

**To parents of Incoming Fifth Graders:**

Your child is required to read three books over the summer. The first title is required. You may choose two additional titles from books listed below OR one title from below and one title from the nonfiction list. Brief annotations have been provided to help you and your child with selection.

*The Sign of the Beaver* by Elizabeth George Speare

Left alone to guard the family's wilderness home in eighteenth-century Maine, a boy is hard-pressed to survive until local Indians teach him their skills.

*Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

*The City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau

Ember was built as a last refuge for the human race. Two hundred years later, the great lamps that light the city are beginning to dim. When Lina finds part of an ancient message, she's sure it holds a secret that will save the city. Now, she and her friend Doon must race to figure out the clues to keep the lights on. If they succeed, they will have to convince everyone to follow them into danger. But if they fail? The lights will burn out and the darkness will close in forever.

*Souder* by William Howard Armstrong

Angry and humiliated when his sharecropper father is jailed for stealing food for his family, a young black boy grows in courage and understanding by learning to read and through his relationship with his devoted dog Souder.

*Nory Ryan's Song* by Patricia Reilly Giff

When a terrible blight attacks Ireland's potato crop in 1845, twelve-year-old Nory Ryan's courage and ingenuity help her family and neighbors survive.

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

Having run away with her younger brother to live in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, twelve-year-old Claudia strives to keep things in order in their new home and to become a changed person and a heroine to herself.

*Shades of Gray* by Carolyn Reeder

At the end of the Civil War, twelve-year-old Will, having lost all his immediate family, reluctantly leaves his city home to live in the Virginia countryside with his aunt and the uncle he considers a “traitor” because he refused to take part in the war.

*Call It Courage* by Armstrong Sperry

Based on a Polynesian legend, this is the story of a youth who overcomes his fear of the sea and proves his courage to himself and his tribe.

*Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli

After his parents die, Jeffrey Lionel Magee’s life becomes legendary, as he accomplishes athletic and other feats which awe his contemporaries.

*Abel’s Island* by William Steig

Castaway on an uninhabited island, Abel, a very civilized mouse, finds his resourcefulness and endurance tested to the limit as he struggles to survive and return to his home.

*Brave* by Svetlana Chmakova

*Brave* is a follow-up to *Awkward*: also set in Berrybrook Middle School, it does feature Penelope, but mostly focuses on the shy Jensen. The book shows how Jensen deals with difficult class projects, weird friends, and being roped into a project with the school newspaper, run by the spirited duo of Akilah and Jenny.

*Africa is My Home* by Monica Edinger

When a drought hits her homeland in Sierra Leone, nine-year-old Magulu is sold as a pawn by her father in exchange for rice. But before she can work off her debt, an unthinkable chain of events unfolds: a capture by slave traders; weeks in a dark and airless hold; a landing in Cuba, where she and three other children are sold and taken aboard the *Amistad*; a mutiny aboard ship; a trial in New Haven that eventually goes all the way to the Supreme Court and is argued in the Africans’ favor by John Quincy Adams. Narrated in a remarkable first-person voice, this fictionalized book of memories of a real-life figure retells history through the eyes of a child — from seeing mirrors for the first time and struggling with laughably complicated clothing to longing for family and a home she never forgets. Lush, full-color illustrations by Robert Byrd, plus archival photographs and documents, bring an extraordinary journey to life.