

June 2017

Hello rising 6th grade! Your 6th grade teaching team is very excited for next year. What better way to kick things off than with a little summer reading, writing and math! We've picked out a few learning experiences for you to explore during your summer days. They should help you keep your skills fresh and also help us to get to know each other better. We expect everyone to do the items marked with a star (*). The other items are encouraged but optional.

READING, Part I

A required book for all...

*** We will all read *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan.**

This novel describes the journey of a young girl and her family from their beautiful ranch in Mexico to a challenging new life in California. The plot and themes are captivating, and the details will lead nicely into our opening social studies units on the Caribbean and Latin America. The Spanish phrases scattered throughout should also keep you sharp for Spanish class. Please note: If you have already read this book and it feels very fresh in your mind, we encourage you to read *Becoming Naomi León*, which is written by the same author (it is also at a higher reading level). If you do opt to read this instead, you should still do the project on *Esperanza Rising*.

*** We will all do a project on *Esperanza Rising*.**

Early in the story, Esperanza's grandmother (Abuelita) says to her: "No hay rosa sin espinas. There is no *rose without thorns*." Esperanza smiles when she hears this, knowing that Abuelita isn't really talking about roses, but instead she is reminding her that a person can't experience true happiness in life without also experiencing difficulties. As you read, take note of the thorns (difficulties) Esperanza encounters, as well as the roses (joys) she eventually finds.

Keep a few notes while you read, listing the thorns and roses Esperanza experiences. Think of the thorns as challenges, setbacks, obstacles, tragedies, problems or difficulties. Think of the roses as growth, happiness, triumphs, successes, new understandings or joys.

Create a project that shows and tells us about at least five thorns and five roses for Esperanza in the book. Choose the format below that you think will best show your understanding of these ideas. If you would like to use a format that isn't listed, please feel welcome to do so, as long as it communicates your ideas about the thorns and roses clearly.

A viewer needs to be able to look at your project and clearly understand what thorns and roses you are including.

To recap: **In your project show at least five thorns and five roses that Esperanza experiences.**

Choose one way to show this:

- An illustration with captions (poster, painting, drawing, collage, cartoon, etc.)
- A written description (essay, poem, journal, letter, etc.)
- A three-dimensional representation with captions (model, sculpture, mobile, etc.)
- A graphic organizer (chart, table, web, etc.)
- A presentation of ideas through technology (glog, prezi, iMovie, PowerPoint, etc.)
- A quilt square or squares, either sewn or glued, with a written explanation

READING, part II

Your choice of book and project...

* Choose one book from the list below and read it. (Read more if you like!)
(Of course, we want you to read tons this summer, but you may also have your own wish list. Most of the book summaries that follow are from www.powells.com.)

Note: Please choose a book from this list that you have not read before.

Applegate, Katherine: *The One and Only Ivan* (fiction/animals) Ivan is an easygoing gorilla. Living at the Exit 8 Big Top Mall and Video Arcade, he has grown accustomed to humans watching him through the glass walls of his domain. He rarely misses his life in the jungle. In fact, he hardly ever thinks about it at all. Instead, Ivan thinks about TV shows he's seen and about his friends Stella, an elderly elephant, and Bob, a stray dog. But mostly Ivan thinks about art and how to capture the taste of a mango or the sound of leaves with color and a well-placed line. Then he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from her family, and she makes Ivan see their home—and his own art—through new eyes. When Ruby arrives, change comes with her, and it's up to Ivan to make it a change for the better.

Curtis, Christopher Paul: *Bud, Not Buddy* (historical fiction) It's 1936 Flint, Michigan. Times may be hard, and 10-year-old Bud may be a motherless boy, but Bud's got a few things going for him: 1. He has his own suitcase full of special things; 2. He's the author of Bud Caldwell's Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself; 3. His momma never told him who his father was, but she left a clue: posters of Herman E. Calloway and his band of renown, the Dusky Devastators of the Depression. Bud

is sure those posters will lead him to his father. Once he decides to hit the road, nothing can stop him, not hunger, not fear, not would-be vampires, not even Herman E. Calloway himself.

Curtis, Christopher Paul: *The Mighty Miss Malone* (historical fiction) "We are a family on a journey to a place called wonderful" is the motto of Deza Malone's family. Deza is the smartest girl in her class in Gary, Indiana, singled out by teachers for a special path in life. But the Great Depression hit Gary hard, and there are no jobs for black men. When her beloved father leaves to find work, Deza, Mother, and her older brother Jimmie go in search of him, and end up in a Hooverville outside Flint, Michigan. Jimmie's beautiful voice inspires him to leave the camp to be a performer, while Deza and Mother find a new home, and cling to the hope that they will find Father. The twists and turns of their story reveal the devastation of the Depression and prove that Deza truly is the Mighty Miss Malone.

Hiassen, Carl: *Hoot* (mystery/realistic fiction) Roy, who is new to his small Florida community, becomes involved in another boy's attempt to save a colony of burrowing owls from a proposed construction site in this Newbery Honor book and the first children's book by *New York Times* bestselling author Hiassen. Or, substitute a different Carl Hiassen book.

Jarrell, Randall: *The Animal Family* (fantasy) This is the story of how, one by one, a man found himself a family. Almost nowhere in fiction is there a stranger, dearer, or funnier family — and the life that the members of The Animal Family live together, there in the wilderness beside the sea, is as extraordinary and as enchanting as the family itself.

Kurlansky, Mark: *World Without Fish* (nonfiction) a riveting new book for kids about what's happening to fish, the oceans, and our environment, and what, armed with knowledge, kids can do about it. Written by a master storyteller, "World Without Fish" connects all the dots biology, economics, evolution, politics, climate, history, culture, food, and nutrition in a way that kids can really understand. It describes how the fish we most commonly eat, including tuna, salmon, cod, and swordfish, could disappear within 50 years, and the domino effect it would have oceans teeming with jellyfish and turning pinkish orange from algal blooms; seabirds disappearing, then reptiles, then mammals.

Lord, Cynthia: *Rules* (fiction) Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules—from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to "keep your pants on in public"—in order to stop his embarrassing behaviors. But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a paraplegic boy, and Kristi, the

next-door friend she's always wished for, it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal?

Lupica, Mike: *Heat* (realistic fiction) Michael Arroyo has a pitching arm that throws serious heat. But his firepower is nothing compared to the heat Michael faces in his day-to-day life. Newly orphaned after his father led the family's escape from Cuba, Michael's only family is his seventeen-year old brother Carlos. If Social Services hears of their situation, they will be separated in the foster-care system-or worse, sent back to Cuba. Together, the boys carry on alone, dodging bills and anyone who asks too many questions. But then someone wonders how a twelve-year-old boy could possibly throw with as much power as Michael Arroyo throws. With no way to prove his age, no birth certificate, and no parent to fight for his cause, Michael's secret world is blown wide open, and he discovers that family can come from the most unexpected sources.

Sachar, Louis: *Holes* (mystery) Stanley Yelnats is under a curse. A curse that began with his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather and has since followed generations of Yelnats. Now Stanley has been unjustly sent to a boys' detention center, Camp Green Lake, where the warden makes the boys "build character" by spending all day, every day, digging holes: five feet wide and five feet deep. It doesn't take long for Stanley to realize there's more than character improvement going on at Camp Green Lake. The boys are digging holes because the warden is looking for something. Stanley tries to dig up the truth in this inventive and darkly humorous tale of crime and punishment — and redemption.

*** Then, choose one of the following projects to complete.**

We'll be sharing our projects, so bring it proudly on the first day of school, clearly labeled with your name.

1. Rewrite an important part of the story as a news article. You might include images, quotes, facts, interviews, charts or any features that help to tell the "news" about what happened.
2. Write a new ending for the book, or the first few pages of a sequel. Try to give your piece the same style and tone that the author uses.
3. Create a timeline of the most important moments in the story with illustrations and brief descriptions of each of them.

4. Build a three-dimensional object that shows something very important about the book you read. Include a caption that explains what you have shown.

5. Write a letter to the author explaining what you liked and disliked about the book and why. Give praise and suggestions for specific parts.

And now it's time for some WRITING!

Write a letter to your 6th grade teachers! Tell us about something you love to do, something that gets you interested in learning, and some things you hope and wonder for this coming year. Make your letter between one and two pages long and bring it on the first day of school.

And finally, some MATH!

*Math Packet: Do the problems in the math “end-of-year-assessment” packet. This will help to keep your skills sharp! It is not an actual graded test, but it will help us to see how you are doing with the skills. Bring this packet in (with questions if you had any) on the first day of school.

Finally, here's a checklist to help you make sure you're finished:

- 1. I read *Esperanza Rising*.
- 2. I did my “thorns and roses” project.
- 3. I read a second book from the list of choices.
- 4. I did a project for that book.
- 5. I wrote a letter to my 6th grade teachers.
- 6. I did my math packet.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions at all. We hope that you enjoy your summer tasks and are looking forward to September!

Warmest regards,

Your 6th Grade Team
Laura & Becky