

6th Grade Summer Book Report Assignments

Each assignment is due to Mrs. Klein on the first day of school.

☺ Happy reading! ☺

Assignment 1: Mark Twain Nominee (Choose 1)

Choose one of the Mark Twain Award Nominees from the attached list.

Complete the "Book Talk Preparation" form, so you'll be prepared to briefly tell your classmates about your book and encourage other readers to try it, too.

Assignment 2: Fiction Book of Choice

This may be another Mark Twain Nominee or any other fiction book of choice. See the attached list of book ideas if you need one.

Complete the "Book Talk Preparation" form, so you'll be prepared to briefly tell your classmates about your book and encourage other readers to try it, too.

2019-2020 Mark Twain Nominees – Lexile Levels & Book Summary

1) Halfway Normal – by: Barbara Dee

Lexile Level - 620

Summary

A cancer survivor must readjust to “normal” middle school life in this hopeful novel from the author of *Star-Crossed* and *Truth or Dare*.

Norah Levy has just completed two years of treatment for leukemia and is ready to go back to the “real world” of middle school. The hospital social worker warns her the transition back may be tricky, but Norah isn’t worried. Compared with battling cancer, how tricky can seventh grade be?

Very. Everyone is either treating Norah like she will break at any second, or acting weird about all the attention she’s getting. Her best friend, Harper, does her best to be there for Norah, but she doesn’t *get it*, really—and is hanging out with a new group of girls, leaving Norah feeling a little unsteady. Norah’s other good friend, Silas, is avoiding her. What’s that about, anyway?

When Norah is placed with the eighth graders for math and science she meets Griffin, a cute boy who encourages her love of drawing and Greek mythology. And Norah decides not to tell him her secret—that she was “that girl” who had cancer. But when something happens to make secret-keeping impossible, Norah must figure out a way to share her cancer story. But how do you explain something to others that you can’t explain to yourself? And then, once you find the words, how do you move forward with a whole new ‘normal’?

2) Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus – by: Dusti Bowling

Lexile Level - 700 ****Audio version available for free on Hoopla app. All you need is your St. Louis County Library card number!****

Summary

Aven Green loves to tell people that she lost her arms in an alligator wrestling match, or a wildfire in Tanzania, but the truth is she was born without them. And when her parents take a job running Stagecoach Pass, a rundown western theme park in Arizona, Aven moves with them across the country knowing that she’ll have to answer the question over and over again.

Her new life takes an unexpected turn when she bonds with Connor, a classmate who also feels isolated because of his own disability, and they discover a room at Stagecoach Pass that holds bigger secrets than Aven ever could have imagined. It’s hard to solve a mystery, help a friend, and face your worst fears. But Aven’s about to discover she can do it all . . . even without arms.

3) Joplin, Wishing – by: Diane Stanley

Lexile Level – 670

Summary

While cleaning out her reclusive grandfather’s house, Joplin discovers pieces of a broken platter in a cookie tin. After having the platter repaired, Joplin wishes that she could both find a friend at school, and befriend the girl pictured in the platter. The next day, Joplin befriends a boy named Barrett, and also notices a girl outside her apartment. A girl who looks remarkably like the girl in the platter...

The girl introduces herself as Sofie, and she has a terrible secret. Cursed to grant wishes for the owner of the platter for all of time, she has been trapped for centuries. Joplin and Barrett vow to help her, but freeing Sofie is more complicated than they could have imagined, and the three friends end up against a sinister foe who could put them all in terrible danger.

4) Mustaches for Maddie – by: Shelly Brown & Chad Morris

Lexile Level – 560 **Digital version available for free on Hoopla app. All you need is your St. Louis County Library card number!******

Summary

Maddie is a normal twelve-year-old girl. Well, except for the fake mustaches she carries in her pocket. She likes to make people laugh and slapping on a mustache, especially a fuzzy pink or neon green one, always gets a smile. Maddie hopes that the class queen, Cassie, will find her mustaches as funny as she does and want to play with her at recess. She's been self-conscious lately because her right arm only feels normal when it's curled against her chest and she's constantly tripping over her feet. But that's probably just part of growing up and not something weird, right? When Maddie's arm continues to bother her, her parents take her to a doctor who gives them a shocking diagnosis: the cause of the abnormal behavior of her limbs is a brain tumor and she must have surgery to remove it. She's understandably afraid as he describes the procedure, but knows she must find a way to be brave and must face her fears--*all of them*--at the hospital, at home and at school.

She will need all of her courage not only to face her illness, but also to face Cassie at school. Both Cassie and Maddie are auditioning for the same role in the school play, but when Cassie accuses Maddie of lying about her tumor in order to get attention, Cassie's bossiness turns into bullying. As Maddie's surgery approaches, she begins to worry more and more about the outcome. What if something goes wrong? What if the doctors don't get all the tumor out of her brain? What will happen to her family? What will happen to *her*?

It will take all of Maddie's vibrant imagination, a lot of kindness--both given and received--and of course, the perfect mustache to overcome the tough stuff ahead of her.

5) One for Sorrow – by: Mary Downing Hahn

Lexile Level – 660 **Audio version & digital version available for free on Hoopla app. All you need is your St. Louis County Library card number!******

Summary

Against the ominous backdrop of the influenza epidemic of 1918, Annie, a new girl at school, is claimed as best friend by Elsie, a classmate who is a tattletale, a liar, and a thief. Soon Annie makes other friends and finds herself joining them in teasing and tormenting Elsie. Elsie dies from influenza, but then she returns to reclaim Annie's friendship and punish all the girls who bullied her. Young readers who revel in spooky stories will relish this chilling tale of a girl haunted by a vengeful ghost.

Mary Downing Hahn is the author of "Took" which was the 2nd place Mark Twain 2017-2018 award winner.

6) Real Friends – by: Shannon Hale

Lexile Level – GN290L

Summary

When best friends are not forever . . . Shannon and Adrienne have been best friends ever since they were little. But one day, Adrienne starts hanging out with Jen, the most popular girl in class and the leader of a circle of friends called The Group. Everyone in The Group wants to be Jen's #1, and some girls would do anything to stay on top . . . even if it means bullying others.

Now every day is like a roller coaster for Shannon. Will she and Adrienne stay friends? Can she stand up for herself? And is she in The Group—or out?

Newbery Honor author Shannon Hale and *New York Times* bestselling illustrator LeUyen Pham join forces in this graphic memoir about how hard it is to find your real friends—and why it's worth the journey.

This is the only graphic novel nominee.

7) Restart – by: Gordon Korman

Lexile Level – 730

Summary

Chase's memory just went out the window. Chase doesn't remember falling off the roof. He doesn't remember hitting his head. He doesn't, in fact, remember anything. He wakes up in a hospital room and suddenly has to learn his whole life all over again, starting with his name.

He knows he's Chase. But who is Chase? When he gets back to school, he sees that different kids have very different reactions to his return. Some kids treat him like a hero. Some kids are clearly afraid of him.

One girl in particular is so angry with him that she pours her frozen yogurt on his head the first chance she gets. Pretty soon, it's not only a question of who Chase is--it's a question of who he was . . . and who he's going to be.

From the #1 bestselling author of Swindle and Slacker, Restart is the spectacular story of a kid with a messy past who has to figure out what it means to get a clean start.

8) Saving Marty – by: Paul Griffin

Lexile Level – 650

Summary

Fans of *Because of Winn Dixie* will adore this warm and heart-wrenching story of the friendship between a boy and a pig who thinks it's a dog.

Eleven-year-old Lorenzo Ventura knows heroes are rare--like his father, who died in the war, or his friend Paloma Lee, who fearlessly pursues her dream of being a famous musician. Renzo would never describe himself as a hero, but his chance comes when he adopts Marty, a runt piglet.

Marty is extraordinary--he thinks he's a dog and acts like one too--and his bond with Renzo is truly one of a kind. At first, the family farm seems like the perfect home for Marty, but as he approaches 350 pounds, it becomes harder for Renzo to convince his mom that a giant pig makes a good pet. So when Marty causes a dangerous (and expensive) accident, Renzo knows Marty's time is up. He'd do anything and everything for his best friend, but will everything be enough to save Marty?

Paul Griffin masterfully melds the heartrending and the hopeful in this unforgettable story about the power of friendship . . . and the unsung heroes all around us.

9) The Loser's Club – by: Andrew Clements

Lexile Level – 860

Summary

Sixth grader Alec can't put a good book down. So when Principal Vance lays down the law--pay attention in class, or else--Alec takes action. He can't lose all his reading time, so he starts a club. A club he intends to be the only member of. After all, reading isn't a team sport, and no one would want to join something called the Losers Club, right? But as more and more kids find their way to Alec's club--including his ex-friend turned bully and the girl Alec is maybe starting to like--

-Alec notices something. Real life might be messier than his favorite books, but it's just as interesting.

With *The Losers Club*, Andrew Clements brings us a new school story that's a love letter to books and to reading and that reminds us that sometimes the best stories are the ones that happen off the page--our own!

10) The Peculiar Incident on Shady Street – by: Lindsay Currie

Lexile Level – 620

Summary

A girl unravels a centuries-old mystery after moving into a haunted house in this deliciously suspenseful mystery.

Tessa Woodward isn't exactly thrilled to move to rainy, cold Chicago from her home in sunny Florida. But homesickness turns to icy fear when unexplainable things start happening in her new house. Things like flickering lights, mysterious drawings appearing out of nowhere, and a crackling noise she can feel in her bones.

When her little brother's doll starts crying real tears, Tessa realizes that someone—or something—is trying to communicate with her. A secret that's been shrouded in mystery for more than one hundred years.

With the help of three new friends, Tessa begins unraveling the mystery of what happened in the house on Shady Street—and more importantly, what it has to do with her!

11) Walking with Miss Millie – by: Tamara Bundy

Lexile Level – 790

Summary

A poignant middle grade debut about the friendship between a white girl and an elderly black woman in the 1960s south.

Alice is angry at having to move to Rainbow, Georgia—a too small, too hot, dried-up place she's sure will never feel like home. Then she gets put in charge of walking her elderly neighbor's dog. But Clarence won't budge without Miss Millie, so Alice and Miss Millie walk him together. Strolling with Miss Millie quickly becomes the highlight of Alice's day, as she learns about the town's past and meets a mix of its catty and kind residents. As the two become confidantes, Alice is finally able to express her heartache over her father's desertion; and when Miss Millie tells her family story, Alice begins to understand the shameful history of Segregation, and recognize the racism they need to fight against. Navigating the neighborhood with Miss Millie gives Alice new perspective, the wisdom to move on from her anger, and even enables her to laugh again.

Tamara Bundy's beautifully written story reminds readers that there is nothing like friendship to lighten one's load, and make anyplace a home.

12) Wishtree – by: Katherine Applegate

Lexile – 590

Summary

Red is an oak tree who is many rings old. Red is the neighborhood "wishtree"—people write their wishes on pieces of cloth and tie them to Red's branches. Along with her crow friend Bongo and other animals who seek refuge in Red's hollows, this "wishtree" watches over the neighborhood.

You might say Red has seen it all. Until a new family moves in. Not everyone is welcoming, and Red's experiences as a wishtree are more important than ever.

Mark Twain Nominee
"Book Talk" Preparation

Directions: Complete the following questions. You'll use this form to guide you as you briefly speak about this book to your classmates in an effort to encourage others to read this book, too.

Book Title: _____

Author: _____

1. What is the setting of the book?

2. Who is the main character? Give two adjectives to describe this character, and use specific details from the story to explain your reasoning.

3. Briefly explain the main problem the characters face. Be careful not to give away any spoilers!

4. On a scale from 1-10 (1=low, 10=high) what would you rate this book? Explain. What kind of person/reader would you recommend this book to? Explain.

Mrs. Klein Recommends:

- The books below are middle-grade novels highly recommended by teachers and librarians. **You are NOT limited to reading these books.** These are simply ideas for readers who do not know where to begin looking for a book.

1. Any book by Stuart Gibbs: FunJungle series, Moonbase Alpha series, Spy School series. If you like humor and mysteries, you can't go wrong with Stuart Gibbs.

2. The Track series by Jason Reynolds. If you read *Ghost* last year, get to know the other members of the Defenders track team: *Patina*, *Sunny*, and *Lu*.

3. *The Last Day of Summer* by Lamar Giles: When two adventurous cousins accidentally extend the last day of summer by freezing time, they find the secrets hidden between the unmoving seconds, minutes, and hours are not the endless fun they expected. Now, with the help of some very strange people and even stranger creatures, Otto and Sheed will have to put aside their differences to save their town—and each other—before time stops for good.

4. *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang: Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?

5. *Breakout* by Kate Messner: Nora Tucker is looking forward to summer vacation, but when two inmates break out of the town's maximum-security prison, everything changes. Doors are locked, helicopters fly over the woods, and police patrol the school grounds. Worst of all, everyone is on edge, and fear brings out the worst in some people Nora has known her whole life.

6. *Refugee* by Alan Gratz: Three different kids. One mission in common: ESCAPE. Josef is a Jewish boy in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world... Isabel is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety and freedom in America...Mahmoud is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward

Europe... All three young people will go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers-And although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, surprising connections will tie their stories together in the end. *Greetings from Witness Protection!* by Jake Burt: A funny and touching novel about a foster-care girl who is placed with a family in the witness protection program, and finds that hiding in plain sight is complicated and dangerous.

7. *The Unteachables* by Gordon Korman: A hilarious new middle grade novel from beloved and bestselling author Gordon Korman about what happens when the worst class of kids in school is paired with the worst teacher

8. *Because of Mr. Terupt* by Rob Buyea: It's the start of fifth grade for seven kids at Snow Hill School. There's . . . Jessica, the new girl, smart and perceptive, who's having a hard time fitting in; Alexia, a bully, your friend one second, your enemy the next; Peter, class prankster and troublemaker; Luke, the brain; Danielle, who never stands up for herself; shy Anna, whose home situation makes her an outcast; and Jeffrey, who hates school. Only Mr. Terupt, their new and energetic teacher, seems to know how to deal with them all. He makes the classroom a fun place, even if he doesn't let them get away with much . . . until the snowy winter day when an accident changes everything—and everyone.

9. *The Candy Shop War* by Brandon Mull: Welcome to the Sweet Tooth Ice Cream & Candy Shoppe, where the confections are a bit on the...unusual side. In this start to the series, four young friends—Nate, Summer, Trevor, and Pigeon—meet the grandmotherly Mrs. White, owner of the Sweet Tooth, and soon learn about the magical side effects of her candies: Rock candy that makes you weightless. Jawbreakers that make you unbreakable. Chocolate balls that make you a master of disguise. In addition, the ice cream truck driver, Mr. Stott, has arrived with a few enchanted sweets of his own. But what about the mysterious man in the dark overcoat and fedora hat? And why are all these “magicians” trying to recruit Nate and his friends? Who can they trust? The mystery deepens and the danger unfolds as the four of them discover that the magical strangers have all come to town in search of a legendary, hidden treasure—one that could be used for great evil if it fell into the wrong hands. The kids, now in over their heads, must try to retrieve the treasure first. And so, the war begins...

10. *The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl* by Stacy McAnulty: A lightning strike gave her a super power...but even a super genius can't solve the problem of middle school. Lucy Callahan's life was changed forever when she was struck by lightning. She doesn't remember it, but the zap gave her genius-level math skills, and she's been homeschooled ever since. Now, at 12 years old, she's technically ready for college. She just has to pass 1 more test-middle school!

Fiction Book of Choice
"Book Talk" Preparation

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