Battle of the Books 2026-2027
5th Grade Book Summaries

The Academy *by T.Z. Layton*

Born and raised in a small town, twelve-year-old Leo K. Doyle has never seen the ocean or stepped foot on a plane. But Leo is a star soccer player with big dreams in life. While Leo longs to make the pros one day, he has no idea how to achieve this goal—until a professional scout extends an invitation to try out for the London Dragons youth squad, known as the Academy. Along with the grueling competition, Leo must also face a bully intent on torpedoing his summer, a roomie who doesn't know how to have fun, a terrifying camp director, and, most of all, Leo's own lack of formal training.

I Survived the Battle of Gettysburg, 1863 *by Lauren Tarshis*

It's 1863, and Thomas and his little sister, Birdie, have fled the farm where they were born and raised as slaves. Following the North Star, looking for freedom, they soon cross paths with a Union soldier. Everything changes: Corporal Henry Green brings Thomas and Birdie back to his regiment, and suddenly it feels like they've found a new home. Best of all, they don't have to find their way north alone--they're marching with the army. But then orders come through: The men are called to battle in Pennsylvania. Thomas has made it so far . . . but does he have what it takes to survive Gettysburg?

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

When Claudia decided to run away, she planned very carefully. She would be gone just long enough to teach her parents a lesson in Claudia appreciation. And she would go in comfort-she would live at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She saved her money, and she invited her brother Jamie to go, mostly because he would have money.

Claudia was a good organizer and Jamie bad some ideas, too; so the two took up residence at the museum right on schedule. But once the fun of settling in was over, Claudia had two unexpected problems: She felt just the same, and she wanted to feel

different; and she found a statue at the Museum so beautiful she could not go home until she bad discovered its maker. The former owner of the statue was Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. Without her—well, without her, Claudia might never have found a way to go home.

The Last Kids on Earth: The Graphic Novel *by Max Brailler*

Ever since the monster apocalypse hit town, average thirteen-year-old Jack Sullivan has been living in his tree house, which he's armed to the teeth with catapults and a moat, not to mention video games and an endless supply of Oreos and Mountain Dew scavenged from abandoned stores. But Jack alone is no match for the hordes of Zombies and Winged Wretches and Vine Thingies, and especially not for the eerily intelligent monster known only as Blarg. So Jack builds a team: his dorky best

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friend, Quint; reformed middle school bully, Dirk; Jack's loyal pet monster, Rover; and the fiercest girl Jack knows, June. With their help, Jack is going to slay Blarg, achieve the ultimate Feat of Apocalyptic Success, and be average no longer! Can he do it?

Out of My Mind *by Sharon M. Draper*

Eleven-year-old Melody is not like most people. She can't walk. She can't talk. She can't write. All because she has cerebral palsy. But she also has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She's the smartest kid in her whole school, but NO ONE knows it. Most people—her teachers, her doctors, her classmates—dismiss her as mentally challenged because she can't tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by her disability. And she's determined to let everyone know it...somehow.

Where the Red Fern Grows *by Wilson Rawls*

Billy has long dreamt of owning not one, but two, dogs. So when he's finally able to save up enough money for two pups to call his own—Old Dan and Little Ann—he's ecstatic. It doesn't matter that times are tough; together they'll roam the hills of the Ozarks. Soon Billy and his hounds become the finest hunting team in the valley. Stories of their great achievements spread throughout the region, and the combination of Old Dan's brawn, Little Ann's brains, and Billy's sheer will seems unbeatable. But tragedy awaits these determined hunters—now friends—and Billy learns that hope can grow out of despair, and that the seeds of the future can come from the scars of the past.