SLAM Titles for 6th-8th Grade
Synopsis

In the spirit of modern-day classics like Fish in a Tree and Counting by 7s comes the story of a deaf girl's connection to a whale whose song can't be heard by his species, and the journey she takes to help him. From fixing the class computer to repairing old radios, twelve-year-old Iris is a tech genius. But she's the only deaf person in her school, so people often treat her like she's not very smart. If you've ever felt like no one was listening to you, then you know how hard that can be. When she learns about Blue 55, a real whale who is unable to speak to other whales, Iris understands how he must feel. Then she has an idea: she should invent a way to "sing" to him! But he's three thousand miles away. How will she play her song for him? Full of heart and poignancy, this affecting story by sign language interpreter Lynne Kelly shows how a little determination can make big waves.
Synopsis
Five years. That’s how long Coyote and her dad, Rodeo, have lived on the road in an old school bus, crisscrossing the nation. It’s also how long ago Coyote lost her mom and two sisters in a car crash. Coyote hasn’t been home in all that time, but when she learns the park in her old neighborhood is being demolished — the very same park where she, her mom, and her sisters buried a treasured memory box — she devises an elaborate plan to get her dad to drive 3,600 miles back to Washington state in four days...without him realizing it. Along the way, they’ll pick up a strange crew of misfit travelers. Lester has a lady love to meet. Salvador and his mom are looking to start over. Val needs a safe place to be herself. And then there’s Gladys....Over the course of thousands of miles, Coyote will learn that going home can sometimes be the hardest journey of all...but that with friends by her side, she just might be able to turn her “once upon a time” into a “happily ever after”.
Synopsis
In 1940, a group of British children, their escorts, and some sailors struggle to survive in a lifeboat when the ship taking them to safety in Canada is torpedoed.
Synopsis
The Rylance family is stuck. Dad's got writer's block. Ethan promised to illustrate a group project at school--even though he can't draw. Sarah's still pining for a puppy. And they all miss Mom. Enter Inkling. Inkling begins life in Mr. Rylance's sketchbook. But one night the ink of his drawings runs together--and then leaps off the page! This small burst of creativity is about to change everything. Ethan finds him first. Inkling has absorbed a couple chapters of his math book--not good--and the story he's supposed to be illustrating for school--also not good. But Inkling's also started drawing the pictures to go with the story--which is amazing! It's just the help Ethan was looking for! Inkling helps the rest of the family too--for Sarah he's a puppy. And for Dad he's a spark of ideas for a new graphic novel. It's exactly what they all want. It's not until Inkling goes missing that this family has to face the larger questions of what they--and Inkling--truly need.
Synopsis
Perfect for fans of Raina Telgemeier and Gene Luen Yang, New Kid is a timely, honest novel about starting over at a new school where diversity is low and the struggle to fit in is real, from award-winning author-illustrator Jerry Craft. Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?
Synopsis
Thirteen-year-old Teddy Youngblood is in a coma fighting for his life after an unspecified football injury at training camp. His family and friends flock to his bedside to support his recovery—and to discuss the events leading up to the tragic accident. Was this an inevitable result of playing a violent sport, or was something more sinister happening on the field that day? Told in an innovative, multimedia format combining dialogue, texts, newspaper articles, transcripts, an online forum, and Teddy's inner thoughts, Game Changer explores the joyous thrills and terrifying risks of America's most popular sport.
Synopsis
Operating out of a base in Scotland, the City Spies are five kids from various parts of the world. When they’re not attending the local boarding school, they’re honing their unique skills, such as sleight of hand, breaking and entering, observation, and explosives. All of these allow them to go places in the world of espionage where adults can’t. Before she knows what she’s doing, Sara is heading to Paris for an international youth summit, hacking into a rival school’s computer to prevent them from winning a million euros, dangling thirty feet off the side of a building, and trying to stop a villain; all while navigating the complex dynamics of her new team. No one said saving the world was easy.
Synopsis
Four determined homeless children make a life for themselves in Padma Venkatraman’s stirring middle-grade debut. Life is harsh in Chennai’s teeming streets, so when runaway sisters Viji and Rukku arrive, their prospects look grim. Very quickly, 11-year-old Viji discovers how vulnerable they are in this uncaring, dangerous world. Fortunately, the girls find shelter — and friendship — on an abandoned bridge. With two homeless boys, Muthi and Arul, the group forms a family of sorts. And while making a living scavenging the city’s trash heaps is the pits, the kids find plenty to laugh about and take pride in, too. After all, they are now the bosses of themselves and no longer dependent on untrustworthy adults. But when illness strikes, Viji must decide whether to risk seeking help from strangers or to keep holding on to their fragile, hard-fought freedom.
Synopsis
Charlie Hernández has always been proud of his Latin American heritage. He loves the culture, the art, and especially the myths. Thanks to his abuela’s stories, Charlie possesses an almost encyclopedic knowledge of the monsters and ghouls who have spent the last five hundred years haunting the imaginations of children all across the Iberian Peninsula, as well as Central and South America. And even though his grandmother sometimes hinted that the tales might be more than mere myth, Charlie’s always been a pragmatist. Even barely out of diapers, he knew the stories were just make-believe—nothing more than intricately woven fables meant to keep little kids from misbehaving.

But when Charlie begins to experience freaky bodily manifestations—ones all too similar to those described by his grandma in his favorite legend—he is suddenly swept up in a world where the mythical beings he’s spent his entire life hearing about seem to be walking straight out of the pages of Hispanic folklore and into his life. And even stranger, they seem to know more about him than he knows about himself.
Synopsis
Imagine being forced to move to a new planet where YOU are the alien! From the creator of the Tapper Twins, New York Times bestselling author Geoff Rodkey delivers a topical, sci-fi middle-grade novel that proves friendship and laughter can transcend even a galaxy of differences. The first time I heard about Planet Choom, we’d been on Mars for almost a year. But life on the Mars station was grim, and since Earth was no longer an option (we may have blown it up), it was time to find a new home. That’s how we ended up on Choom with the Zhuri. They’re very smart. They also look like giant mosquitoes. But that’s not why it’s so hard to live here. There’s a lot that the Zhuri don’t like: singing (just ask my sister, Ila), comedy (one joke got me sent to the principal’s office), or any kind of emotion. The biggest problem, though? The Zhuri don’t like us. And if humankind is going to survive, it’s up to my family to change their minds. No pressure.
Synopsis

When a shy girl and her dragon-like companion discover their country’s idyllic weather comes at a steep and secret cost, they recruit fellow students to defy authority and attempt to spread the truth. Storm beasts and their guardians create perfect weather every day, and Mina longs for a storm beast of her own. But when the gentle girl bonds with a lightning beast—a creature of fire and chaos—everyone’s certain it’s a mistake. Everyone but Mina and the beast himself, Pixit. Quickly enrolled in lightning school, Mina struggles to master a guardian’s skills, and she discovers that her country’s weather comes at a devastating cost, a cost powerful people wish to hide. Mina’s never been the type to speak out, but someone has to tell the truth, and, with Pixit’s help, she resolves to find a way to be heard.
Synopsis
From Watt Key, the author of the acclaimed Alabama Moon, comes a thrilling middle grade survival story about a scuba dive gone wrong and two enemies who must unite to survive. It’s the most important rule of scuba diving: If you don’t feel right, don’t go down. So after her father falls ill, twelve-year-old Julie Sims must take over and lead two of his clients on a dive miles off the coast of Alabama while her father stays behind in the boat. When the clients, a reckless boy Julie’s age and his equally foolhardy father, disregard Julie’s instructions during the dive, she quickly realizes she’s in over her head. And once she surfaces, things only get worse: One of the clients is in serious condition, and their dive boat has vanished—along with Julie’s father, the only person who knows their whereabouts. It’s only a matter of time before they die of hypothermia, unless they become shark bait first. Though Julie may not like her clients, it’s up to her to save them all.
Synopsis
Stranger Things meets The Goonies in this suspenseful yet heartwarming adventure story about a group of friends who set out to find a crashed meteor...but find mystery and danger instead as their close relationships begin to fracture. Annie, Beans, Rocky, and Fynn are the Scouts--best friends who do everything together. It's 1985, and the summer before seventh grade is just beginning. The Scouts decide to secretly climb Old Man Basinger's silo to watch a meteor shower, and when one meteor seems to crash nearby, the Scouts know they have to set out on their next adventure and find it. But their fun overnight jaunt through the woods soon takes a turn for the worst when they discover a series of disturbing clues about the meteor--and suddenly find themselves on the run from the wild, violent Mason clan. Bonds are tested when new kids join their adventure and the group's true feelings are revealed. Will the Scouts survive this journey together—or will their unbreakable friendships prove vulnerable after all? READ LESS
Synopsis
From the critically acclaimed author of the Edge of Extinction series comes this fast-paced, action-packed, and heartfelt adventure about a group of kids with uncontrollable abilities, perfect for fans of Gordon Korman, Lisa McMann, and Dan Gutman! Emerson can float; he just can’t do it very well. His uncontrollable floating is his RISK factor, which means that he deals with Reoccurring Incidents of the Strange Kind. The last place Emerson wants to be is at a government-mandated summer camp for RISK kids like him, so he’s shocked when he actually starts having fun at camp and he even makes some new friends. But it’s not all canoeing and capture the flag at Camp Outlier. The summer of fun takes a serious turn when Emerson and his friends discover that one of their own is hiding a deadly secret that puts all of their lives in danger. It’s up to the Red Maple boys to save themselves’ and everyone like them.
Synopsis
One boy's search for his father leads him to Puerto Rico in this moving middle-grade novel, for fans of Ghost and See You in the Cosmos. Marcus Vega is six feet tall, 180 pounds, and the owner of a premature mustache. When you look like this and you're only in the eighth grade, you're both a threat and a target. After a fight at school leaves Marcus facing suspension, Marcus's mom decides it's time for a change of environment. She takes Marcus and his younger brother to Puerto Rico to spend a week with relatives they don't remember or have never met. But Marcus can't focus knowing that his father—who walked out of their lives ten years ago—is somewhere on the island. So begins Marcus's incredible journey, a series of misadventures that take him all over Puerto Rico in search of his elusive namesake. Marcus doesn't know if he'll ever find his father, but what he ultimately discovers changes his life. And he even learns a bit of Spanish along the way.