

The 2025-2026

BUILDING READERS®

Book List

Recommended Books for Elementary School Children

The Yellow Bus by Loren Long (Roaring Brook Press). This award-winning picture book follows the life of a school bus. With beautiful illustrations and a theme about new beginnings, this book celebrates life's dynamic journey. (*lower elementary, fiction*)

City of Leafcutter Ants: A Sustainable Society of Millions

by Amy Hevron (Neal Porter Books). Discover the complex world of leafcutter ants in this engaging story. Vivid illustrations and simple language explain the ants' specialized roles and their social structure. (*upper elementary, nonfiction*)

Built to Last by Minh Lê (Knopf Books for Young Readers). This relatable story shows how friends can face problems together and grow from the experience. It offers a sweet message about friendship's enduring strength. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

The Fabulous Fannie Farmer: Kitchen Scientist and America's Cook by Emma Bland Smith (Calkins Creek). Learn how a cooking teacher transformed American cooking by advocating for standardized measurements in this STEM picture book biography. (*upper elementary, biography*)

How to Pee Your Pants: The Right Way by Rachel Michelle Wilson (Feiweil & Friends). Kids will laugh out loud at this silly picture book which reinforces that accidents happen to everyone. (*fiction, lower elementary*)

The Mistakes That Made Us: Confessions from Twenty Poets by Irene Latham and Charles Waters (Carolrhoda Books). Writers share the lessons they learned in childhood. The engaging poems and artwork remind readers that mistakes are opportunities to learn. (*upper elementary, poetry*)



Volcanoes by Nell Cross Beckerman (Orchard Books). Explore the fiery nature of volcanoes in this award-winning informative picture book. Poetic storytelling and detailed illustrations will inspire explorers of all ages. (*lower elementary, non-fiction*)

Johnny, the Sea, and Me by Melba Escobar (Enchanted Lion). This highly-acclaimed story is about a ten-year-old boy who hopes a trip to the ocean will solve his problems. When the trip goes awry, he finds help and forms an unlikely friendship with a mysterious old

sea dog. (*upper elementary, fiction*)

Exactly as Planned by Tao Nyeu (Rocky Pond Books). Fox and Moose plan a tea party, but Fox's brownies vanish, and Moose's gift unravels. Find out what happens in this special picture book about friendship that shows two different perspectives of the same day. (*lower elementary, fiction*)

Poetry Comics by Grant Snider (Chronicle Books). Colorful, comic-style drawings make poetry fun in this picture book about the seasons. This unique poetry experience is perfect for readers who enjoy graphic novels. (*upper elementary, poetry*)

The 2025-2026

BUILDING READERS®

Book List

Chooch Helped by Andrea L. Rogers (Levine Querido). Sissy's frustration with her little brother, Chooch, leads to a lesson in the importance of patience and understanding. Filled with detailed collage illustrations, this award-winning picture book reminds older siblings to lead by example. (*lower elementary, fiction*)

Home by Isabelle Simler (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers). Journey through a variety of animal homes around the world. Through beautiful artwork and poetic descriptions, this book presents concepts like life cycles and camouflage. (*upper elementary, poetry*)

Bounce!: A Scientific History of Rubber by Sarah Albee (Charlesbridge). This picture book explores rubber's history and uses. Dynamic pictures and a time line make learning about rubber fun and memorable! (*lower elementary, nonfiction*)

Murray Out of Water by Taylor Tracy (Quill Tree Books). Murray, a girl who channels the ocean's magic, is forced inland by a hurricane and loses her powers. She learns about herself, regains her magic and finds new family with a friend. (*upper elementary, fiction*)

Monster Hands by Karen Kane & Jonaz McMillan (Nancy Paulsen Books). Milo fears a monster under his bed, so his friend Mel uses rhyming American Sign Language (ASL) and shadow puppets to help scare it away. This award-winning, empowering bedtime story will inspire children to tackle their nighttime fears. (*lower elementary, fiction*)

Golden Gate: Building the Mighty Bridge by Elizabeth Partridge (Chronicle Books). This picture book tells the story of how the Golden Gate Bridge was built during the Great Depression. Readers witness the engineering feat, from the arrival of construction crews to the grand opening. (*upper elementary, nonfiction*)

Dog vs. Strawberry by Nelly Buchet (Random House Studio). A determined dog races a motionless strawberry all over the house, convinced it's a competitor. This picture book playfully captures a dog's silly imagination and will amuse dog lovers. (*lower elementary, fiction*)

Popcorn by Rob Harrell (Dial Books). This funny graphic novel follows a boy on a day when everything seems to go wrong. Readers will learn about anxiety and effective ways to cope with it! (*upper elementary, fiction*)

Vacation: Three-and-a-Half Stories by Ame Dyckman (Beach Lane Books). Bat, Cat and Rat need a vacation but struggle with planning. They

work to save money, disagree on where to go, and then try to find a compromise, leading to funny friendship moments. (*lower elementary, fiction*)

What Is Color?: The Global and Sometimes Gross Story of Pigments, Paint, and the Wondrous World of Art by Steven Weinberg (Roaring Brook Press). This fact-filled nonfiction book explores the surprising science and history behind the colors we see every day. Perfect for curious kids who love both art and science. (*upper elementary, nonfiction*)

