth-grade teacher's love of the dictionary around on her, clever Nick Allen invents a new word and begins a chain of events that quickly moves beyond his control.

From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler by E. L. Konigsburg

The enchanting story of the unappreciated Claudia Kincaid, "boring straight-A Claudia" (oldest child and only girl and almost too old for half-fare tickets), who runs away with her little brother Jamie to live in the Metropolitan Museum, FILES is a sentimental favorite with a remarkable heroine. Crammed with fascinating details -- strategies for hiding in a museum, techniques for bathing in a fountain, the smell of a 16th-century bed (musty), and tantalizing peeks at the Met and its treasures -- it's a grand adventure. More important, FILES is the story of Claudia's quest to define herself. In the fulfillment of that quest, her own resourcefulness is bolstered by a statue that may or may not be by Michelangelo; a brother who proves to be a fabulous ally; and the wise, prickly Mrs. Frankweiler herself.

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell

In the Pacific there is an island that looks like a big fish sunning itself in the sea. Around it, blue dolphins swim, otters play, and sea elephants and sea birds abound. Once, Indians also lived on the island. And when they left and sailed to the east, one young girl was left behind. This is the story of Karana, the Indian girl who lived alone for years on the Island of the Blue Dolphins. Year after year, she watched one season pass into another and waited for a ship to take her away. But while she waited, she kept herself alive by building a shelter, making weapons, finding food, and fighting her enemies, the wild dogs. Island of the Blue Dolphins is not only an unusual adventure of survival but also a tale of natural beauty and personal discovery.

The Warm Place by Nancy Farmer

When Ruva, a young giraffe, is captured and sent to a zoo in San Francisco, she calls upon two rats, a street-smart chameleon, a runaway boy, and all the magical powers of the animal world to return to "the warm place" that is home.

Suggested Books for Going into 5th Grade

Matilda by Roald Dahl, Quentin Blake (illus.)

Matilda Wormwood started reading books at the age of four, but her crooked father and bingo-playing mother regard book reading as a waste of time -- and much prefer watching TV. In fact, they take no notice of their genius daughter at all! Only Miss Honey, Matilda's lovely and gentle teacher, recognizes her special gifts. Yet Miss Honey has problems of her own: Her aunt is the tyrannical Miss Trunchbull, an evil headmistress who bullies children and parents alike -- and has taken Miss Honey's house and money. Can Matilda use her extraordinary talents to seek revenge -- and make all of the wrong-doing grown-ups pay? **Also recommended: James and the Giant Peach.**

Mick Harte Was Here by Barbara Park

How could someone like Mick die? He was the kid who freaked out his mom by putting a ceramic eye in a defrosted chicken, the kid who did a wild dance in front of the whole school -- and the kid who, if only he had worn his bicycle helmet, would still be alive today. But now Phoebe Harte's 12-year-old brother is gone, and Phoebe's world has turned upside down. With her trademark candor and compassion, beloved middle-grade writer Barbara Park tells how Phoebe copes with her painful loss in this story filled with sadness, humor -- and hope.

My Daniel by Pam Conrad

Wandering through the Natural History Museum with her grandchildren, Julia Creath feels the presence of her dead brother, Daniel. She remembers a time when fossil fever hit everyone, old and young -- a time when people would even kill for those old bones under the ground. Julia becomes the Nebraska farm girl she once was, as she weaves together the story of the great dinosaur rush -- an adventurous tale of love and treachery, but most of all the story of her own childhood, and of the older brother she loved more than anything. Daniel had a dream: to save their family farm by finding a dinosaur. It was a dream that Julia shared -- and that she alone would see come true.

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry

Ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen and her best friend Ellen Rosen often think about life before the war. But it's now 1943, and their life in Copenhagen is filled with school, food shortages, and the Nazi soldiers marching in their town. When the Nazis begin "relocating" the Jews of Denmark, Ellen moves in with the Johansens and pretends to be part of the family. And as Annemarie helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis and embarks on a dangerous mission, she learns how to be brave and courageous -- to save her best friend's life.

Shiloh by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Eleven-year-old Marty Preston loves to spend time up in the hills behind his home near Friendly, West Virginia. Sometimes he takes his .22 rifle to see what he can shoot, like some cans lined up on a rail fence. Other times he goes up early in the morning just to sit and watch the fox and deer. But one summer Sunday, Marty comes across something different on the road just past the old Shiloh schoolhouses -- a young beagle -- and the trouble begins. What do you do when a dog you suspect is being mistreated runs away and comes to you? When it is someone else's dog? When the man who owns him has a gun? This is Marty's problem, and he finds it is one he has to face alone. When his solution gets too big for him to handle, things become more frightening still. Finally, Marty puts his courage on the line and discovers in the process that it is not always easy to separate right from wrong. Sometimes, however, you'll do almost anything to save a dog you love.

The View from Saturday by E. L. Konigsburg

It was a surprise to a lot of people when Mrs. Olinski's team won the sixth-grade Academic Bowl contest at Epiphany Middle School. It was an even bigger surprise when they beat the seventh grade and the eighth grade, too. And when they went on to even greater victories, everyone began to ask: How did it happen? Mrs. Olinski, returning to teaching after having been injured in an automobile accident, found that her Academic Bowl team became her answer to finding confidence and success. What she did not know, at least at first, was that her team knew better than she did the answer to why they had been chosen. This is a tale about a team, a class, a school, a series of contests and, set in the midst of this, four jewel-like short stories -- one for each of the team members -- that ask questions and demonstrate surprising answers.

Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech

Thirteen-year-old Salamanca Tree Hiddle, proud of her country roots and the "Indian-ness in her blood," travels from Ohio to Idaho with her eccentric grandparents. Along the way, she tells of the story of Phoebe Winterbottom, who received mysterious messages, who met a "potential lunatic," and whose mother disappeared. Beneath Phoebe's story is Salamanca's own story and that of her mother, who left one April morning for Idaho, promising to return before the tulips bloomed. Sal's mother has not, however, returned, and the trip to Idaho takes on a growing urgency as Salamanca hopes to get to Idaho in time for her mother's birthday and bring her back, despite her father's warning that she is fishing in the air. This richly layered Newbery Medal-winning novel is in turn funny, mysterious, and touching.