**The Kaleidoscope Booklist for Grades 6-8**

**Color-coding key: Black = Contemporary Red = Historical Blue = Futuristic**

**Alone in the Woods by Rebecca Behrens** -Jocelyn and Alex are lost in the woods and will have to overcome their fractured friendship if they’re going to make it out alive.

**Amal Unbound by Aisha Saeed** -12-year-old Amal’s dream of becoming a teacher is dashed in an instant when she accidentally insults a member of her Pakistani village’s ruling family and as punishment is forced to leave her home to go work at their estate.

**Amina’s Voice by Hena Khan** – This novel brings to life the joys and challenges of a young Pakistani American and highlights the many ways in which one girl’s voice can help bring a diverse community together to love and support each other

**[Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna](https://amzn.to/3BHiVGj) by Alda P. Dobbs** - Set in Mexico in 1913, Petra Luna and her family flee their home when Federales burn the village, then wait with throngs of others trying to cross the bridge into the United States before the Federales can reach them.

**Before the Ever After by Jacqueline Woodson** -ZJ’s friends help him cope when his father, a beloved professional football player, suffers severe headaches and memory loss that spell the end of his career.

**Beyond the Bright Sea by Lauren Wolk** - A painter named Osh discovered Crow as an infant alone in a boat in the sea. 12 years later, in 1925, Crow sets out on what turns into a drama-filled search to discover the truth about her birth family and origins.

**Birchbark House by Louise Erdrich** -Omakayas and her Anishinabe family work together to survive a year on their island home in Lake Superior.

**Blue Birds by Caroline Starr Rose** -The storyof a seemingly impossible friendship in the New World between Alis, who just arrived from England, and Kimi, a Native American who doesn’t trust the newcomers to her land.

**[The Bridge Home](https://amzn.to/2TAlIPH) by Padma Venkatraman** - Set in India, the story unfolds through letters Viji writes to her little sister, Rukku, who has intellectual disabilities. An eye-opening story that reveals the plight of many homeless children in India, and yet finds a way to be hopeful.

**Breaking Stalin’s Nose by Eugene Yelchin** -Sasha Zaichik has known the laws of the Soviet Young Pioneers since the age of six. But now that it is finally time to join, everything goes wrong, and worst of all, his father, the best Communist he knows, has been arrested.

**Broken Strings by Eric Walters** - In the aftermath of the attack on the twin towers and the death of her beloved grandmother, a young Jewish girl discovers a violin and unleashes a dark family secret.

**Brother’s Keeperby Julie Lee** - A powerful story that captures the fearful culture of North Korea, the marginalization of females, and the bond between siblings.

**Catherine Called Birdy by Karen Cushman -** An often humorous historical novel in diary format, set in 13th-century England, about a spirited young girl rebelling at her father’s plans to marry her off to an elderly suitor to restore his fortune.

**Chirp by Kate Messner -** A mystery, a family story, and a story of the power of friendship, when a girl must learn to speak out.

**The City of Ember by Jeanne DuPrau** - Built two hundred years ago as a last refuge for the human race, the City of Ember’s resources are running out for the city’s inhabitants.

**[Click’d](http://amzn.to/2vore72)** **by Tamara Ireland Stone** - At coding camp, Allie makes an app to help kids find new friends. When she returns to school, she releases it only to discover it has a major glitch.

[**Closer to Nowhere**](https://amzn.to/3iRe5wi) **by Ellen Hopkins** - A story in verse of struggle and unconditional love for a child with challenging behaviors.

**Clues to the Universe by Christina Li** - Ro and Benji couldn’t be more different but become close friends and face bullying, grief, and their own differences as they try to piece together clues to some of the biggest questions in the universe.

**The Crossover** **by Kwame Alexander** -A novel in verse about basketball and its impact on a young Black boy’s growth.

**The Door of No Return by Kwame Alexander** -After his world turns upside down, Kofi ends up in a fight for his life and embarks on a harrowing journey across land and sea, away from everything he loves

**Dragonwings by Lawrence Yep** - Moon Shadow leaves his mother behind in China to live with his father, Windrider, in California, and work in the family laundry business, until they leave to build an airplane called Dragonwings.

**The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm by Nancy Farmer** -In the year 2194, Tendai, Rita, and Kuda disappear in Zimbabwe and their parents call upon the Ear, the Eye, and the Arm, detectives with special abilities as the result of a nuclear accident.

**Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan** -On the eve of the Great Depression, Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave a life of wealth in Mexico to work in the labor camps of Southern California.

**Fever 1793 by Laurie Halse Anderson** -Mattie struggles to survive in an abandoned and diseased city ravaged by yellow fever that killed thousands of citizens.

**Finding Junie Kim by Ellen Oh** - When Junie Kim is faced with middle school racism, she learns of her grandparents’ extraordinary strength and finds her voice. Inspired by the author’s mother’s real-life experiences during the Korean War.

**Fish in a Tree by Lynda Mullaly Hunt** - Ally thinks she’s dumb because she can’t read but with help from a new teacher, she discovers all the creative things she *can* do, as well as the true reason she has difficulty reading.

**Freakling by Lana Krumweide** -Everyone in 12-year-old Taemon Houser’s mountain city has the gift of psi—an ability to move things with the mind—and when Taemon loses that ability, his life takes a dramatic turn.

**Fuzzy Mud by Louis Sachar** - An imaginative and suspenseful story of the great lengths we’ll go to for friendship and family, the mishaps and breakthroughs that are made in the name of science, and the wonders of mud.

**The Giver by Lois Lowry** - A haunting story centered on twelve-year-old Jonas, who lives in a seemingly ideal world of conformity and contentment. Not until he is given his life assignment as the Receiver of Memory does he begin to understand the dark, complex secrets behind his community.

**Gold Rush Girl by Avi** -Victoria Blaisdell longs for adventure, so she stows away on the ship that will take her father and younger brother on the perilous journey to San Francisco’s gold fields.

**Ground Zero by Alan Graz** -A novel of 9/11 in two storylines—a boy in the towers and an Afghan girl who finds an injured American soldier in her village.

**[Harbor Me](https://amzn.to/2NBULay) by Jacqueline Woodson** - The story is about six diverse children and tackles issues including race, immigration, bullying, learning differences, friendship, and forgiveness.

**Hello, Universe by Erin Entrada** **Kelly** - An engrossing neighborhood adventure told from four intertwining points of view—two boys and two girls—and celebrates bravery, being different, and finding your inner *bayani* (hero).

**Hoot by Carl Hiaasen** -A mystery/suspense novel, set in Florida, where new arrival Roy makes two oddball friends and one bad enemy, and joins an effort to stop construction of a pancake house which would destroy a colony of owls.

**I Can Make this Promise by Christine Day** -Inspired by her family’s history, the author tells the story of a girl who uncovers her family’s secrets—and finds her own Native American identity.

**The Infinite Lives of Maisie Day by Christopher Edge** -Math and science inform this mind-bending mystery about a girl who must work with the laws of the universe and trust the love of her family if she is to set her world right.

**Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai** -After the fall of Saigon, Ha’s father is reported missing in action. She, her mother, and her three brothers flee across the sea to Alabama.

[**It All Comes Down to This**](http://amzn.to/2v61jWI)**by Karen English** - Sophie, a sweet black girl, lives in an all-white neighborhood in Los Angeles during the 1960’s—a turbulent time of racism and growing activism.

**Josie and the Pirate Captain Toledano by Arnon Z. Shorr & Joshua M. Edelglass** -Set in the shadows of the Spanish Inquisition, this graphic novel is the coming-of-age story of a young Jewish refugee who forms a powerful bond with the mysterious Pirate Captain Toledano.

**[The Kaya Girl](https://amzn.to/3Q86dru)** **by Mamle Wolo** - A thoughtful novel set in Ghana about a friendship that crosses regions, languages, income levels, and education–despite the stigmas and prejudices.

**King and the Dragonflies by Kacen Callender** -A Black boy **i**n a small but turbulent Louisiana town, Kingston copes with the recent death of his older brother by imagining that his sibling has returned as adragonfly.

**The Last Emperor by Kwame Mbalia and Prince Joel David Makonnen** – An Afrofuturist adventure about a mythical Ethiopian empire. Sci-fi and fantasy combine in this epic journey to the stars.

**Lifeboat 12 by Susan Hood** – 13-year-old Ken is one of 90 boys and girls to escape England for Canada when London is being bombed in WWII. When their ship is torpedoed, Ken scrambles aboard Lifeboat 12 with 5 other boys in a desperate attempt to survive.

**Linked by Gordon Korman** - This novel combines serious issues with the author’s trademark humorous characters and tackles very sensitive issues like casual racism, anti-Semitism, the impact of the Holocaust, and the messiness of going viral.

**The Lion of Mars by Jennifer L. Holm** - Life on Mars is pretty standard for 11-year-old Bell, until a mysterious virus hits.

**Listen Slowly by Thanhha Lai** -Mia must forgo her summer on the beach with girlfriend Montana and instead embark on a journey to current-day Vietnam with her Vietnamese-born father and grandmother.

**A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park** - Two stories, told in alternating sections, about two eleven-year-olds in Sudan, a fictional girl in 2008 whose entire day is spent obtaining water for her family’s survival, and the true story of a boy caught up in a war in 1985.

**Look Both Ways by Jason Reynolds** - Each chapter focuses on a student or group of students who attend Latimer Middle School and are dealing with issues of acceptance, bullying and negative stereotypes.

**Lostman’s River by Cynthia DeFelice** -Greed and profit have brought great danger into the swampland where Tyler’s family lives and when they dare to trust a stranger, they learn to their horror that they have jeopardized not only the land and all who live there, but their own future.

**Maizy Chang’s Last Chance by Lisa Yee** - When her grandfather falls ill, eleven-year-old Maizy travels from Los Angeles with her single mom to spend the summer in Last Chance, Minnesota, to help with the family’s Chinese restaurant, the Golden Palace.

**MacKenzie’s Last Run by Gayle Rosengren –** Thirteen-year-old MacKenzie can’t stop blaming himself for his father’s death in a mass shooting and runs away from home only to end up seriously injured, miles from home, with no way to call for help.

**Melt by Ele Fountain** - A boy who lives in a remote, snow-bound village, and a girl whose father works for an oil company, find themselves together in a desperate search for survival, and for the truth.

**Melissa’s Story by Alex Gino** - Everyone thinks Melissa is boy but she knows she’s a girl and in this novel she finds a way to show everyone who she really is once and for all.

**Merci Suarez Changes Gears by Meg Medina** -Mercedes "Merci" Suárez is a sixth-grade scholarship student at an elite private school in South Florida who faces struggles at school and at home.

**[The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl](https://amzn.to/2HgDFws)** **by Stacy McAnulty** - Lucy is a girl genius with OCD whose grandma wants her to go to public middle school to make one friend, read one non-math book, and join one school activity**.** The results are more than even Lucy could have imagined.

**[The Neptune Project](http://amzn.to/29C53Rr)** **by Polly Holyoke** - When the government discovers her mom’s secret lab, Nere learns her mom has experimented on her and other kids so they can survive underwater and she’s forced to swim for her life to meet up with the other kids and escape to her father’s underwater headquarters.

**Night Diary by Veera Hiranandani** -Half-Muslim, half-Hindu, twelve-year-old Nisha doesn’t know who she is or where she belongs when the government forces her family to take a dangerous journey to a new home where she hopes she can finally feel whole.[Veera Hiranandani](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/142207/veera-hiranandani)

**[A Night Divided](http://amzn.to/1YksYYy)** **by Jennifer A. Nielsen** - When overnight a fence with armed guards is built to divide Berlin, the only way for Gerta’s suddenly split-up family to be reunited is a dangerous one—she must dig a tunnel to the west.

**Northwind by Gary Paulsen** – When a deadly plague reaches the fish camp where he lives, an orphan named Leif is forced to take to the water in a cedar canoe and flee north, navigating from one danger to the next.

**Once There Were Wolves by Charlotte McConaghy** - A young girl leads a project to reintroduce wolves to the Highlands, the mountainous region of northern Scotland.

[Veera Hiranandani](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/142207/veera-hiranandani)

**The One Safe Place by Tania Unsworth** - A dark, twisting, thrilling read set in a world plagued by drought.

**The Only Black Girls in Town by Brandy Colbert** - In a predominately white California beach town, the only two black seventh graders, Alberta and Edie, find hidden journals that uncover family secrets and speak to race relations in the past.

**Out of Range by Heidi Lang** - A novel about three sisters who went from being best friends to mortal enemies but will have to rely on each other when disaster strikes and they’re lost in the wilderness.

**The Other Half of Happy by Rebecca Balcarcel** - Twelve-year-old Quijana likes to say that she used to be Pangaea—unsplit. Nothalfwhite orhalf Latina. But that was before her Guatemalan cousins moved to town.

**The Parker Inheritance by Varian Johnson** - Twelve-year-old Candice sets out to find a mysterious treasure, exonerate her wrongly accused grandmother, and expose an injustice once committed against an African American family in a South Carolina town.

**Prairie Lotus by Linda Sue Park** -In Dakota Territory in the 1880s, half-Chinese Hanna and her white father face racism and resistance to change as they try to make a home for themselves.

**Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor** -Set in rural Mississippi in the early 1930’s, conditions for African Americans could hardly be worse as Cassie Logan relates in this story about her family’s struggle to survive both the Great Depression and White backlash.

**Roll With It by Jamie Summer** -An irrepressible girl with Cerebral Palsy, Ellie’s life takes an unexpected turn when she moves to a new town.

**Small Town Pride by Phil Stamper** -A young gay boy seeks acceptance in his small town.

**So Done by Paula Chase** - A story about the complex friendship between two very different African American girls.

[**Soul Lanterns**](https://amzn.to/37xPv0o) **by Shaw Kuzki** - A multi-layered story of a Japanese girl’s understanding of Hiroshima, grief, family, and the healing power of sharing stories.

**Stella by Starlight by Sharon Draper** -A depression-era novel about a young girl who must learn to be brave in the face of violent prejudice when the Ku Klux Klan reappears in her segregated southern town.

**Stowaway by Karen Hesse** -In the summer of 1768, an eleven-year-old butcher’s apprentice climbs aboard a ship, hides himself from captain and crew, and waits to be carried far away from the life he hates in London

**Stranded by Amy Laundrie** – Ex-best friends fight for survival on a remote island inhabited by wild horses. They think they’re alone but discover a mysterious stranger has been watching them.

**Strange Birds: A Field Guide to Ruffling Feathers by Celia C. Perez** -After Ofelia, Aster, Cat, and Lane fail to persuade a local girls club to change an outdated tradition, they form an alternative group that shakes up their sleepy Florida town.

**This is Just a Test by Madelyn Rosenberg and Wendy Wan Long Shang** – Twelve-year-old Chinese-Jewish David sometimes feels like surviving a possible nuclear war is the least of his problems as he is torn between preparing for his Bar Mitzvah as well as the upcoming trivia tournament, all while digging a fallout shelter with friends who don’t make any of it easier.

**Three Times Lucky by Sheila Turnage** - Eleven-year-old Mo LoBeau and best friend Dale turn detective when her adopted parent, the Colonel, is implicated in a murder.

**A Time Traveler’s Theory of Relativity by Nicole Valentine** - Days before his thirteenth birthday, science lover Finn learns that the women of his family are time travelers and he is expected to help locate his missing mother

**Two Roads by Joseph Bruchac** - A boy discovers his Native American heritage in this Depression-era tale of identity and friendship set in an indigenous boarding school.

**Turtle Under Ice by Juleah del Rasario** -A teen navigates questions of grief, identity, and guilt in the wake of her sister’s mysterious disappearance in this novel-in-verse.

**Voyage of the Sparrowhawk** **by Natasha Farrant** - Two friends set off in a small boat for France to find Ben’s missing older brother, not realizing how unlikely it is they’ll survive the journey in their fragile craft.

**The War that Saved My Life by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley** -A young girl with a physical disability is evacuated from London with her brother during World War II and finds life to be much sweeter away from their abusive mother.

**The Watsons Go to Birmingham: 1963** **by Christopher Paul Curtis** - The Watsons set out on a family road trip and their experience gives them courage to stand up for what is right at the same time it helps them grow stronger as a family.

**We Dream of Space by Erin Entrada Kelly** -Cash, Fitch, and Brid are in seventh grade in 1986, each struggling with their own anxieties, as the country waits expectantly for the launch of the Space Shuttle Challenger.

**Weird Kid by Greg Van Eekhout** -A shapeshifting alien adopted by humans is trying to stay hidden when sinkholes start showing up all over town. Can Jake keep the town from being swallowed up *and* keep his identity a secret?

**We’re Not From Here** **by Geoff Rodkey** - Long after Earth becomes unlivable, Lan and his family set out to make a new life on the planet Choom, but when they arrive humans are no longer welcome. How can they change minds that seem determined to think the worst of them?

**When Winter Robeson Came by Brenda Woods** – The whole world seems to transform during the summer of 1965, when African American Eden's cousin from Mississippi comes to visit her in L.A. just as the Watts Riots erupt.

**When You Reach Me by Rebecca Stead** - A twelve-year-old girl in 1980’s New York City tries to make sense of a series of mysterious notes from an anonymous sender that seem to defy the laws of time and space.

**While I was Away by Waka T Brown** -An empowering middle grade memoir that takes readers on a journey to 1980s Japan, where the author was sent as a child to reconnect to her family’s roots.

**Wildoak by C.C. Harrington** -There is no way to predict what happens when the fates of a snow leopard, a girl, and an ancient forest collide in this story.

[**Words on Fire**](https://amzn.to/2od005z) **by** **Jennifer A. Nielsen** - Audra doesn’t know her parents are book smugglers until they are arrested. Then she flees and learns how books keep alive a language, culture, and identity, no matter how hard someone tries to erase it.

**You Go First by Erin Entrada Kelly** - A story about family, bullying, word games, art, and the ever-complicated world of middle school friendships.

**Yusuf Azeem Is Not a Hero by Sassdia Faruqi** - A boy experiences rising hostility to his Muslim community as the 20th anniversary of the Twin Towers attack approaches.