

Summer Reading Resources for Lower School Families 2023

Research shows that reading for pleasure leads to success in school, the workplace, and life. It helps kids empathize with their peers and reduces their stress levels. During the summer, kids have more time to read for enjoyment, which also offers a great opportunity to preserve and strengthen their reading skills. Set aside time for your child to read each day during the summer break--15 to 30 minutes per day is all it takes! Advance literacy and academic performance by engaging your child in reading and reading-related activities during the summer months.

- Frequent the library, start a summer book club with friends, or create a family challenge to read a certain number of books before school starts.
- Foster a love of reading through public library programs and services.
- Listen to audiobooks together.
- Increase successful reading experiences through self-selected books, librarian-supported selections, and recommendations from teachers, family members, and friends.

Below are some books that you and your child might enjoy together this summer. At the end of the list, you will find more information and resources: inspiration to look at the “windows and mirrors” of your child’s bookshelf; ideas to spark book-related conversations; and more places to look for awesome books.

Please don’t hesitate to email Kate Hewitt or Jenn McDonough this summer for personalized book recommendations based on the latest titles your child has enjoyed.

Picture Book Read-Aloud Recommendations For All Grade Levels

- [Hot Dog](#) (Doug Salati)
- [Evergreen](#) (Matthew Cordell)
- [Berry Song](#) (Michaela Goade)
- [Knight Owl](#) (Christopher Denise)
- [Choosing Brave: How Mamie Till-Mobley and Emmett Till Sparked the Civil Rights Movement](#) (Angela Joy & Janelle Washington) ****ages 8-12****
- [A Day with No Words](#) (Tiffany Hammond & Kate Cosgrove)
- [Listen: How Evelyn Glennie Changed Percussion](#) (Shannon Stocker & Devon Holtzworth)
- [Just Like Grandma](#) (Kim Rogers & Julie Flett)
- [The Kindest Red: A Story of Hijab and Friendship](#) (Ibtahaj Muhammad, S.K. Ali & Hatem Aly)
- [Plátanos Go with Everything/Los Plátanos van con todo](#) (Lissette Norman & Sara Palacios and translated by Kianny N. Antigua)
- [Chloe’s Lunar New Year](#) (Lily LaMotte & Michelle Lee)
- [Nell Plants a Tree](#) (Anne Winter & Daniel Miyares)

Chapter Book Read-Aloud Recommendations

We have tried to choose titles that will make great read-alouds across many different ages; however, as with any read-aloud, we recommend that you preview and pre-read the book before sharing it with your child. These are all available as audiobooks and we think they will make the miles pass quickly on any family road trips!

- [The Flamingo: A Graphic Novel Chapter Book](#) (Guojing) ****wordless****
- [The Eyes and the Impossible](#) (Dave Eggers)
- [Esme's Birthday Conga Line](#) (Lourdes Heuer)
- [Leeva at Last](#) (Sara Pennypacker)
- [Surely, Surely Marisol Rainey](#) (Erin Entrada-Kelly)
- [Haven: A Small Cat's Big Adventure](#) (Megan Wagner Lloyd)
- [The Lost Ryu](#) (Emi Watanabe Cohen)
- [The Problem Children](#) (Natalie Lloyd)
- [Always, Clementine](#) (Carlie Sorosiak)
- [Miles Lewis King of the Ice](#) (Kelly Starling Lyons & Wayne Spencer)
- [The Sheep, the Rooster, and the Duck](#) (Matt Phelan)
- [Maizy Chen's Last Chance](#) (Lisa Yee) ****ages 8-12****
- [Merci Suarez Plays it Cool](#) (Meg Medina) ****ages 8-12****
- [A Seed in the Sun](#) (Aida Salazar) ****ages 8-12****
- [Swim Team: Small Waves, Big Changes](#) (Johnnie Christmas) ****ages 8-12****

PreK-Grade 1 Book Recommendations

- Fiction: [Holi Hai!](#) (Chitra Soudner & Darshika Varma); [Friends Are Friends, Forever](#) (Dane Liu & Lynn Scurfield); [Mii maanda ezhi-gkendmaanh/This Is How I Know](#) (Brittany Luby)
- Nonfiction: [Fearless Heart: An Illustrated Biography of Surya Bonaly](#) (Frank Murphy & Surya Bonaly); [Listen to the Language of the Trees](#) (Tera Kelley & Marie Hermansson); [Make Way for Animals!](#) (Meeg Pincus); [To Change a Planet](#) (Christina Soontornvat)
- Graphic Novels: [Hello, Hedgehog](#) (Norm Feuti); [Norma and Belly](#) (Mika Song)
- Poetry: [Beautiful Day!: Petite Poems for All Seasons](#) (Rodoula Pappa); [At the Pond](#) (David Elliott); [Hidden Animal Colors](#) (Jane Park)
- Tales: [Mother Goose Goes to India](#) (Kabir Sehgal & SurishTha Sehgal); [Itzel and the Ocelot](#) (Rachel Katstaller)

Grades 2 and 3 Book Recommendations

- Fiction: [Sam's Super Seats](#) (Keah Brown & Sharee Miller); [Amah Faraway](#) (Margaret Chiu Greanais & Tracy Subisak); [Billy and Rose: Forever Friends](#) (Amy Hest); [Wednesday and Woof](#) (Sherri Winston)
- Nonfiction: [Opal Lee and What It Means to be Free](#) (Alice Faye Duncan & Keturah A. Bobo); [Pizza!: A Slice of History](#) (Greg Pizzoli); [Fighting for Yes: The Story of Disability Rights Activist Judith Heumann](#) (Maryann Cocca-Leffler)

- Graphic Novels: [Cranky Chicken Books](#) (Katherine Battersby); [Blue, Barry & Pancakes](#) (Dan Abdo & Jason Patterson); [Bug Scouts Out in the Wild](#) (Mike Lowery); [PAWS: Gabby Gets It Together](#) (Nathan Fairbairn)
- Poetry: [The Dirt Book: Poems About Animals that Live Beneath Our Feet](#) (David L. Harrison); [Delicious!: Poems Celebrating Street Food Around the World](#) (Julie Larios); [My Head Has a Bellyache](#) (Chris Harris)
- Tales: [Nine Color Deer](#) (Kailin Duan); [The Girl and the Wolf](#) (Katherena Vermette & Julie Flett)

Grades 4 and 5 Book Recommendations

- Fiction: [The Last Mapmaker](#) (Christina Soontornvat); [Attack of the Black Rectangles](#) (Amy Sarig King); [Jennifer Chan is Not Alone](#) (Tae Keller); [It's the End of the World and I'm in My Bathing Suit](#) (Justin Reynolds)
- Nonfiction: [Total Garbage: A Messy Dive into Trash, Waste and Our World](#) (Rebecca Donnelly & John Hendrix); [A First Time for Everything](#) (Dan Santat); [Hardcourt: Stories from 75 Years of the NBA](#) (Fred Bowen); [The Tower of Life](#) (Chana Stiefel)
- Graphic Novels: [Freestyle](#) (Gale Galligan); [Invisible](#) (Christina Diaz Gonzalez); [Wingbearer](#) (Marjorie Liu)
- Poetry: [They Only See the Outside](#) (Kalli Dakos); [Alone](#) (Megan E. Freeman); [The Last Straw: Kids vs Plastics](#) (Susan Hood & Christiane Engel); [Marshmallow Clouds](#) (Ted Kooser & Connie Wanek)
- Tales: [Princess and the Peas](#) (Rachel Himes); [Endlessly Ever After: Pick Your Path to Countless Fairy Tale Endings!](#) (Laurel Snyder & Dan Santat); [A Sliver of Moon and a Shard of Truth: Stories from India](#) (Chitra Soundar)

THE WINDOWS AND MIRRORS OF YOUR CHILD'S BOOKSHELF

In her TED Talk [The Windows and Mirrors of Your Child's Bookshelf](#), Grace Lin tells a powerful story of her own childhood experience of literature. She encourages all of us to ensure that our children have the chance to read “mirror” books where they see their own identities and experiences reflected, as well as “window” books that immerse them in the lives of characters whose identities and experiences differ from their own. (Note that the “windows and mirrors” concept and phrase was initially coined by [Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop](#)).

Here are some criteria to consider when evaluating whether a book is a worthwhile addition to your child's bookshelf:

- Is it engaging - relevant, interesting, and attuned to a child's experience and point of view?
- Is it culturally authentic - an accurate reflection of lived experience in terms of setting, characters, speakers, events, language and illustrations? (Often the most culturally authentic texts are written/illustrated by artists who share the protagonist's identity and culture).
- Is it joyful - does it promote a healthy self-concept and exploration of identity?
- Is it culturally competent - does it resist stereotypes, generalizations or misrepresentations and foster intergroup understanding and empathy?

IDEAS TO SPARK BOOK-RELATED CONVERSATIONS

Talk to your child about the books they are reading, read the same title as your child, and model what reading looks like by reading a good book yourself. Consider these suggestions when discussing books with your child.

- **Activate schema:** Use what your child already knows to preview topics in the book. Discuss the cover and read the summary together to get their brains moving before the reading begins.
- **Look at the book's print:** Talk about the print, the layout, the words on the page.
- **Talk about the pictures:** Use the illustrations to pull together ideas, discuss the illustrator's craft, and to strengthen comprehension.
- **Make connections:** Make connections between your child's traits and those of the characters in the book. Make connections between what happens in the book and what has happened in their life. Make connections between what happens in the book and what happens in the world around them.
- **Visualize:** Make mind movies. Visualizing is one of the key components of comprehension; if your child can visualize, they're most likely understanding what they read!
- **Make predictions:** Get your child thinking about what might happen next in the book at the end of different sections or chapters.
- **Ask questions:** Model strong questioning by thinking aloud as you read. Pause to ask questions and show your child how asking good questions helps them to better understand what they read.
- **Make inferences:** Synthesize what your child already knows with the information they have gathered from reading, and make informed guesses about how characters are feeling and/or about what messages the author might intend us to take away.
- **Think deeply:** Ask questions that activate critical thinking and model how to think them through.

FANTASTIC WEBSITES TO CONSULT FOR MORE RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- [Colours of Us](#)
- [Classroom Book a Day](#)
- [Reading Middle Grade](#)
- [Recommended books from ALSC \(Association for Library Service to Children\)](#)
- [Best Books for Young Readers](#) (Penn Graduate School of Education)
- [Best Children's Books of the Year](#) (Bank Street College of Education archive of lists)
- [Cybils Awards Books](#) (Children's and Young Adult Bloggers Literary Awards)
- [Best Books of the Year](#) (Kirkus Reviews searchable list includes Middle Grade & Picture Books)
- [Awards and Best-of-the-Year Lists](#) (Cooperative Children's Book Center)