

PLAINFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT #202
6-8 APPROVED NOVEL LIST

PLEASE NOTE: This is a list of novels that are used for literacy instruction in Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202. These summaries were created using a variety of resources such as Novelist, Follett's Titlewave, The Lexile Framework for Reading, Amazon.com and Commonsense.com. This list and the summaries contained therein are provided as a convenient reference only. The opinions and statements contained in each of the novels are those of the author only and do not represent the opinions or interests of Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202. Further, Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202 does not represent that the summaries accurately reflect or represent the views of the authors.

Title	Novel Summary
6th Grade	
Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls	The adventures of a ten-year-old boy and the two dogs he bought with money he had earned. <i>Violence</i>
The Call of the Wild by Jack London	The adventures of an unusual dog, part St. Bernard, part Scotch shepherd, that is forcibly taken to the Klondike gold fields. <i>Violence</i>
Myths and Legends from Ancient Greece and Around the World by various authors	A collection of myths and legends, passed down from generation to generation, describing another world - a world of superhuman deeds, heroism, love, jealousy, war, tragedy, and triumph.
Fair Weather by Richard Peck	Thirteen-year-old Rosie and members of her family travel from their Illinois farm to Chicago in 1893 to visit Aunt Euterpe and attend the World's Columbian Exposition which, along with an encounter with Buffalo Bill and Lillian Russell, turns out to be a life-changing experience for everyone.
Things Not Seen by Andrew Clements	When fifteen-year-old Bobby wakes up and finds himself invisible, he and his parents and his new blind friend Alicia try to find out what caused his condition and how to reverse it.
The Red Pony by John Steinbeck	Ownership of a beautiful red pony teaches ten-year-old boy about life and death. <i>Language</i>
Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli	Winner of the Newbery Medal, this humorous yet poignant tall tale concerns a super-athletic teenager who bridges his town's racial gap. <i>Discrimination/Language/Drug-Alcohol Reference</i>
Hatchet by Gary Paulson	After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce. <i>Violence</i>
The Watsons Go to Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis	The ordinary interactions and everyday routines of the Watsons, an African-American family living in Flint, Michigan, are drastically changed after they go to visit Grandma in Alabama in the summer of 1963. <i>Violence</i>
The Hero's Trail: A Guide For a Heroic Life by Thomas A. Barron	Explores how to lead a heroic life, facing challenges with courage, strength of character, and wisdom, much as a hiker uses those qualities on a challenging trail.
Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt	The Tuck family is confronted with an agonizing situation when they discover that a ten-year-old girl and a malicious stranger now share their secret about a spring whose water prevents one from ever growing any older. <i>Violence</i>
Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman	One by one, a number of people of varying ages and backgrounds transform a trash-filled inner-city lot into a productive and beautiful garden, and, in doing so, the gardeners are themselves transformed.
A Long Way From Chicago by Richard Peck	Set during the years 1929-1942, this humorous novel recounts a boy and his sister's annual summer trips to rural Illinois to visit their eccentric grandmother. <i>Violence</i>
Angelfish by Laurence Yep Award: Young Hoosier Book Award (Nominated, 2005) Volunteer State Book Award (Nominated, 2004)	Robin, a young ballet dancer who is half Chinese and half white, works in a fish store for Mr. Tsow, a brusque Chinese who accuses her of being a half-person and who harbors a bitter secret. <i>Discrimination</i>
A Strong Right Arm: The Story of Mamie "Peanut" Jackson by Michelle Y. Green	Tells the story of Mamie "Peanut" Johnson, a woman who had to overcome the obstacles of gender and race to pursue her dream of playing baseball, and who finally got her chance when she and other African-American women were invited to play in the Negro Leagues after male players were allowed on major league teams. <i>Discrimination</i>
Flip-Flop Girl by Katherine Paterson	Uprooted following the death of their father, nine-year-old Vinnie and her five-year-old brother, Mason, cope in different ways - one in silence - but both with the help of Lupe, the flip-flop girl.

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Eagle Song by Joseph Bruchac	After moving from a Mohawk reservation to Brooklyn, New York, eight-year-old Danny Bigtree encounters stereotypes about his Native American heritage. <i>Discrimination</i>
Spies! by Richard Platt	In Spies, readers explore the history of espionage through war and "cold war" peace.
7th Grade	
Lottery Rose by Irene Hunt	A young victim of child abuse gradually overcomes his fears and suspicions when placed in a home with other boys. <i>Violence</i>
The Pearl by John Steinbeck	A fisherman finds the great pearl, only to lose it all again.
Oddballs by William Sleator	A collection of stories based on experiences from the author's youth and peopled with an unusual assortment of family and friends.
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain	This story deals with all the challenges that any young person faces and resolves them in exciting and unusual ways.
The Hound of the Baskervilles by Arthur Conan Doyle	Sherlock Holmes is asked to investigate the tale of a hound that haunts the lonely moors around the Baskervilles' ancestral home.
Within Reach: My Everest Story by Mark Pfetzer	The author describes how he spent his teenage years climbing mountains in the United States, South America, Africa, and Asia, with an emphasis on his two expeditions up Mount Everest.
The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton Award: Bilby (Books I Love Best Yearly) Award (Won, 1991)	The struggle of three brothers to stay together after their parent's death and their quest for identity among the conflicting values of their adolescent society. <i>Violence/Drug-Alcohol Reference</i>
The Glory Field by Walter Dean Myers	This story chronicles the African American experience through the lives and times of one family , beginning in 1753 with the capture of Muhammed Bilal in Sierra Leone. <i>Discrimination/Drug-Alcohol Reference/Violence/Language</i>
Promises to Keep: How Jackie Robinson Changed America by Sharon Robinson	A biography of baseball legend Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play in the major leagues, as told by his daughter. <i>Discrimination</i>
Locomotion by Jacqueline Woodson	Inspired by his teacher, eleven-year-old Lonnie begins to write about his life in a series of poems in which he discusses his feelings about his friends, his foster mom, his little sister Lili, and the death of his parents.
The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin Award: Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards (Won, 1978)	The mysterious death of an eccentric millionaire brings together an unlikely assortment of heirs who must uncover the circumstances of his death before they can claim their inheritance. <i>Violence</i>
Rosa Parks: My Story by Rosa Parks	On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus, sparking the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott. In straightforward, moving language, she tells of her vital role in the struggle for equality for all Americans. Rosa Park's life story reveals the choices she made. <i>Discrimination</i>
Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor	This is a story told from the perspective of a fourth grader, Cassie, struggling to understand the segregation that plagues her cotton-growing region of Mississippi during the early 1930s. <i>Discrimination/Violence</i>
A Step From Heaven by An Na	A young Korean girl and her family find it difficult to learn English and adjust to life in America. <i>Violence</i>

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The Pact by Drs. Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, and Rameck Hunt with Lisa Frazier Page	Presents the true story of three African-American kids from the inner city of Newark, New Jersey, who made a pact to support each other as they rose from an environment of poverty, crime, and drugs, and went on to become successful doctors.
Someone is hiding on Alcatraz Island by Eve Hunting	When he offends the toughest gang in his San Francisco school, Danny tries to elude them by going to Alcatraz only to find himself and a Park Service employee trapped by the gang in an old prison cell block. <i>Violence</i>
Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson	After his anger erupts into violence, fifteen year-old Cole, in order to avoid going to prison, agrees to participate in a sentencing alternative based on the Native American Circle Justice. He is sent to a remote Alaskan Island where he is left to survive for a year.
Micromonsters: Life under the Microscope by Christopher Maynard	Explores the hidden world of very small creatures that live around us and even inside us, including fleas, bedbugs, itch mites and more.
8th Grade	
The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson	The novel depicts the struggle of two opposing personalities - one essentially good, the other evil. <i>Violence</i>
The Jungle by Upton Sinclair	This dramatic exposé of the Chicago meat-packing industry prompted an investigation by Theodore Roosevelt which culminated in the pure-food legislation of 1906.
Code Talker by Joseph Bruchac	After being taught in a boarding school that Navajo is a useless language, Ned Begay and other Navajo men are recruited by the Marines to become Code Talkers, sending messages during World War II in their native tongue.
Animal Farm by George Orwell	A political satire in which the animals take over running the farm, but find their utopian state turning into a dictatorship.
Lord of the Flies by William Golding	The tale of a group of English school boys who are left stranded on an unpopulated island, who must confront the defects of their society and of their own natures.
Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki	This true story is a chronicle about the internment of a Japanese-American family during World War II. <i>Discrimination</i>
Anne Frank: A Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank	A thirteen-year-old Dutch-Jewish girl records her impressions of the two years she and seven others spent hiding from the Nazis before they were discovered and taken to concentration camps
Hush by Jacqueline Woodson	Twelve-year-old Toswiah finds her life changed when her family enters the witness protection program.
To Be a Slave by Julius Lester	A compilation, selected from various sources and arranged chronologically, of the reminiscences of slaves and ex-slaves about their experiences from the leaving of Africa through the Civil War and into the early twentieth century.
The Giver by Lois Lowry	A twelve year old boy becomes the receiver of memories shared by only one other in his community and discovers the terrible truth about the society in which he lives.
Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff by Walter Dean Myers	New to 116th street in New York, a young boy soon makes friends and begins a year of unusual experiences.
Who Moved My Cheese? For Teens by Spencer Johnson	The author's parable about change framed in a story about a group of high school friends trying to handle change in their lives.
Anne Frank and Me by Cherrie Bennett	After suffering a concussion while on a class trip to a Holocaust exhibit, Nicole finds herself living the life as a Jewish teenager in Paris during the Nazi occupation.
Number the Stars by Lois Lowry	Set in Nazi-occupied Denmark in 1943, this 1990 Newbery winner tells of a 10-year-old girl who undertakes a dangerous mission to save her best friend.
F is For Freedom by Roni Schotter	When ten-year-old Manda interrupts a midnight delivery, she discovers her parents' involvement in the Underground Railroad and makes her own contribution to a fugitive slave's freedom.
Going Home by Nicholasa Mohr	Feeling like an outsider when she visits her relatives in Puerto Rico for the first time, eleven-year-old Felita tries to come to terms with the heritage she always took for granted.

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Brady by Jean Fritz	A boy discovers an Underground Railroad station near his family's farm and is forced to make his own decision about the slavery controversy.
Bermuda Triangle by Andrew Donkin	Explores the mysteries and legends associated with the Bermuda Triangle, an area in the Atlantic Ocean bounded by Bermuda, Florida, and Puerto Rico, where hundreds of boats and planes have vanished.