**5th Grade Historical Fiction Book List**

This document contains suggested titles for book clubs and independent reading for the Historical Fiction Unit of Study. The books have been grouped into five topics: Westward Expansion and Prairie Life, The Great Depression, The Civil Rights Movement, Pre-Columbian through the American Revolutionary War (Including Colonial Period), and Pre- and Post-Civil War. Please note that some of these topics overlap with the Grade 5 Social Studies curriculum, so that you can make the best use of time in both ELA and Social Studies. Other topics contain books that are appropriate to this age group and address timeless themes across time periods and settings, but do not address the curriculum. If you choose to use these titles (such as those that take place during the Depression), the ELA and Social Studies coordinators remind you to keep the focus on developing critical readers and provide only the background knowledge necessary to understand the context.

This is a work in progress and not every book or resource is listed. All books are leveled, the Lexile is displayed if available, and a brief synopsis of the book has been inserted. All information has been taken from the Scholastic Book Wizard website or Amazon.

\*Indicates already purchased by Plymouth Public Schools. Check out your school’s book closet for these titles.

**Teaching Points:**

**· Paying attention to the concrete physical details of the setting and the “feel” of a place—the mood and tone**

**· Synthesizing information quickly to understand setting and characters**

**· Noticing how time moves in the text**

**· Seeing how the main character’s personal time line unfolds alongside a historical time line and how the two are entwined**

**· Paying attention to the different ways in which characters respond to events; using this information to better understand the characters and the time period**

**· Holding onto big ideas throughout the text and noticing evidence that supports/doesn’t support these theories**

**· Being open to new ideas and interpretations as we read and talk**

**· Understanding the story through multiple characters’ perspectives**

**· Analyzing the power dynamics in the stories**

**· Reading nonfiction to complement & deepen our understanding of the historical fiction**

**· Understanding the role of literary allusion**

**· Learning from the characters in our books as they face critical moments of choice**

***Topic: Westward Expansion and Prairie Life***

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| **Level** | **Lexile** | **Title** | **Author** | **Type** | **Photo** |
| T | 830 | ***Mr. Tucket***Fourteen-year-old Francis Tucket is heading west on the Oregon Trail with his family by wagon train. When he receives a rifle for his birthday, he is thrilled that he is being treated like an adult. But Francis lags behind to practice shooting and is captured by Pawnees. It will take wild horses, hostile tribes, and a mysterious one-armed mountain man named Mr. Grimes to help Francis become the man who will be called Mr. Tucket. | Gary Paulsen | Chapter |  |
| T | N/A | ***Sing Down the Moon***When the Navaho are forced to move from their homes to Fort Sumner, Bright Morning and Tall Boy struggle to survive and live in their traditional ways. | Scott O’Dell | Chapter |  |
| R | 890 | ***Caddie Woodlawn***Children everywhere will love redheaded Caddie with her penchant for pranks. Scarcely out of one scrape before she is into another, she refuses to be a "lady," preferring instead to run the woods with her brothers. Whether she is crossing the lake on a raft, visiting an Indian camp, or listening to the tales of the circuit rider, Caddie's adventures provide an exciting and authentic picture of life on the Wisconsin frontier in the 1860s. And readers will discover, as Caddie learns what growing up truly means, that it is not so very different today. | Carol Ryrie Brink | Chapter |  |
| U | 680 | ***Thunder Rolling on the Mountain***This powerful account of the tragic defeat of the Nez Perce Indians in 1877 by the United States Army is narrated by Chief Joseph's strong and brave daughter. | Scott O’Dell | Chapter |  |

***Topic: The Great Depression***

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| **Level** | **Lexile** | **Title** | **Author** | **Type** | **Image** |
| T | 950 | ***Bud, Not Buddy\****It's 1936, in Flint, Michigan. Ten-year-old Bud may be a motherless boy on the run, but he's on a mission. His momma never told him who his father was, but she left a clue: posters of Herman E. Calloway and his famous band, the Dusky Devastators of the Depression! Bud's got an idea that those posters will lead to his father. Once he decides to hit the road and find this mystery man, nothing can stop him.*Bud, Not Buddy* is full of laugh-out-loud humor and wonderful characters, hitting the high notes of jazz and sounding the deeper tones of the Great Depression. | Christopher Curtis | Chapter |  |
| U | 750 | ***A Long Way From Chicago***Set during the years 1929–1942, and told in eight engaging episodes, this fresh and funny novel recounts a boy and his sister's annual summer trips to rural Illinois to visit their eccentric grandmother. Grandma Dowdel, a remarkable larger-than-life character, continually astounds her grandchildren with her nonconformist behavior and her gutsy, take-charge attitude.What happens when Joey and his sister, Mary Alice — two city slickers from Chicago — make their annual summer visits to Grandma Dowdel's seemingly sleepy Illinois town? | Richard Peck | Chapter |  |
| V | 610 | ***A Year Down Yonder*** The worst part of the "Roosevelt Recession" in 1937 is that Mary Alice has to spend a year in a rural town with her feisty and conniving Grandma Dowdel. After enduring many outrageous schemes, Mary Alice eventually learns to appreciate her grandmother's wisdom and her ways. This Newbery Medal winner is the hilarious sequel to Peck's celebrated *A Long Way From Chicago.* | Richard Peck | Chapter |  |
| V | 750 | ***Esperanza Rising***Esperanza thought she'd always live with her family on their ranch in Mexico — she'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home, and servants. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California during the Great Depression, and to settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard labor, financial struggles, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When their new life is threatened, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances — Mama's life, and her own, depend on it. | Pam Munoz Ryan | Chapter | Esperanza Rising |

***Topic: The Civil Rights Movement***

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| S | 760 | **Journey to Jo’burg\***Separated from their mother by the harsh social and economic conditions prevalent among blacks in South Africa, thirteen-year-old Naledi and her younger brother make a journey over 300 kilometers to find her in Johannesburg. The reader will confront poverty, illness and racism in this story about South Africa. The meaning of freedom is addressed and would make for a good discussion topic. Despite the short length of the story and the inclusion of illustrations, this book covers a serious and valuable subject. The children's determination to save their sister is rare and moving and will stay with readers long after they finish the book. | Beverly Naidoo | Chapter |  |
| T | 900 | **Sounder** Set in the Deep South, this Newbery Medal-winning novel tells the story of the great coon dog, Sounder, and the poor sharecroppers who own him. During the difficult years of the nineteenth century South, an African-American boy and his poor family rarely have enough to eat. Each night, the boy's father takes Sounder out to look for food and the man grows more desperate by the day. When food suddenly appears on the table one morning, it seems like a blessing. But the sheriff and his deputies are not far behind. The ever-loyal Sounder remains determined to help the family he loves as hard times bear down on them. | William H. Armstrong | Chapter |  |
| T |  | **The Well**During a drought, the Logan family shares their well water with all their neighbors, black and white alike. But David and Hammer find it hard to share with Charlie Simms, who torments them because they are black. Hammer's pride and Charlie's meanness are a dangerous mixture, and tensions build and build. Narrated by young David Logan, Cassie's father in Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, this extraordinary story is filled with characters and events so real that they're unforgettable. | Mildred Taylor | Chapter |  |
| U | 1000 | **The Watsons Go To Birmingham**Enter the world of ten-year-old Kenny and his family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan. When Momma and Dad decide it's time for a visit to Grandma, Dad comes home with the amazing Ultra-Glide, and the Watsons head South to Birmingham, Alabama...toward one of the darkest moments in America's history.A hilarious, touching, and tragic novel about civil rights and the impact of violence on one African American family.  | Christopher Paul Curtis | Chapter |  |

***Topic: Pre-Columbian through the American Revolutionary War (Including Colonial Period)***

***(Also see books listed on the “Mentor Texts for Grade 5 Historical Fiction)***

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| **Level** | **Lexile** | **Title** | **Author** | **Type** | **Image** |
| T | 840 | **George Washington’s Socks\***When five kids take a walk along Lake Levart late one night, a mysterious wooden rowboat beckons them aboard. As if in a trance, they all step inside. But what they don't realize is that this enchanted boat is headed backward in time, to the time of George Washington. And their neighborhood lake has been transformed into the icy Delaware River on the eve of the battle at Trenton. How will they ever find their way back to the safety of their familiar suburban homes? | Elvira Woodruff | Chapter |  |
| T | 740 | **Toliver’s Secret\***When her grandfather is injured, 10-year-old Ellen Toliver replaces him on a top-secret patriotic mission. Disguised as a boy, she manages to smuggle a message to General George Washington. | Esther Wood Brady | Chapter |  |
| U | 800 | **War Comes to Willy Freeman\***A free 13-year-old black girl in Connecticut is caught up in the horror of the Revolutionary War and the danger of being returned to slavery when her patriot father is killed by the British and her mother disappears. | Christopher Collier | Chapter |  |
| V | 780 | **The Keeping Room**When Colonel Joseph Kershaw leaves Camden, South Carolina, to lead the American rebels in their struggle against the British, he leaves his son Joey behind as the man of the house. But what can a 13-year-old do when General Cornwallis comes into town and makes the Kershaws' home his headquarters, and begins hanging American prisoners in the family garden? Joey is determined to get revenge, even if he has to risk everything. | Ann Myers | Chapter |  |
| W | 850 | **The Witch of Blackbird Pond**Kit Tyler is marked by suspicion and disapproval from the moment she arrives on the unfamiliar shores of colonial Connecticut in 1867. Alone and desperate, she has been forced to leave her beloved home on the island of Barbados and join a family she has never met. Torn between her quest for belonging and her desire to be true to herself, Kit struggles to survive in a hostile place. Just when it seems she must give up, she finds a kindred spirit. But Kit's friendship with Hannah Tupper, believed by the colonists to be a witch, proves more taboo than she could have imagined and ultimately forces Kit to choose between her heart and her duty. | Elizabeth George Speare | Chapter |  |

***Topic: Pre and Post Civil War***

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| **Level** | **Lexile** | **Title** | **Author** | **Type** | **Image** |
| S | 600 | **Pink and Say\***The heart-wrenching true story of Civil War valor in which a 15-year old Yankee soldier, Say, alone and bleeding, is dragged to safety by a fellow Union soldier from the Forty-eighth colored regiment. They are ultimately captured and separated, and Say survived to pass the story down through the author's family. | Patricia Polacco | Picture | Pink and Say |
| U | 870 | **Stealing Freedom**Inspired by a true story, this riveting novel tells of a young slave girl's harrowing escape to freedom on the Underground Railroad. The moment Ann Maria Weems was born, her freedom was stolen from her. Like her family and the other slaves on the farm, Ann works from sunup to sundown and obeys the orders of her master. Then one day, Ann's family — the only joy she knows — is gone. Just 12 years old, Ann is overcome by grief, struggling to get through each day. And her only hope of stealing back her freedom and finding her family lies in a perilous journey: the Underground Railroad. | Elisa Carbone | Chapter |  |
| Y  | 810 | **Bull Run**In this brilliant, fictional tour de force, Newbery Medalist Paul Fleischman recreates the early days of the Civil War with startling immediacy, giving voice to 16 different narrators, Northern and Southern, male and female, young and old, white and black. Each point of view is strikingly different, and utterly believable. Bull Run, winner of the Scott O'Dell Award, can be read as a novel, but its straightforward monologues lend themselves to staged performance or readers' theater. A marvelous resource for extending units on the Civil War, this stunning book offers a broad range of discussion possibilities. It also puts forth the universal lesson that there are often more than two sides to any story told: there can be as many accounts as there are witnesses. | Paul Fleischman | Chapter |  |