

Summer 2025

Hello students and families!

Welcome to the team! I am so excited that we are going to form the first ever combined first and second grade classroom at AOSJ! As you probably know, my name is Ms. Gilman and I am going to be your teacher. I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself. You may know that I have two sons, Jesse and Cody. Jesse is now a high school science teacher, and he has a cat named Dippity. Cody is in his third year at the University at Albany. He is studying Political Science and wants to be a lawyer when he finishes school. I also have a dog named Scout, and two cats, Meg and Jack. I was born in Nebraska and I have traveled through 43 of the 50 states! I love to go to the park with Scout, read, and play board games with Jesse and Cody.

Summer is a time to relax, have fun and go on adventures. And, we also want to make sure that we keep our school skills sharp. Next year is a big year for both first and second graders. First graders, you are going to learn how to read longer and trickier words, and use those skills to read longer and more complicated books. Second graders, you also will be reading longer, more interesting books with engaging characters and complicated plots. All students will grow as writers, learning new strategies to create stories that capture your reader's interest. In math, we will take what you have been learning in kindergarten and first grade and grow that knowledge to include bigger numbers and more complex processes. I have a special fondness for science and social studies and I have several projects in mind for us. I can't wait to see what we discover together!

We have so much to do and learn next year. In order to be ready in September, I have a few challenges for you friends.

First: read, read, and read some more! Together we are going to create a list of all the books we read over the summer and give each book a rating. That way we can learn about interesting books from each other. To accomplish this, you will log your reading on the attached reading log. When we meet in the fall, I will create a list of your favorite books. I can't wait to see what you are reading over the summer! Read all different kinds of books-- fiction, non-fiction, poems, biographies, etc. -- whatever you like! I've attached a list of recommended books for first and second graders if you are not sure what to read. Remember to spend some time reading 'just right' books. These are books that are not too easy, and not too hard.

If you need help sounding out 5 or more words on a page, you might want to read that book with a grown-up. Also, grown-ups, please continue reading to your children! Reading books that are above your child's reading level is a great way to grow vocabulary, develop knowledge of grammar and story structure, and a wonderful way to spend time with your child. Talk about what is happening in the story, what might happen next, and how the characters change throughout the story. What a perfect bedtime activity! You can read e-books downloaded from your library, or on a site like getepic.com

Second: I have attached pages for a summer journal. Writers always need material for their writing, and summer is the perfect time, full of adventures, to collect material for your writing. Your challenge is to complete 10 journal entries throughout the summer. Don't wait until the last minute! Try to complete one entry every week! Use your best handwriting, complete sentences, and don't forget the punctuation. I can't wait to read all about your summer!

Finally, to keep your math minds sharp, practice the foundational skills you learned in kindergarten and first grade by completing the Khan Academy Early Math Review. I will send along log-in information in a separate email at the beginning of the summer. Practice a little bit every day! This will keep your math skills sharp over the summer break.

I am so excited to be your teacher next year! Have a wonderful summer! See you in September!

Warmly,

Ms. Gilman

First Grade Suggested Reading List

Bathe the Cat by Alice B. McGinty
Berry Song by Michaela Goade
Big by Vashti Harrison
Emile and the Field by Kevin Young
The High Line by Victoria Tentler-Krylov
Hot Dog by Doug Salati
Once Upon a Book by Grace Lin
Pie Is for Sharing by Stephanie Parsley Ledyard
This Story Is Not About a Kitten by Randall de Sève
Uncle John's City Garden by Bernette Ford
Camila the Record-Breaking Star by Alicia Salazar
Chick and Brain: Egg or Eyeball? by Cece Bell
Frank and Bean: Food Truck Fiasco by Jamie Michalak
It's a Sign!-Elephant and Piggie Like Reading! by Jarrett Pumphrey
Mr. Putter and Tabby Turn the Page by Cynthia Rylant
See the Cat: Three Stories About a Dog by David LaRochelle
If Bees Disappeared by Lily Williams
The Last Plastic Straw by Dee Romito
Mars! Earthlings Welcome by Stacy McAnulty
The Mystery of the Monarchs by Barb Rosenstock
Who Is a Scientist? by Laura Gehlb
Pizza! by Greg Pizzoli
MAE AMONG THE STARS BY RODA AHMED
Knights vs. Dinosaurs by Matt Phelan
The Spell Thief by Tom Percival
Ways to Make Sunshine by Renée Watson
Any of the Elephant And Piggie Books by Mo Willems

Second Grade Suggested Reading List

Early Readers

Mr. Putter and Tabby series by Cynthia Rylant

Yasmin series by Saadia Faruqi

Pedro series by Fran Manushkin

Vivi Loves Science series by Kimberly Derting

Fly Guy series by Tedd Arnold

Cornbread and Poppy by Matthew Cordell

Early Chapter Books

Magic Treehouse series by Mary Pope Osborne

Miles Lewis series by Kelly Starling Lyons

Young Cam Jansen and Cam Jansen series by David A. Adler

Junie B. Jones series by Barbara Park

Doggo and Pupper Series by Katherine Applegate

Here are some other resources to find great books for both grades :

[Notable Children's Books - 2025 | Association for Library Service to Children](#)

[CBC Showcase - Children's Book Council](#)

[Archive - Bank Street College of Education](#)

[The Best Early Chapter Books for Boys | Brightly](#)

Summer Journal

Name: _____

Date: _____, 2025

One great thing that happened this week is:

These are the people I was with:

This is where it happened:

This is why it was great:

Here is a photo or drawing of this week's Great Thing!