



## 3<sup>rd</sup> into 4<sup>th</sup> Grade 2025 Summer Reading List

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*In this journey from third to fourth, as children cherish a bit more independence, I encourage parents to remain solidly in the literary loop. This is a perfect time to bring the classics, reading them aloud to your children. Sewell's *Black Beauty*, Trenton Lee Stewart's *Mysterious Benedict Society*, and *The Narnia Series*, are examples of books that you can enjoy anew as you read them to your child. They underscore the dynamic power of words, not only to create vivid pictures in our children, but to influence who they become and how they potentially communicate with others. As your children travel in the world of books, please guide them in their choices. Parent read-alouds are still rewarding social exchanges even with proficient readers, and conversation around stories can give revealing glimpses into how your children experience and interpret the world.*

### On the Farm: Level "3" I-Can-Read Books

*For children learning to read, these texts—with simple prose and supportive illustrations—can be enjoyed with a caregiver or sibling. During the initial reading, consider focusing on the book cover (What do you see? What might this story be about?). Next, look at the pictures, making story predictions, then return to the opening page to spot recognizable words. Finally, partner read—alternating sentences. Above all, have fun and read a book more than once. If a child worries about reading slowly, remind him or her the authors took a long time to write the books, finding perfect words just for them.*

1. **Abe Lincoln's Hat** by Barbara Brenner (1994). Abe Lincoln, known for being absent minded, kept important notes, contracts, and even his checkbook in his stovepipe hat. What would happen if pranksters knocked the hat off into the street? This book includes several amusing stories about our famous president.
2. **A Bear for Miguel** by Elaine Alphin (1996). In El Salvador, a girl helps her father trade for basic necessities at the local market. Will Maria need to give up her treasured stuffed bear, Paco? This is a contextualized story for children asking about war, relating events for younger ears and presenting a young child's optimism and love of family; end-notes are for parents. Beautiful, interpretive watercolors by Joan Sandin.
3. **Dust for Dinner** by Ann Turner (1995). Jake and Maggy loved the farm of their early childhood, which their parents must sell when dust storms kill the crops and force a move to California. The realities of finding work and rough travel create ample drama. **[ER TUR]**
4. **Johnny Appleseed: My Story** by David Harrison (2001). A fictionalized autobiography relates Appleseed's planting exploits as it examines the unusual myths and truths about this legendary life. Also read George Washington and the General's Dog, Eat My Dust: Henry Ford's First Race, and Lewis and Clark: A Prairie Dog for the President.
5. **Wagon Wheels** by Barbara Brenner (1978). When the three Muldie boys travel a long way to Kansas, they must fend for themselves in their temporary dug-out as their father moves on to find better land for his family. **[ER BRE]**

### On the Farm: Early Chapter Books (under 125 pages)

1. **Breath of the Dragon** by Gail Giles (1997). When Malila is left with her grandmother in a small Thailand village, she encounters many trials and acts of unkindness from neighbors. The trials, however, like the "breath of a dragon," make Malila strong, ultimately giving her *sanouk*, as her grandmother says, or joy in living.

2. The Cabin Faced West by Jean Fritz (1958). Ann longs for her old life as she faces her new home in the Pennsylvania wilderness until a terrible storm brings a sense of her fortitude and competence—and a visit from George Washington. **[jFIC FRI]**
3. The Chickenhouse House by Ellen Howard (1991). A family settling in a new territory must spend their first winter in a chicken house until spring provides them with the fine weather and friend to help them build a permanent home. **[yFIC HOW]**
4. Cloud Tea Monkeys by Mal Peet (2010). When her mother becomes too ill to harvest tea on a nearby plantation, Tashi is too small to fill in, but when she tells the monkeys she has befriended why she is so sad, they bring her a basket filled with a rare and valuable wild tea—suddenly her status shifts. **[Y PEE]**
5. The Corn Grows Ripe by Dorothy Rhoads (1956). When Tigre’s father is injured, his family asks: Who will plant and harvest the corn to help them survive and please the Mayan gods? Tigre—only 12—knows he must do a man’s work, helping his mother. **[jFIC RHO]**
6. Justin and the Best Biscuits of the World by Mildred Pitts (1987). Growing up with sisters, Justin wants a week of manly tasks—riding horses, tending livestock—when he visits his grandfather’s ranch. History of the rodeo and African-American cowboys forms an interesting back story, along with housekeeping tasks even cowboys need to master.
7. Li Lun: Lad of Courage by Carolyn Treffinger (1947). Banished to a mountaintop with only a few grains of rice because he is afraid of the sea, Li Lun, finding in himself a stalwart farmer, gently nurtures the rice seedlings into a crop, proving that not just fishermen have value in his village. **[jFIC TRE]**
8. The Golden Goose by Dick King-Smith (2006). Farmer Skint and his family have fallen on hard times at Woebegone Farm until their seemingly ordinary goose lays a golden egg and their fortunes begin to change. **[yFIC KIN]**
9. McBroom’s Wonderful 1-Acre Farm by Sid Fleischman (1972). Tongue-in-cheek farming hilarity taking place on turf that grows vegetables overnight. Why? Because the 80 acres of farm are actually 80 fertile 1-acre parcels mounted one on top of the other. **[yFIC FLE]**
10. Midnight Fox by Betsy Byars (1968). Tom—a city boy—is uncomfortable spending the summer at his Aunt Millie’s farm until he discovers a black fox in the forest and tracks her to her den. Will he be able to save her and her small cub when they are threatened? **[jFIC BYA]**
11. Mountain Born by Elizabeth Yates (1994). Wolves, weather, a black lamb, and a trusty dog are all part of a boy’s life on a mountain farm. **[Y YAT]**
12. Tales from Maple Ridge: The Lucky Wheel by Grace Gilmore (2015). Wanting to raise money to repair the local schoolhouse, Logan finds an old wagon wheel by the side of the road and works hard to repair it, hoping to get a good price. Books in this series celebrate the industry and resourcefulness of a young boy. **[yFIC GIL]**
13. Tornado by Betsy Byars (1996). As they wait out a tornado in a storm cellar, boys listen to their farm hand’s tale of a dog blown into his life many years ago by similar weather. **[yFIC BYA]**

### On the Farm—Longer Works

1. Black-eyed Susan by Jennifer Armstrong (1997). A young girl, who with her father loves her new life on the plains, must come to terms with the fact that her mother may never feel completely at home there. **[yFIC ARM]**
2. Blue Willow by Doris Gates (1941—Newbery Honor). Janey Larkin, who wants to have a real home and go to a regular school hopes her family, whose new home so closely resembles the farm on her blue willow plate, will settle down for good. **[jFIC GAT]**

3. Caddy Woodlawn by Carol Brink (1935—Newbery Medal). Considered a clock-fixing tomboy, Caddy would much prefer to run wild in the woods of Wisconsin or make a midnight gallop across a frozen river than tend to more womanly household chores. Based on the true stories of the author’s grandmother.
4. Charlotte’s Web by E.B. White (1952—Newbery Honor). Even if you have read this, it is worth reading again for its window on family life as well as the beauty and sacrifices of friendship. **[jFIC WHI]**
5. The Fox and The Hound by Daniel P. Mannix (1967). This book tells the tale of a young fox raised by humans for the first year of his life and the half-bloodhound dog, who is his close companion. Will friendship or natural instincts win?
6. Ivy Takes Care by Rosemary Wells (2013). Brokenhearted when her best friend leaves for the summer, Ivy turns her attention to taking care of farm animals and developing a new sense of purpose. **[jFIC WEL]**
7. Me and the Pumpkin Queen Marlane Kennedy (2009). Is Mildred focused or obsessed? To remember her mother, an intrepid 11-year-old wishes to grow the biggest pumpkin in the world. What could interfere? Tornados? Dogs? The low expectations of a difficult aunt? Mildred’s father is a vet; parents might want to preview a calf-birthing moment. And talk to their children about the grammar of the title.
8. My Friend Flicka by Mary O’Hara (1941). This is the story of a ten-year-old boy on a remote Wyoming ranch, who wishes to break a filly, part mustang, and redeem himself in the eyes of his exacting father.
9. Rabbit Hill by Robert Lawson (1944). New folks are coming to live in the Big House, and the animal inhabitants of the field wonder if they will plant a delicious and fertile garden as well as be good providers.
10. Thimble Summer by Elizabeth Enright (1938—Newbery Award). A few hours after Garnet finds a silver thimble in a dried-up Wisconsin riverbed, rains come, ending the drought on her farm. With thimble luck, good things follow. Could Garnet’s well-tended pig win a blue ribbon, perhaps? Could her family build a new barn? **[J ENR]**
11. Strawberry Girl by Lois Lenski (1946—Newbery Award). Birdie Boyer was a “Florida Cracker;” she belonged to a large “strawberry family,” who lived on a flat woods farm in the lake section of the state. This short novel recounts Birdie’s ambitions to go to school and play the organ while dealing with drought, fires, and roving hogs. Also read Houseboat Girl, Flood Friday, and Prairie School by the same author.
12. Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer by Kelly Jones (2015). Through a series of letters, Sophie Brown, a spunky girl from a biracial family, records her family’s move from Los Angeles to her Uncle Jim’s farm, where she cares for “supernatural” chickens with the assistance of caring neighbors. **[jFIC JON]**
13. Willow Wind Farm: Betsy’s Story by Anne Pellowski (1981). On the farm where Betsy lives, all ten children must help with numerous chores, but there is still much fun—for instance, the day the pigs get tipsy on fermented blackberry preserves! (Also read Winding Valley Farm: Annie’s Story, First Farm in the Valley: Anna’s Story, Stair Step Farm: Anna Rose’s Story.) **[jFIC PEL]**

### **Animals: Early Chapter Books (under 125 pages)**

1. The Blue Hill Meadows by Cynthia Rylant (1997). A gentle story about the Meadow Family, who live in a quiet Virginia town, and the dog they discover there. **[ER RYL]**

2. Chester Cricket's Pigeon Ride by George Selden (1981). Chester, who misses star gazing in the city, rides on his friend's back to discover the lights are closer than they seem.
3. The Gingerbread Rabbit by Randall Jarrell (1964). The story of a mother who bakes a wonderful gingerbread rabbit for her daughter only to find the cookie jump off the cookie sheet and escape into the woods. **[Y JAR]**
4. Gooseberry Park: & the Master Plan by Cynthia Rylant (2015). Stumpy the squirrel, Kona the Labrador, Murray the bat, and Gwendolyn the hermit crab enlist the assistance of a crow and 200 owls to help them battle a month-long drought. **[yFIC RYL]**
5. Lady Lollipop by Dick King-Smith (2000). A quick-witted swineherd and a pig named Lollipop are royally rewarded after they reform a very spoiled princess. **[yFIC KIN]**
6. Not My Dog by Colby Rodowsky(1999). Ellie wanted a cute puppy, not a full-grown mutt...so she resists her new pet until one day her resistance almost makes her lose the only pet she's ever likely to have. **[Y ROD]**
7. Sable by Karen Hesse (1998). Tate is delighted when a stray turns up at her doorstep, but the dog makes so much trouble for the neighbors it may not be able to stay.
8. Tippy Lemmey by Patricia McKissack (2003). A dog (and possibly a bit of a monster) meets three children who don't want him nipping their heels as they bike, following them everywhere, and generally being a nuisance. What does he have to do to convince Leandra, Paul, and Jeannie he's a good soul?

### Animal Tales

1. Firstborn by Tor Seidler (2015). Lamar does not take after his noble wolf father, Blue Boy, who is the forest's fierce predator. Lamar likes to study butterflies, waits for his siblings if they fall behind, and actually has the nerve to befriend a coyote. This book, which thumbs its nose at stereotypes, dances between White Fang and Ferdinand. Also read Toes by the same author. **[J SEI]**
2. A Nest for Celeste: A Story about Art, Inspiration, and the Meaning of Home written and illustrated by Henry Cole (2012). In this beautifully illustrated work, a mouse befriends Audubon's apprentice in her search for a home. Will it be the toe of a worn boot, a boy's pocket, an attic dollhouse, or her old domain under the floorboards? **[J COL]**
3. Poppy by AVI (1995). A tiny and intrepid deer mouse urges her family to move to a nearby field of corn; unfortunately, the field is threatened by an owl, Mr. Ocax. Winner of the Boston-Globe Horn Book Award. Also read the sequels. **[Fic]**
4. Sheep by Valerie Hobbs (2009). After a fire destroys the farm where he was born, a young border collie acquires a series of owners on his way to fulfilling his life dream of shepherding sheep. **[JFIC HOB]**
5. The Tale of Despereaux by Kate DiCamillo (2003—Newbery Medal). The adventures of Despereaux Tilling, a small mouse of unusual talents, the princess he loves, the servant girls who wishes to be royalty, and one devious rat. **[JFIC DIC]**
6. Tua and the Elephant by R. P. Harris (2012). A young girl, who lives in Chang Mai, Thailand, yearns for a sister, but instead discovers a distressed elephant, Pohn-Pohn, in the local markets. Together, they journey from the bustling stalls, to a Buddhist temple, and finally to a refuge, where Pohn-Pohn will lead a more humane animal existence.
7. White Fur Flying by Patricia MacLaughlin (2103). Rescue dogs and one rescue parrot help a 9-year-old boy, who refuses to speak, socialize once again with friends and family in a rural Maine setting. **[yFIC MAC]**

8. Young Fredle by Cynthia Voigt (2012). Cast out of his kitchen-cabinet home, a young and slightly anxious mouse must face the novelty of snakes, rain, and lawn mowers as he also discovers the beauty of the outdoors and a possible new safe setting for a home.

### Family Life: Contemporary

1. Adventures with Waffles by Maria Parr (translated from Norwegian, 2015). Lena and Trille, friends through a hole in the hedge in Mathildewick Cove, have done everything together: lured a cow onto a boat, sledded with chickens, devoured waffles, and shared secrets.....well, perhaps not all secrets. There is one Lena feels she must hold back. **[jFIC PAR]**
2. Ava & Pip by Carol Weston (2014). Extroverted 9-year-old Ava is puzzled her older sister, Pip, 13, is so quiet and not quick to make friends. Wishing to help, Ava writes a story, but things do not turn out as planned. Also read the sequel Ava and Taco Cat (2015). **[jFIC WES]**
3. Because of Winn Dixie by Kate DiCamillo (2001). A ten-year-old girl learns 10 things about her mother, who abandoned her preacher father, as she explores her new town of Naomi, Florida, with a lost dog. Inhabitants of the town offer entertaining stories: a librarian who fights off a bear in a parking lot with a copy of War and Peace? **[jFIC DIC]**
4. 11 Birthdays by Wendy Mass (2009). When Amanda is ready to turn 11, she finds the friend she has always shared a birthday with is not really her friend any more. How will the two manage this potentially difficult day? **[J MAS]**
5. Fortunately, the Milk by Neil Gaimon (2013). A father, left suddenly on his own to tend his family, discovers he has forgotten to supply milk to go with the cereal. Returning home following a trip to the corner store, Dad describes his fantastic, time-travel, tongue-in-cheek exploits. Lively Illustrations.
6. Love, Ruby Lavender by Deborah Wiles (2005). When her quirky grandmother goes to Hawaii for the summer, 9-year-old Ruby learns how to survive on her own in Mississippi by writing letters, befriending chickens, and making a new best friend. **[J WIL]**
7. Maggie & Oliver and a Bone of One's Own by Valerie Hobbs (2012). A young maid tossed out into the street and a stray dog discover new beginnings through a golden locket. **[J HOB]**
8. The Misadventures of the Family Fletcher, by Dana Alison Levy (2015). The start of the school year is not going as the Fletcher brothers hoped. Each boy finds his plans for success veering off in unexpected and sometimes disastrous directions. And at home, their miserable new neighbor complains about everything. As the year continues, the boys learn the hard and often hilarious lesson that sometimes what you least expect is what you come to care about the most. **[J LEV]**
9. Secret Letters from 0 to 10 by Susie Morgenstern (1996). Ten-year-old Ernest lives a dull and fiercely predictable life until Victoria (she has 13 brothers) enters to add a profound amount of color. Eating soup every night? Try fondue. Fear contact with others? Hold a squirming baby. Translated from the French. **[jFIC MOR]**
10. Sun and Spoon by Kevin Henkes (1998). A young boy, navigating the death of a beloved grandmother, tries to find something special he can remember her by—an Apostle Spoon—but is it really his to borrow?
11. Sweet Home Alaska, by Carole Estby Dagg (2016). This exciting pioneering story, based on actual events, introduces readers to a fascinating chapter in American history, when FDR set up a New Deal colony in Alaska to give loans and land to families struggling during the Great Depression. **[FIC DAG]**
12. Ways to Make Sunshine by Renee Watson (2020) The Hart family of Portland, Oregon, faces many setbacks after Ryan's father loses his job, but no matter what, Ryan tries to bring sunshine to her loved ones. Also three more in the series. **[J WAT]**

13. **The Year of the Book** by Andrea Cheng (2012) Follows a young Chinese American girl, as she navigates relationships with family, friends, and her fourth-grade classroom, and finds a true best friend. see also The Year of the Baby and The Year of the Garden.

### **Family & Friends: Long Ago**

1. **All-of-a-Kind Family** by Sidney Taylor (1951). In the turn-of-the-century Lower East Side of New York City, five sisters indulge in old-time fun: exploring the basement warehouse of Papa's peddler's shop, looking for hidden buttons while dusting the parlor, and enjoying special family holidays. [J TAY]
2. **Anne of Green Gables** by L.M. Montgomery (1908). The beloved novel about an 11-year-old girl finding her place among new friends (and a few spiteful people—young and old) on Prince Edward Island. [jFIC MON]
3. **The Five Little Peppers and How They Grew** by Margaret Sidney (1881). A fatherless family, raised by an industrious and joyous mother, finds strength in their simple life and ultimately the generosity of a neighbor. [F SID]
4. **Ginger Pye** by Eleanor Estes (1951—Newbery Medal). The disappearance of a new puppy named Ginger and the appearance of a mysterious man in a mustard yellow hat bring excitement into the lives of the Pye children. Winner of the 1952 Newbery Medal.
5. **The Lost Flower Children** by Janet Taylor Lisle (1999). After their mother's death, two sisters move in with their great aunt and slowly bring a weedy garden back to life. [yFIC LIS]
6. **The Saturdays** by Elizabeth Enright (1941). Four siblings pool their allowances so that each one may choose an adventure on consecutive Saturdays...sequel include *Then There Were Five*, *Four-Story Mistake*, and *Spiderweb for Two*). [jFIC ENR]
7. **Rufus M.** by Eleanor Estes (1942). Rufus accomplishes a great deal, but using his own unique approaches. For one, when food is in short supply, he plants beans, digging them up every day to check on them, and somehow they miraculously grow. [J EST]

### **Moments in History: Early Chapter Books (under 125 pages)**

1. **Anna Maria's Gift** (2010). The gifted daughter of a talented violin maker is sent to an orphanage, the Pietà in Venice, when she loses her loving father. Fortunately, the composer, Vivaldi, takes her under wing, but what can she do when a jealous classmate throws her instrument into a canal?
2. **Cora Freer: Brave Kids from America's Past** by Susan E. Goodman (2002). Based on the true story of a girl in rural 19<sup>th</sup>-century Iowa, this book recounts her courage as she and her doctor father fight a prairie fire as he journeys to care for a sick baby. Also read Robert Henry Hendershoot and Hazel Boxberg by the same author. [yFIC GOO]
3. **Elin's Amerika** by Marguerite de Angeli (1941). Set in the New Sweden Colony of North America, around 1648, this narrative tells the story of Elin, her daily chores, her loneliness, and her interaction with a kind native American medicine woman, Lamefoot. Also read Thee, Hannah!, Yonnie Wondernose, and Henner's Lydia by the same author. Books have been re-released through the American Swedish Historical Museum.
4. **A Horn for Louis** by Eric Kimmel (2004). When Louis Armstrong, at age 7, too poor to go to school, wishes for a trumpet, he starts off with a tin-horn cast-off. Can he put aside his pride to accept a coronet from well-intended neighbors in his boarding house, who gives Louis this treasured gift from their own slender stores for Hanukkah?

5. Toliver's Secret by Esther Woods by Judith Griffin (1993). Brady When her grandfather is injured, 10-year-old Ellen, disguised as a boy, deliver's his top-secret message to General Washington. Also read Phoebe, the Spy by Esther Wood Brady.

### **Children & A Challenge or Two: Early Chapter Books (under 125 pages)**

1. A Likely Place by Paula Fox (1987). A little boy who can't spell or ever seem to please his parents spends a week with an odd babysitter and makes a special friend. **[yFIC FOX]**
2. Sideways Stories from the Wayside School by Louis Sachar (1978). "John was one of the boys in Mrs. Jewl's class. But he had one problem. He could only read upside down." "Terrence was a good athlete, but a bad sport." "Kathy doesn't like you. She doesn't know you, but she still doesn't like you." Who wouldn't want to watch these children transform—and don't we all know someone just like them? Glorious humor. **[yFIC SAC]**
3. Skinny Bones by Barbara Park (1982). The smallest boy on a baseball team gets more than he bargains for when he challenges the team's star pitcher with his active sense of humor. **[yFIC PAR]**
4. Waylon! One Awesome Thing, by Sara Pennypacker (2017). Waylon has lots of ideas for making life more awesome through science, like teleportation, human gills, and attracting cupcakes by controlling gravity. But it's impossible for him to concentrate on his inventions when he's experiencing his own personal Big Bang. **[jFIC PEN]**
5. Winder Riders: Rescue on Turtle Beach, by Jenn Marlin (2021). After discovering Wind Rider, an abandoned magical sailboat, Max and Sofia arrive on a beach in Hawaii where, with new friend Laila, they rescue newly-hatched sea turtles. Includes facts about sea turtles. **[Y MAR]**
6. Yang the Youngest and his Terrible Ear by Lenson Namioka (1994). Chinese and American cultures are lightly contrasted in this book about a boy, who is not a natural musician like others in his family, favoring baseball in his new home in Seattle. Also read *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord.
7. The Year of Miss Agnes by Kirkpatrick Hill. In 1948, a school teacher arrives in a remote part of Alaska to give the children an educational experience they haven't encountered in years...at the same time accepting their odd-smelling fish sandwiches and insisting that the deaf-boy, Bakko, attend school with everyone else. **[jFIC HIL]**

### **Adventure Beckons**

1. Chitty Chitty Bang Bang by Ian Fleming (1964). A flying car takes the Pott family on a colorful range of adventures as they try to catch an elusive gang of thieves. Also consider *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again* by Frank Cottrell Boyce. **[J FLE]**
2. Faith and the Electric Dogs by Jennings (1998). Set in San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico, this story celebrates the courage of a 10-year-old girl seeking to escape her local tor-mentors and return to San Francisco on a rocket fueled with pork fat and chili peppers. **[jFIC JEN]**
3. From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankenweiler by E. L. Konigsburg (1967—Newbery Award). An engaging story of two children who leave home and take up residence in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (very nice furniture and artwork!). **[J KON]**
4. Journey to the River Sea by Eva Ibbotson (2003). Going to the Amazon with her stern governess, Miss Minton, orphan Maia, expects a lush jungle-filled adventure, but instead finds a disagreeable aunt and uncle. Friendship with an Indian boy and a homesick child actor turn her visit into a more palatable mystery experience. **[FIC IBB]**

5. [The Lost Island](#), by Eilís Dillon (1987). The book begins with a simple market day and progresses to a young boy, navigating dangerous waters, to locate his missing father and supposed treasure on the fabled island of Inishmananan.
6. [Madame Pamplemousse and her Incredible Edibles](#) by Rupert Kingfisher (2008). This book tells the story of a young girl in Paris (yes, her name is Madeleine), who has extraordinary talent as a cook, but also a horrid Uncle who makes the most atrocious food in the land: Pig’s Ear Pizza or Kidney Burger with Double Cream anyone? **[jFIC KIN]**
7. [Miss Hickory](#) by (1947—Newbery Award). Well, the main character’s head is eaten, but other than that this tale of a humble doll with applewood body and hickory nut head recounts the kindness of friends—a crow, squirrel, and doe—in a New England winter. **[yFIC BAI]**
8. [The Penderwicks in Spring](#) by Birdsall (2015). For those who know the series, Book Four is told from the perspective of Batty, now 10—graced with a beautiful singing voice and planning a grand surprise. She starts a dog-walking business to pay for voice lessons. **[jFIC BIR]**
9. [The Twenty-One Balloons](#) by William Pene DuBois (1947). When Professor Sherman leaves San Francisco in a hot air balloon, he expects a fairly predictable journey; dealing with hungry seagulls and plummeting onto the island of Krakatoa teaches him otherwise. Winner of the 1948 Newbery Medal. **[J DUB]**
10. [The Creature of the Pines \[1st book in the Unicorn Rescue Series\]](#) by Adam Gidwitz (2018)). After encountering a Jersey Devil while on a field trip to the Pine Barrens, Elliot and his new friend Uchenna help their teacher Professor Fauna rescue the mythological creature from a pair of greedy billionaire brothers. **[J GID]**
11. [A Week in the Woods](#) by Andrew Clements (2002). Known in his school as a student who doesn’t work as hard as he could, privileged Mark is sent to New Hampshire, where he experiences a trek with snow shoes, the discovery of an old barn, and surviving overnight in the wilds to prove to a teacher his is more rugged than all had thought. **[J CLE]**
12. [The Wolves of Willoughby Chase](#) by Joan Aiken (1962). Two cousins, left in the care of an evil governess, are rescued from a workhouse by a dear friend, Simon, who leads them on a 400-mile trek to London with his geese (sequels are equally exciting). **[FIC AIK]**

### **Time for a Mystery**

1. [The Boxcar Children](#) by Gertrude Chandler Warner (1924). The Alden children begin their independent lives by making a home in an abandoned boxcar—a beautiful story about optimism, loyalty, and resourcefulness. **[Y WAR]**
2. [Gold Dust Letters](#) by Janet Taylor Lisle (1996). When nine-year-old Angela and her friends begin investigating letters she is receiving from her fairy godmother, they start an organization called The Investigators of the Unknown to discover the messages’ source; complex family issues make this a worthy read-aloud.
3. [Gone-Away Lake](#) by Elizabeth Enright (1957). When Portia and Julian discover a ghost town bordering a swamp where they are vacationing for the summer, two residents who never left help them fathom the mystery of an old resort’s origins. **[J ENR]**
4. [The Mysterious Benedict Society](#) by Trenton Lee Stewart (2007). The ad: “Are you a gifted child looking for splendid opportunities?” Following a series of tests, only four children will be able to attend The Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened and graduate to secret missions where the only rule is that there are no rules. **[jFIC STE]**
5. [The Mystery of the Missing Lion](#) by Alexander McCall Smith (2014). Young Precious Ramotswe, a superlative sleuth, visits her aunt at a Botswana safari camp, to solve the dilemma of a missing lion, Teddy, starring in a film. Also read “The Great Cake Mystery” and “The Mystery of Meerkat Hill.”

6. [Ophelia and the Marvelous Boy](#) by Karen Foxlee (2014). Ophelia, a shy 11-year-old lamenting the loss of her mother, revisits her belief in things non-scientific when she discovers a boy—from another time, it seems—locked up in the museum. **[J FOX]**
7. [Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes](#) by Jonathan Auxier (2010). A blind 10-year-old orphan, schooled in a life of thievery, tries on a pair of magical eyes and is promptly transported to a hidden island.
8. [Mr. and Mrs. Bunny—Detectives Extraordinaire](#), by Polly Horvath (2011). National Book Award winner Horvath tells the story of two talented bunnies who assist a girl whose parents have been kidnapped by nefarious foxes.
9. [The Rescuers](#) by Marjorie Sharp (New York Review Books Children Collection re-issue from 1959). Miss Bianca, a mouse of great beauty and exceptional vanity, also reveals herself as a mouse of brilliance and compassion as she rescues an imprisoned poet from the Black Castle.
10. [The Seven Treasure Hunts](#) by Betsy Byars. On Saturday, Jackson and his best friend, Goat, hide treasures for one another to find, and then on their next challenge discover someone else has gotten to them first.

### **Fantasy/Science Fiction: Early Chapter Books (under 125 pages)**

1. [The Dragon's Boy](#) by Jane Yolen (1990). Young Arthur meets a dragon he comes to accept as a friend and mentor. **[jFIC YOL]**
2. [The Ice Dragon](#) by George R. R. Martin (1980). Adara is a winter child, born to cold and capable of seeing the Ice Dragon and harnessing its forces to save her people from the fiery dragons from the north. **[jFIC MAR]**
3. [The Iron Giant](#) by Ted Hughes (1999). A feared, but misunderstood metal-eating giant is destructive and yet somehow filled with heroic potential. But only a young boy knows enough to lead the giant to a noble outcome. **[yFIC HUG]**

### **Fantasy**

1. [Any Which Wall](#) by Lynn Snyder (2009). Inspired by the Half Magic series, this delightful story follows siblings on their journeys through a wall in a nearby cornfield that takes them back in time to nearly insurmountable adventures.
2. [A Boy and a Bear in a Boat](#) by Dave Shelton (2012). A boy and a bear, who wish for a short adventure, find themselves lost at sea, sending out a message in a bottle, and hoping their small vessel *The Harriet* will return them safely to shore. **[jFIC SHE]**
3. [The Castle in the Attic](#) by Elizabeth Winthrop (1993). A gift of a toy castle, complete with a silver knight, introduces William to an adventure involving magic and a personal quest. **[jFIC WIN]**
4. [Dragons in a Bag](#) by Zetta Elliott (2018) In Brooklyn, nine-year-old Jax joins Ma, a curmudgeonly witch who lives in his building, on a quest to deliver three baby dragons to a magical world, and along the way discovers his true calling. **[J ELL]**
5. [The Enormous Egg](#) by Oliver Butterworth (1956). A young boy is surprised when he goes to his hen's nest one morning to find a gigantic egg and even more surprised when the egg hatches a triceratops dinosaur. **[FIC BUT]**
6. [Five Children and It](#) by E. Nesbit (look for versions illustrated by H.R. Miller or Paul Zelinsky (1902). When four children, digging to Australia, discover a Psammead, or sand fairy, in the gravel pit of their house, they look to a future of adventure and wish-making.

7. Horns & Wrinkles by Joseph Helgeson (2006). River trolls, rock trolls, and blue-wing fairies are the usual suspects in a Mississippi tale, where Claire must transform her difficult cousin, Duke, who has suddenly sprouted horns and a tusk. **[jFIC HEL]**
8. Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher by Bruce Colville (1991). Small for his age, but artistically gifted, Jeremy purchases a dragon's egg; adventures ensue (part of the author's humorous "Magic Shop" series).
9. The Ordinary Princess by M. M. Kaye (1980). The most beautiful and gifted princess in the kingdom has a spell put on her shortly after birth making her "merely ordinary" and, thus, destined for a very different life from her sisters', one she seeks at first as "the fourteenth assistant kitchen maid" in a neighboring castle.
10. Pals in Peril: Jasper Dash and the Flame-Pits of Delaware by M.T. Anderson (2009). Technonaut Jasper Dash and his friends, Lily and Katie, travel into forbidden mountains of Delaware to decipher a mystery involving lost cities, tentacles, lost cities, etc...
11. The Secret of Platform 13 by Eva Ibbotson (1994). Odge Gribble, a young hag, travels with a wizard, fey and ogre travel from their magical Island to London to rescue a prince stolen as a baby from their King and Queen.
12. Whittington by Alan Armstrong (2005). A blend of a rags-to-riches folktale, barnyard lore, and a tale of a wise cat who teaches a young boy to read. **[J ARM]**

### **Fantasy, Mystery & Animal Series Easy Reads and more Challenging**

1. The Borrowers by Mary Norton **[jFIC NOR]**
2. Emily Windsnap series by Kessler **[jFIC KES]**
3. Cat Wings LeGuinn **[yFIC LEG]**
4. Hardy Boys **[jFIC DIX]**
5. Chronicles of Prydain by Lloyd Alexander
6. Narnia Series by C.S. Lewis, Start with The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe!!!
7. Redwall Series by Brian Jacques **[J JAC]**
8. The Princess and Curdie, Curdie and the Goblins by George MacDonald **[J MAC]**

### **Family & Friend Series**

1. Betsy-Tacy by Maud Lovelace **[yFIC LOV]**
2. Cobble Street Cousins by Cynthia Rylant **[yFIC RYL]**
3. Iva Honeysuckle by Candice Ransom **[J RAN]**
4. Jake Drake by Andrew Clements
5. Julian series by Ann Cameron **[yFIC CAM]**
6. Lulu series by Hilary McKay
7. Marvin Redpost series by Louis Sachar **[yFIC SAC]**
8. The Year of the Book series by Andrea Cheng
9. The Life of Ty by Lauren Myracle **[yFIC MYR]**
10. Soup series by Robert Peck

## **This Feels Ridiculous**

*Understanding literary humor is a developmental talent requiring an ability to muster a spontaneous response toward what should have happened and what actually occurred. In young literature, there is the hyperbole of Swamp Angel, the practical jokes of George and Martha, the pun-sensing antics of Amelia Bedelia, the curative nonsense of Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle, and the tongue-in-cheek humor or flat-out nonsense of Tales for Very Picky Eaters or the Wayside School. These types of humor are fine for this age group, and we all can use the soothing levity of a good joke. What parents might consider avoiding are narrative sarcasm and laughter at another's expense, or at least bullying laughter that is not immediately noted and resolved. Third into fourth is still a humor threshold; know your children and appreciate what they are ready to receive. For example, can they manage the irreverence of Dahl? For a child, to not get a joke is to feel excluded, and reading should be a positive, self-affirming moment.*

1. Arabel and Mortimer by Joan Aiken (1972). A troublesome and hilarious friendship between a young girl and her pet raven. An example: Mortimer decides to go to sea on a grand piano, attacks the giraffes at the zoo for stealing his doughnuts, unearths a priceless treasure buried in the local park. Also read others in the series. **[J AIK]**
2. The Castle Corona by Sharon Creech (2007). There was a spoiled king whose primary wish was to be able to nap and have a gown that didn't itch. And then there were two plucky and proud peasants in possession of a pouch that could change their lives.
3. The Fabled Fourth Graders of Aesop Elementary School by Candace Fleming (2007). How does one turn morals, such as "Be careful what you wish for" and "Don't count your chickens before they hatch" into tales about children with challenges? Read this book to find out.
4. Gooney Bird Greene Series by Lois Lowry (2002). A unique child at Water Tower Elementary School, Gooney Bird loves telling stories with wonderful word play and plot twists; Gooney Bird, herself, is a delightfully complex, eccentric, and confident character. Part of a series. **[Y LOW]**
5. How to Eat Fried Worms by Thomas Rockwell (1973). Two boys prove that worms can make a fantastic meal by eating (in many different ways) 15 worms in 15 days.
6. Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle by MacDonald. Children have problems and Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle fixes them in humorous and inventive ways. **[yFIC MAC]**
7. The Stories Julian Tells by Ann Cameron (1981). A quick fibber and inspired story-teller, Julian entertains his little brother, Huey, with tales about cats that come in the mail and fig leaves, when eaten, that make you grow tall, but sometimes the stories backfire. **[yFIC CAM]**
8. Tom, Babette, & Simon: Three Tales of Transformation by AVI (1995). Tom turns into a cat. Babette is invisible (her mother, the Queen wished for a perfect baby with no discernable flaws). And indulged Simon yearns for undivided attention—but from a bird? Read this trilogy to see how children transform.
9. The Willoughbys by Lois Lowry (2008). Four children, abandoned by their ill-humored parents, are overseen by a seasoned nanny and rescued by their sudden brush with an abandoned baby and reclusive candy magnate. **[J LOW]**

**Our Book Lists are available in a binder at Books Inc in Laurel Village. They are happy to help you find the books too!**

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