

Winchester Thurston School



SUMMER READING 2026

Lower School

WT Lower School Summer Reading

In addition to the required and suggested books here, there are many other great reads for your family to explore this summer! For additional suggestions, ask your local librarian or click on the following links:

- [Association for Library Services for Children 2026 Summer Reading Lists](#)
- [American Library Association Youth Media Awards for 2026](#)
- [Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Graded Booklists](#)
- [School Library Journal's Best Books of 2025](#)

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Early Childhood Summer Reading

JPK, PK, & K

There is no specific summer reading requirement for our youngest learners. We encourage you to make reading a part of your child's daily routine. Set aside time to read together as a family, model independent reading for your child, and take a trip to your local library and sign up for their Summer Reading Program!

Suggested Family Reading:

Our Early Childhood Educators have picked some of their favorite read-aloud stories to begin the school year. We highly recommend reading the following books aloud, as a family, in the weeks leading up to the beginning of the school year:

Karst, Patrice. [*The Invisible String*](#).

When Liza and Jeremy run to their mother during a scary storm, she comforts them by telling them about the Invisible String, which connects people who love each other no matter where they are and means that they are never alone.

Levi, Ganit & Adir. [*What Should Danny Do?*](#)

A choose-your-own-adventure story that follows real-life superhero-in-training Danny as he learns about his most important superpower of all, the power to choose.

Levi, Ganit & Adir. [*What Should Darla Do?*](#)

Darla is a young and spunky astronaut-in-training. She wants to go to Mars one day, just like her favorite doll, Astronautica. But, to do so, she'll need to practice using her Power to Choose wisely.

Penfold, Alexandra. [*All Are Welcome*](#).

Illustrations and simple, rhyming text introduce a school where diversity is celebrated, and songs, stories, and talents are shared.

Penn, Audrey. [*The Kissing Hand*](#).

When Chester the raccoon is reluctant to go to kindergarten for the first time, his mother teaches him a secret way to carry her love with him.



Wohnoutka, Mike. [*Dad's First Day*](#).

Oliver and Dad have spent a fun summer together, but when it comes time for the first day of school, Dad discovers that he is not ready and does everything he can to postpone the big day.

Woodson, Jacqueline. [*The Day You Begin*](#).

Other students laugh when Rigoberto, an immigrant from Venezuela, introduces himself, but later he meets Angelina and discovers that he is not the only one who feels like an outsider.

Other Suggested Reading:

Picture Books:

Ashman, Linda. [*Rain*](#)

As an old man grumbles his way through a rainy morning, spreading gloom, his neighbor, a young child, spreads cheer while hopping through puddles in frog-themed rainwear.

Bailey, Jenn. [*A Friend for Henry*](#)

Henry would like to find a friend at school, but for a boy on the autism spectrum, making friends can be difficult, as his efforts are sometimes misinterpreted, or things just go wrong--but Henry keeps trying, and in the end he finds a friend he can play with.

Barnes, Derrick. [*The King of Kindergarten*](#)

Instilled with confidence by his parents, a young boy has a great first day of kindergarten.

Barnett, Mac. [*Just Because*](#)

When a child is too full of questions about the world to go to sleep, her patient father offers up increasingly creative responses to his child's nighttime wonderings.

Beaton, Kate. [*The Princess and the Pony*](#)

Princess Pinecone would like a real war horse for her birthday, instead of which she gets a plump, cute pony—but sometimes cuteness can be a kind of weapon, especially in a fight with dodgeballs and spitballs and hairballs and squareballs.

Beaty, Andrea. [*Ada Twist, Scientist*](#)



Ada Twist is a very curious girl who shows perseverance by asking questions and performing experiments to find things out and understand the world.

Beaty, Andrea. [*Sofia Valdez, Future Prez*](#)

When her abuelo is injured at the local landfill, second-grader Sofia is determined to transform the dangerous Mount Trashmore into a park, taking on City Hall in the process.

Cabrera, Cozbi. [*Me & Mama*](#)

For a little girl on a rainy day, the best place to be is with Mama.

De La Pena, Matt. [*Last Stop on Market Street*](#)

A young boy rides the bus across town with his grandmother and learns to appreciate the beauty in everyday things.

Dyckman, Ame. [*Wolfie the Bunny*](#)

When her parents find a baby wolf on their doorstep and decide to raise him as their own, Dot is certain he will eat them all up until a surprising encounter with a bear brings them closer together.

Finison, Carrie. [*Don't Hug Doug \(He Doesn't Like It\)*](#)

Doug prefers not to be hugged, but there are a variety of other ways his loved ones can show him affection.

Lindstrom, Carole. [*We Are Water Protectors*](#)

When a black snake threatens to destroy the Earth and poison her people's water, one young water protector takes a stand to defend Earth's most sacred resource. Inspired by the many indigenous-led movements across North America, this picture book issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption.

Llenas, Anna. [*The Color Monster*](#)

One day, Color Monster wakes up feeling very confused. His emotions are all over the place; he feels angry, happy, calm, sad, and scared all at once! So his friend, a young girl, helps him detangle his jumbled-up feelings by separating each one into its own color jar.

Love, Jessica. [*Julian is a Mermaid*](#)



In an exuberant picture book, a glimpse of costumed mermaids leaves one boy flooded with wonder and ready to dazzle the world.

Mackintosh, David. [*Waiting for Chicken Smith*](#)

While a girl savors the sun at the beach one summer, her brother is waiting to relive last year's fun with his friend Chicken Smith.

Maillard, Kevin Noble. [*Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*](#)

Using illustrations that show the diversity in Native America and spare that emphasizes fry bread in terms of provenance, this volume tells the story of a post-colonial food that is a shared tradition for Native American families all across the North American continent.

Miller, Pat Zietlow. [*The Quickest Kid in Clarksville*](#)

Growing up in the segregated town of Clarksville, Tennessee in the 1960s, Alta's family cannot afford to buy her new sneakers—but she still plans to attend the parade celebrating her hero Wilma Rudolph's three Olympic gold medals.

Reynolds, Peter. [*Be You!*](#)

A joyful celebration of individuality, persistence and staying true to you.

Savage, Stephen. [*Supertruck*](#)

When the city is hit by a colossal snowstorm, only one superhero can save the day. But who is this mysterious hero, and why does he disappear once his job is done?

Underwood, Deborah. [*Every Little Letter*](#)

In a world where all the letters of the alphabet live in separate cities surrounded by walls, little h and small i's newfound friendship inspires all the divided communities to connect and form such words as courage, cooperate, and kindness.

Yoon, Salina. [*Penguin and Pinecone: A Friendship Story*](#)

When curious little Penguin finds a lost pinecone in the snow, their friendship grows into something extraordinary!



Early & Emerging Readers:

Arnold, Tedd. [*Hi! Fly Guy*](#)

When Buzz captures a fly to enter in The Amazing Pet Show, his parents and the judges tell him that a fly cannot be a pet, but Fly Guy proves them wrong.

Butler, Dori Hillestad. [*King & Kayla and the Case of the Missing Dog Treats*](#)

King's human, Kayla, has baked some treats for a friend's new puppy, Thor, but some go missing and it is up to King to find the culprit.

Higgins, Ryan T. [*What About Worms?!*](#)

Tiger unwittingly helps some worms overcome their fear of tigers with a well-placed, informative book, but will a wormy hug aid a fearful Tiger?

LaRochelle, David. [*See the Cat: Three Stories About a Dog*](#)

What happens when the book gets it wrong? Max is not a cat-- Max is a dog! But much to his dismay, this book keeps instructing readers to "see the cat." How can Max get through to the book that he is a dog?

Long, Ethan. [*Big Cat*](#)

A hefty feline puts up with all kinds of indignities from the children in her loving but rambunctious family.

Lyons, Kelly Starling. [*Ty's Travels: All Aboard!*](#)

Ty wishes his family would play with him, but everyone is too busy before dinner time. Luckily, Ty knows just what to do... Time for fun. Celebrate the power of imagination in All Aboard!

Milgrim, David. [*See Otto*](#)

Otto the robot lands on Earth, where he is chased by a rhinoceros and befriended by some monkeys.

Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. [*Nate the Great*](#)

Join the world's greatest detective, Nate the Great, as he solves the mystery of the lost picture.

Willems, Mo. [*The Thank You Book*](#)

Piggie is determined to thank everyone she knows, but Gerald thinks she will forget someone important.



First Grade

There is no specific reading requirement for rising first graders. We encourage you to make reading a part of your child's daily routine. Set aside time to read together as a family, model independent reading for your child, and take a trip to your local library and sign up for their Summer Reading Program!

Suggested Family Reading:

We highly recommend reading the following books aloud, as a family, in the weeks leading up to the beginning of the school year:

Thompkins-Bigelow, Jamilah. [*Your Name Is A Song*](#).

Saddened by her classmates' and teacher's mispronunciations of her name, a girl is empowered by her discovery that names are like songs when she and her mom celebrate the musicality of African, Asian, Black-American, Latinx, and Middle Eastern names.

Kostecki-Shaw, Jenny Sue. [*Same, Same, but Different*](#).

Pen pals Elliot and Kailash discover that even though they live in different countries--America and India--they both love to climb trees, own pets, and ride school buses.

Sotomayor, Sonia. [*Just Ask!*](#)

Drawing on her own experiences as a child with juvenile diabetes, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor addresses kids' curiosity about disability and illness via a story featuring a group of friends who learn about each other's strengths and weaknesses while planting a garden together.

Other Suggested Reading:

Picture Books:

Alexander, Kwame. [*How To Read A Book*](#).

Suggests a method of reading that begins with planting oneself beneath a tree and leads to a book party one hopes will never end.

Beaty, Andrea. [*Sofia Valdez, Future Prez*](#).

When her Abuelo is injured at the local landfill, second-grader Sofia is determined to transform the dangerous Mount Trashmore into a park, taking on City Hall in the process.

Best, Cari. [*My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay*](#).



Zulay is a blind girl who longs to be able to run in the race on field and track day at her school.

Broskol, Vera. [*Leave Me Alone.*](#)

In her endeavor to make sweaters for 30 curious grandchildren, a harried grandmother embarks on a quest for peace and quiet.

Cornwall, Gaia. [*Jabari Tries.*](#)

Jabari is making a flying machine all by himself, but when it doesn't work the way he imagined, he learns about perseverance and problem-solving.

Jenkins, Steven. [*Creature Features: 25 Animals Explain Why They Look the Way They Do.*](#)

Packed with many cool facts and visuals on where certain animals live and what they eat, this book captures twenty-five explanations of why animals look the way they do in order to exist in this world.

Larsen, Andrew. [*I Do Not Like Stories.*](#)

The story itself is simple. Boy gets up, boy goes to school, boy comes home from school, boy goes to bed. Boy seems a bit grumpy, until the end of the day when he comes home to his cat, who he clearly loves.

Lin, Grace. [*A Big Mooncake for Little Star.*](#)

Reimagines the cycles of the moon as a mother bakes a Big Moon Cookie and, despite Mama's request to wait, Little Star begins nibbling at it every night.

Neal, Juana Martinez. [*Alma and How She Got Her Name.*](#)

When Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela asks her father why she has so many names, she hears the story of her name and learns about her grandparents.

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. [*The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore.*](#)

The compelling story of the founding of the National Memorial African Bookstore founded in 1939 by Louis Michaux.



Raczka, Bob. [*You Are A Story.*](#)

An empowering reflection for children on the many things they are and the ways they relate to the world.

Reynolds, Peter. [*Say Something!*](#)

Reynolds helps us to learn how to find our voice and use it in tough situations, from defining ourselves to using it to help others.

Sriram, Meera. [*A Gift for Amma: Market Day in India.*](#)

A young girl explores the vibrant rainbow of items for sale in a southern Indian street market as she searches for a gift for her mother. Includes facts about the items mentioned and markets around the world, as well as photographs taken by the author in her hometown of Chennai, India.

Stanley, Diane. [*Ada Lovelace, Poet of Science: The First Computer Programmer.*](#)

An engaging biography that looks at Ada Lovelace, the pioneering computer programmer and the daughter of the poet Lord Byron.

Stutzman, Jonathan. [*Tiny T. Rex and the Impossible Hug.*](#)

Tiny T. Rex wants to cheer up his friend, Pointy, with a hug, but he is frustrated because even as he gets bigger, his arms remain too small for proper hugging but he is determined to practice, even when he gets into trouble.

Robinson, Christian. [*You Matter.*](#)

A book that reminds young readers that no matter what happens or how one feels, they matter.

Slice, Jessica. [*This is How We Talk.*](#)

A rhyming picture book that demystifies and respects how disabled people and their families use different forms of communication to connect and show love.

Tetri, Emily. [*Tiger vs. Nightmare.*](#)

While Tiger sleeps, her best friend Monster scares away all of her nightmares, but waiting in the darkness is a nightmare so big and mean that Monster can't fight it alone, and only teamwork and a lot of bravery will chase it away.



Venable, Colleen A. F. [*The Oboe Goes Boom Boom Boom.*](#)

The band is assembled and the band director is ready to tell you all about the instruments, but an enthusiastic little drummer girl keeps interrupting.

Woodson, Jacqueline. [*The Day You Begin.*](#)

Other students laugh when Rigoberto, an immigrant from Venezuela, introduces himself but later, he meets Angelina and discovers that he is not the only one who feels like an outsider.

Zeiger, Danna. [*Rewriting the Rules: How Dr. Kathleen Friel Created New Possibilities for Brain Research and Disability.*](#)

As someone with cerebral palsy who runs a lab to help others with cerebral palsy, Dr. Kathleen Friel is rewriting the rules, defying expectations, and opening up new possibilities for herself and others.

Emerging Readers:

Adler, David A. [*Don't Throw It to Mo!*](#)

Mo Jackson is a little boy with a big passion for sports. He may not be the biggest, the strongest, or the fastest player, but he won't let that stop him from playing!

Arnold, Tedd. [*Noodlehead Nightmares.*](#)

Brothers Mac and Mac star in this collection of bedtime tales inspired by folktales about fools from around the world.

Butler, Dori Hillestad. [*King & Kayla and the Case of the Gold Ring.*](#)

King & Kayla hunt for Asia's missing gold ring.

Henkes, Kevin. [*Penny and Her Marble.*](#)

Penny feels guilty after taking a beautiful blue marble that she sees in Mrs. Goodwin's grass but gets a pleasant surprise when she goes to return it the next day.

Higgins, Ryan T. [*Bruce's Big Fun Day.*](#)

Nibbs the Mouse wants to give Bruce the Bear a Big Fun Day, but unfortunately, grumpy Bruce does not like fun.



Keller, Laurie. [*We Are Growing!*](#)

The story of eight blades of grass who are growing up fast.

LaRochelle, David. [*See the Cat: Three Stories About a Dog.*](#)

What happens when the book gets it wrong? Max is not a cat-- Max is a dog! But much to his dismay, this book keeps instructing readers to "see the cat." How can Max get through to the book that he is a dog.

Lyons, Kelly Starling. [*Ty's Travels: Zip, Zoom!*](#)

Ty cannot wait to ride his new scooter, but when he has a hard time learning and wants to quit, a new friend encourages him to give it another try.

Madan, Vikram. [*Bobo & Pup-Pup: Let's Make Cake!*](#)

Bobo and Pup-pup have fun as they attempt to make a cake for the first time using a recipe book lent to them by the mice.

Ruzzier, Sergio. [*The Quiet Boat Ride and Other Stories.*](#)

Fox and Chick are off on three new adventures involving a boat ride, a mysterious box, and an early morning trip to see the sunrise. Despite the antics ensuing from their opposite personalities, this contradictory duo always manages to find a happy center where they appreciate their differences.

Romito, Dee. [*Fort Builders: The Birthday Castle.*](#)

Caleb and his best friend Jax are excited to start their own fort-building business. Can they finish the fort in time for Analise's big birthday bash?

Rylant, Cynthia. [*Mr. Putter & Tabby.*](#)

A series that features an elderly man, Mr. Putter, who decides to get a cat to help his loneliness. He finds Tabby, an older shelter cat, and the series follows their adventures.

Saadia, Faruqi. [*Yasmin the Builder.*](#)

As their makerspace project, the students in Yasmin's second grade class are building a city: there are houses, a school, a church, even a castle, but Yasmin is not sure what to build--until inspiration strikes.



Shea, Bob. [*Ballet Cat: The Totally Secret Secret.*](#)

While Ballet Cat and Sparkles the Pony are trying to decide what to play, they each share an important secret.

Warner, Sally. [*EllRay Jakes Is Not a Chicken.*](#)

Eight-year-old EllRay's father has promised a family trip to Disneyland if EllRay can stay out of trouble for a week, but not defending himself against Jared, the class bully, proves to be a real challenge.

Yoon, Salina. [*Duck, Duck, Porcupine.*](#)

A big sister duck, a little brother duck, and their porcupine friend have three fun adventures: a picnic, a birthday party, and a camping trip.



Second Grade

There is no specific reading requirement for rising second graders. We encourage you to make reading a part of your child's daily routine. Set aside time to read together as a family, model independent reading for your child, and take a trip to your local library and sign up for their Summer Reading Program!

Suggested Family Reading:

Your second grade teachers highly recommend reading the following two books aloud, as a family, in the weeks leading up to the beginning of the school year:

Berger, Carin. [*The Little Yellow Leaf*](#).

A yellow leaf is not ready to fall from the tree when autumn comes, but finally, after finding another leaf still on the tree, the two let go together.

Sierra, Judy. [*Wild About Books*](#).

A librarian named Molly McGrew introduces the animals in the zoo to the joy of reading when she drives her bookmobile to the zoo by mistake.

Other Suggested Reading:

Picture Books:

Andrews, Troy. [*Trombone Shorty*](#).

Hailing from the Tremé neighborhood in New Orleans, Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews got his nickname by wielding a trombone twice as long as he was high.

Baptiste, Paul. [*The Field*](#).

A book about friends on a Caribbean island playing a game of fútbol.

Barnes, Derrick. [*I Am Every Good Thing*](#).

Illustrations and easy-to-read text pay homage to the strength, character, and worth of an African American child.

Chabon, Michael. [*The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man*](#).

A young superhero describes his awesome powers, which he then demonstrates as various foes arrive on the scene.

Charles, Tami. [*All Because You Matter*](#).



A lyrical, heart-lifting love letter to Black and Brown children everywhere reminds them how much they matter, that they have always mattered and they always will.

Chin, Jason. [*Your Place in the Universe*](#).

An introduction to size, scale, and distance that goes from comparing an eight-year-old's height with a stack of books to examining the vastness of the universe

Cline-Ransome, Lesa. [*Overground Railroad*](#).

A girl named Ruth Anne tells the story of her family's train journey from North Carolina to New York City as part of the Great Migration.

Cornwall, Gaia. [*Jabari Tries*](#).

Jabari is making a flying machine all by himself, but when it doesn't work the way he imagined, he learns about perseverance and problem-solving.

Fan, Terry. [*The Night Gardener*](#).

William and the elderly gardener help transform their town by creating anonymous topiary artwork.

Davies, Nicola. [*Tiny Creatures: The World of Microbes*](#).

A look at all of the different microbes that inhabit the Earth and an explanation of the various jobs they do.

De La Peña. [*Milo Imagines the World*](#).

While on the subway, Milo imagines different stories for the people he sees, but he soon realizes you can't tell who people really are just by their appearance.

Kheiriyeh, Rashin. [*Saffron Ice Cream*](#).

Rashin is an Iranian immigrant girl living in New York, excited by her first trip to Coney Island, and fascinated by the differences in the beach customs between her native Iran and her new home--but she misses the saffron-flavored ice cream that she used to eat.



Lê, Minh. [*Drawn Together.*](#)

A boy and his grandfather cross a language and cultural barrier using their shared love of art, storytelling, and fantasy.

Lamonthe, Matt. [*This Is How We Do It: One Day in the Lives of Seven Kids From Around the World.*](#)

Follows the daily lives of seven children from around the world, including such places as Japan, India, Uganda, and Italy, and discusses how schools, meals, and play can be different or similar in different places in the world.

Medina, Meg. [*Evelyn Del Rey is Moving Away.*](#)

Evelyn Del Rey is Daniela's best friend. They do everything together and even live in twin apartments across the street from each other-- but not after today--not after Evelyn moves away. Until then, the girls play amid the moving boxes until it's time to say goodbye, making promises to keep in touch, because they know that their friendship will always be special.

Mora, Oge. [*Thank You, Omu!*](#)

When the aroma of Omu's homemade stew fills the air, her neighbors arrive, one by one, for a taste until all is gone except for her generous spirit.

Neal, Juana Martinez. [*Alma and How She Got Her Name.*](#)

When Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela asks her father why she has so many names, she hears the story of her name and learns about her grandparents.

Santat, Dan. [*After the Fall: How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again.*](#)

Everyone knows that when Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. But what happened after?

Shetterly, Margot Lee. [*Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race.*](#)

Explores the previously uncelebrated but pivotal contributions of NASA's African American women mathematicians to America's space program.



Woodson, Jacqueline. [*The Day You Begin.*](#)

Other students laugh when Rigoberto, an immigrant from Venezuela, introduces himself but later, he meets Angelina and discovers that he is not the only one who feels like an outsider.

Emerging Readers:

Arnold, Tedd. [*Fly Guy and the Aliens.*](#)

Buzz is filming a movie about aliens from Outer Space, who capture Fly Guy and Buzz Boy--and our two heroes must outsmart the aliens, with some help from Dragon Dude and Fly Girl.

Brown, Jeff. [*Flat Stanley.*](#)

After a bulletin board falls on Stanley while he's sleeping, he finds that being flat has its advantages.

Bunting, Eve. [*Frog and Friends.*](#)

A beginning reader series featuring the delightful Frog and his friends Rabbit, Possum, Raccoon, and Squirrel.

Chaconas, Dori. [*Cork & Fuzz. Good Sports.*](#)

Cork is a short muskrat who likes to win at games. Fuzz is a tall possum who also likes to win at games. Two best friends. Both like to win. What will happen when they play games against each other?

Furuqi, Saadia. [*Yasmin the Builder.*](#)

As their makerspace project, the students in Yasmin's second grade class are building a city: there are houses, a school, a church, even a castle, but Yasmin is not sure what to build--until inspiration strikes. Back matter includes discussion questions, Urdu word list, Pakistan facts, and a suggested activity.

Higgins, Ryan T. [*What About Worms?*](#)

Tiger unwittingly helps some worms overcome their fear of tigers with a well-placed, informative book, but will a wormy hug aid a fearful Tiger?

Kimmelman, Leslie. [*Sam and Charlie \(and Sam too!\)*](#)

A boy named Sam, a girl named Charlie, and Charlie's sister Sam become neighbors and friends.



LaVoy Reynolds, Shauna. [*Poetree.*](#)

Sylvia shares poems with her birch tree. When one day it seems to answer back, she thinks she has found her “poetree.”

Lobel, Arnold. [*Mouse Tales.*](#)

When Papa's seven little mouse boys ask for a bedtime story, Papa does even better than that--he tells seven stories, one for each boy!

Perl, Erica S., [*Truth or Lie: Dinosaurs!*](#)

Fun facts about dinosaurs presented in a quiz like style. Learn about everything from Triceratops to Tyrannosaurs Rex.

Pallotta, Jerry. [*Who Would Win? Killer Whale Vs. Great White Shark.*](#)

Contains facts about killer whales and great white sharks, comparing such aspects as their sizes, brain structure, and abilities. (Any from the series!)

Chapter Books:

Brown, Monica. [*Lola Levine is Not Mean!*](#)

Second-grader Lola has a wonderful family, a great teacher, and the best friend ever, Josh, and they all help her feel better after she is teased and forbidden to play team sports at recess for having accidentally hurt classmate Juan during a soccer game.

Castillo, Lauren. [*Our Friend Hedgehog: The Story of Us.*](#)

When a storm separates Hedgehog from her lifelong friend, she bravely sets out to find him and makes some very good new friends in the process.

Dahl, Roald. [*The Fantastic Mr. Fox.*](#)

Three farmers, each one meaner than the other, try all-out warfare to get rid of the fox and his family.

Draper, Sharon. [*Clubhouse Mysteries*](#) (series)

A diverse group of four boys call themselves the “Black Dinosaurs”, build a clubhouse, decode secret messages, and solve mysteries.

English, Karen. [*Dog Days.*](#)



Gavin wants to make a good impression at Carver Elementary, where no one knows he excels at soccer and skateboarding, but an annoying big sister, a bully, and his great aunt's Pomeranian are not helping.

Graham, Annable. [*Peter & Ernesto: The Lost Sloths*](#).

After a hurricane blows away their tree, Peter, Ernesto, and the rest of their sloth friends must venture into the jungle to find a new home while also dealing with dangers like angry ants, slithering snakes, and a ravenous jaguar. Presented in comic book format.

Hale, Shannon. [*Princess in Black*](#) (series)

Who says princesses don't wear black? When trouble raises its blue monster head, Princess Magnolia ditches her flouncy dresses and becomes the Princess in Black!

Look, Lenore. [*Ruby Lu, Brave and True*](#).

Almost-eight-year-old Ruby Lu spends time with her baby brother, goes to Chinese school, performs magic tricks, learns to drive, and has adventures with old and new friends.

Messenger, Jonathan. [*The Fuzzy Apocalypse*](#).

Eight-year-old Finn is the first kid born in space and he spends his days looking for a new planet to call home with his three best friends and his robot, Foggy. He's used to wild, galaxy hopping adventures. But when Explorer Troop 301 gets stuck on a planet that's about to explode, Finn and his friends will have to face giant aliens, a leader with mind control powers, and one evil, fluffy bunny rabbit in order to save the planet.

Ohlin, Nancy. [*Alicia Alonso Takes the Stage*](#).

A historical novel based on the life of Alicia Alonso, a world-renowned prima ballerina from Cuba.

Thomson, Melissa. [*Keena Ford and the Second-Grade Mix-Up*](#).

Keena Ford chronicles her many mishaps as she begins second grade.



Warner, Sally, [*EllRay Jakes is NOT A Chicken.*](#)

Eight-year-old EllRay's father has promised a family trip to Disneyland if EllRay can stay out of trouble for a week, but not defending himself against Jared, the class bully, proves to be a real challenge.

Willems, Mo. [*The Story of Diva and Flea.*](#)

In the bustling city of Paris, a small yet brave dog, Diva, and an adventurous cat named Flea become two unlikely friends.



Third Grade

Required Reading:

Rising third grade students should read one biography and one non-fiction book from the lists below. Students should also read one fiction (chapter book) of their choice, appropriate for their reading level.

Biography:

Berne, Jennifer. [*Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau*](#).

Before Jacques Cousteau became an internationally known oceanographer and champion of the seas, he was a curious little boy. In this biography, poetic text and paintings combine to create a portrait of Jacques Cousteau.

Keating, Jess. [*Shark Lady: The True Story of How Eugenie Clark Became the Ocean's Most Fearless Scientist*](#)

Biography of Eugenie Clark, who devoted her life to studying sharks and taught the world that sharks were to be admired rather than feared. Includes facts about sharks and a timeline of Eugenie Clark's life.

Lang, Heather. [*Swimming with Sharks: The Daring Discoveries of Eugenie Clark*](#).

The true story about the girl who grew up to be the 'Shark Lady' and became one of the most inspiring scientists in the world.

Nivola, Claire A. [*A Life In the Ocean: The Story of Oceanographer of Sylvia Earle*](#).

A picture book biography tells the story of Sylvia Earle's growing passion for the wonders of the sea and how her ocean exploration and advocacy have made her known around the world.

Nonfiction:

Davies, Nicola. [*Surprising Sharks*](#).

Introduces many different species of sharks, pointing out such characteristics as the small size of the dwarf lantern shark and the physical characteristics and behavior that makes sharks killing machines.



Fleming, Candace. [*Giant Squid*](#).

A nonfiction picture book exploring the mysterious life of the elusive giant squid.

Jenkins, Steve. [*Down, Down, Down: A Journey to the Bottom of the Sea*](#).

Provides a top-to-bottom look at the ocean, from birds and waves to thermal vents and ooze.

Marsh, Laura. [*National Geographic Readers: Weird Sea Creatures*](#).

An introduction to some of the weirdest creatures that live in the ocean including anglerfish, lionfish, and hagfish.

Raymond, Shirley Raye. [*Tentacles! Tales of the Giant Squid*](#).

Describes some of the exaggerated stories that have been told about giant squids and also what scientists have learned about their real physical characteristics and behavior.

Simon, Seymour. [*Seymour Simon's Extreme Oceans*](#).

With mind-bending facts and stunning photographs join us for an exciting, and sometimes unbelievable, underwater expedition.

Simon, Seymour. [*Sharks*](#).

When you get to know the truth about sharks, you'll begin to see them as the fascinating creatures they are, instead of the monsters of myth.

Other Suggested Reading:

Fiction:

Beaty, Andrea. [*Rosie Revere and the Raucous Riveters*](#).

Rosie Revere is no stranger to flops and fails, kerfuffles, and catastrophes.

After all, engineering is all about perseverance! But this time, Rosie has a really important project to tackle--one that feels much bigger than herself.

Rosie's beloved Aunt Rose and her friends, the Raucous Riveters--a group of fun-loving gals who built airplanes during World War II--need help inventing something new



Blakemore, Megan. [*Frankie Sparks and the Class Pet.*](#)

Frankie Sparks, the self-proclaimed "best inventor in the third grade," does research and creates a tool to try to persuade her classmates that a rat would make the best class pet.

Brown, Monica. [*Lola Levine is Not Mean!*](#)

Second grader Lola has a wonderful family, a great teacher, and the best friend ever, Josh, and they all help her feel better after she is teased and forbidden to play team sports at recess for having accidentally hurt classmate Juan during a soccer game.

Citro, Asia. [*Dragons and Marshmallows.*](#)

A girl, Zoey, and her cat, Sassafras, use science experiments to help a dragon with a problem.

Draper, Sharon. [*Clubhouse Mysteries*](#) (series)

A diverse group of four boys call themselves the "Black Dinosaurs", build a clubhouse, decode secret messages, and solve mysteries.

Draper, Sharon. [*Sassy*](#) (series)

Fourth grader Sassy is annoyed that her family calls her "Little Sister". In fact, she doesn't like much that comes with being the youngest child. She is determined to change things and the contents of her sparkly handbag that her grandmother gave her come in handy on that quest.

Elliot, Zetta. [*Dragons in a Bag.*](#)

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.

English, Karen. [*Dog Days.*](#)

Gavin wants to make a good impression at Carver Elementary, where no one knows he excels at soccer and skateboarding, but an annoying big sister, a bully, and his great aunt's Pomeranian are not helping.



Faruqi, Saadia. [*Meet Yasmin!*](#)

In this compilation of four separately published books, Pakistani American second grader Yasmin learns to cope with the small problems of school and home, while gaining confidence in her own skills and creative abilities.

Florence, Debbie Michiko. [*Jasmine Toguchi: Mochi Queen.*](#)

Eager to do something her big sister has not done first, Jasmine Toguchi, eight, decides to pound mochi with the men and boys when her family gets together for New Year's.

Gaiman, Neil. [*Fortunately, the Milk.*](#)

While picking up milk for his children's cereal, a father is abducted by aliens and finds himself on a wild adventure through time and space.

Gidwitz, Adam. [*The Creature of the Pines.*](#)

After encountering a Jersey Devil while on a field trip to the Pine Barrens, Elliot and his new friend Uchenna help their weird teacher Professor Fauna rescue the mythological creature from a pair of greedy billionaire brothers.

Look, Lenore. [*Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things.*](#)

A young boy in Concord, Massachusetts, who loves superheroes and comes from a long line of brave Chinese farmer-warriors, wants to make friends, but first, he must overcome his fear of Everything.

Mian, Zanib. [*Accidental Trouble Magnet.*](#)

My parents decided it would be a good idea to move house AND move me to a new school at the same time. As if I didn't have a hard enough time staying out of trouble at home, now I've also got to try and make new friends. What's worse, the class bully seems to think I'm the perfect target. At least Eid's around the corner which means a feast (YAY) and presents (DOUBLE YAY). Well, as long as I can stay in Mum and Dad's good books long enough...

Smith, Alexander McCall. [*The Great Cake Mystery: Precious Ramotswe's Very First Case.*](#)

Before becoming the first female private investigator in Botswana, eight-year-old Precious Ramotswe tracks down a thief who has been stealing her classmates' snacks.



Tsang, Katie. [*Sam Wu is Not Afraid of Sharks.*](#)

After encountering a scary shark at the aquarium, Sam is afraid to attend a birthday party at the beach.

Vernon Ursula. [*Harriet the Invincible.*](#)

Never a conventional princess, Harriet becomes an adventurer after learning she is cursed to fall into a deep sleep on her twelfth birthday, but after two years of slaying ogres, cliff-diving, and more with her riding quail, Mumfrey, things go awry at home and she must seek a prince to set things right.

Warner, Sally. [*EllRay Jakes the Recess King!*](#)

Eight-year-old EllRay Jakes of Oak Glen Primary School is looking for a new best friend, and he decides that the best way to find one is to come up with a bunch of amazing things to do at recess – and see who shares in the fun.

Nonfiction:

Bell, Kamal E. [*Akeem Keeps Bees!*](#)

This vibrantly illustrated book for kids aged 6 to 10 traces a year in the real-life apiary of Sankofa Farms as a father (the author) teaches his young son, Akeem, the basics of beekeeping. Told from Akeem's perspective, *Akeem Keeps Bees!* begins with the arrival and installation of a package of bees and follows the sequence of beekeeping tasks throughout the year, as Akeem and his dad inspect the hive, find the queen, deal with a swarm, harvest honey, and prepare for winter.

Buzzeo, Toni. [*When Sue Found Sue: Sue Hendrickson Discovers Her T. Rex*](#)

From a very young age, Sue Hendrickson was meant to find things: lost coins, perfume bottles, and even hidden treasure. Her endless curiosity eventually led to her career in diving and paleontology, where she would continue to find things big and small. In 1990, at a dig in South Dakota, Sue made her biggest discovery to date: Sue the T. rex, the largest and most complete T. rex skeleton ever unearthed.

Chin, Jason. [*Hurricane.*](#)

Hurricane is a compelling and informative book that follows a storm's path toward Hatteras Island, North Carolina, highlighting how meteorologists track hurricanes and how communities prepare. Blending vivid storytelling with



scientific detail, it offers a dramatic yet reassuring look at natural disasters and the tools we use to stay safe -- especially relevant in an era of climate change.

DePrince, Michaela. [*Ballerina Dreams: From Orphan to Dancer*](#)

Chronicles the life story of Michaela DePrince, a young orphan from war-torn Sierra Leone who was adopted by an American family and followed her dream of becoming a ballerina.

Duncan, Alice Faye. [*Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop: The Sanitation Strike of 1968*](#)

The story of nine-year-old Lorraine Jackson, who accompanied her sanitation worker father to the Memphis Sanitation Strike of 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s final stand for justice before his assassination.

Harrington, Janice N., [*Buzzing With Questions: The Inquisitive Mind of Charles Henry Turner*](#).

A picture book biography of pathbreaking African American entomologist Charles Henry Turner. Includes timeline.

Jenkins, Steve. [*Our World By the Numbers*](#)

Discover some of the most fascinating aspects of our world through astonishing numbers: the stretch of time from Earth's formation to the present, how often lightning strikes in one day, the temperature at the center of the sun, what percentage of Earth's land is covered in deserts, forests, or cities, and so much more.

Kamkwamba, William. [*The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind*](#)

The true account of African teenager, William Kamkwamba, who constructed a windmill from scraps to create electricity for his entire Malawi village.

Lyons, Kelly Starling. [*A Girl Named Misty: The True Story of Misty Copeland*](#)

Explains how Misty Copeland became the first African American female principal dancer for the American Ballet Theatre.

Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. [*Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix*](#)

Describes the popular street cook's life, including working in his family's restaurant as a child, figuring out what he wanted to do with his life, and his success with his food truck and restaurant.



Rabinowitz, Alan. [*A Boy And A Jaguar.*](#)

Renowned cat conservationist Alan Rabinowitz reflects on his early childhood struggles with a speech disorder, describing how he only spoke fluently when he was communicating with animals and how he resolved at a young age to find his voice in order to be their advocate.

Rosenstock, Barb. [*Otis and Will discover the deep: the record-setting dive of the Bathysphere*](#)

A biographical account of engineer Otis Barton and naturalist Will Beebe's record-setting descent into the deep ocean in their Bathysphere craft, making the men the first humans to witness deep sea creatures in their natural habitat.

Steptoe, Javaka. [*Radiant Child: The Story Of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*](#)

Jean-Michel Basquiat and his unique, collage-style paintings rocked to fame in the 1980s as a cultural phenomenon, unlike anything the art world had ever seen. But before that, he was a little boy who saw art everywhere.

Winter, Jeanette. [*The World Is Not A Rectangle: A Portrait of Architect Zaha Hadid*](#)

A biography of architect Zaha Hadid, who grew up in Baghdad and went on to design buildings all over the world. She became one of the most irreverent, controversial, and celebrated architects in the world.



Fourth Grade

Required Reading:

Rising fourth grade students should read one fiction and one non-fiction book from the lists below.

Fiction:

Applegate, Katherine. [*Wishtree*](#).

A red oak tree and a crow help their human neighbors work out their differences.

Dominguez, Angela. [*Stella Diaz Has Something To Say*](#).

Stella Díaz wants to be friends with the new boy in class, but sometimes she accidentally speaks Spanish instead of English and pronounces words wrong, which makes her turn roja. In addition, she has to get over her fear of speaking in front of the class.

Woodson, Jacqueline. [*Locomotion*](#).

In a series of poems, eleven-year-old Lonnie writes about his life after the death of his parents, being separated from his younger sister, living in a foster home, and finding his poetic voice at school.

Non-Fiction:

Fleischman, John. [*Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science*](#).

Tells the story of Phineas Gage, a railroad construction foreman who survived eleven years after an accident in which a thirteen-pound iron rod shot through his brain.

Polacco, Patricia. [*Clara & Davie*](#).

Depicts the life of a young Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross.

Taylor-Butler, Christine. [*The Circulatory System*](#).

Discusses the circulatory system and ways to keep your heart healthy, and shows a map of the blood's route around the body.



Thompson, Gare. [*Who Was Helen Keller?*](#)

A biography of the woman who, with the assistance of her devoted teacher Annie Sullivan, achieved success and fame despite being blind and deaf.

Other Suggested Reading:

Fiction:

Bell, Cece. [*El Deafo*](#).

Going to school and making new friends can be tough. But going to school and making new friends while wearing a bulky hearing aid strapped to your chest? That requires superpowers!

Callender, Kacen. [*Hurricane Child*](#).

Born on Water Island in the Virgin Islands during a hurricane, which is considered bad luck, twelve-year-old Caroline falls in love with another girl--and together they set out in a hurricane to find Caroline's missing mother.

Chokshi, Roshani. [*Aru Shah and the Song of Death*](#).

Accused of stealing the god of love's bow and arrow, Aru has ten days to find the real thief or risk being kicked out of the Otherworld.

Choldenko, Gennifer. [*One-Third Nerd*](#).

Ten-year-old Liam and his two younger sisters, precocious third-grader Dakota and second-grader Izzy, who has Down syndrome, face the possibility of losing their beloved dog, Cupcake, who keeps urinating on their apartment's carpet.

Cline-Ransome, Lesa. [*Finding Langston*](#).

Discovering a book of Langston Hughes' poetry in the library helps Langston cope with the loss of his mother, relocating from Alabama to Chicago as part of the Great Migration, and being bullied.

Craft, Jerry. [*New Kid*](#).

Instead of sending Jordan to the arts school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics. Jordan turns out to be one of the few kids of color in his entire grade and struggles to find balance between his home life in Washington Heights and his new upscale academy. Presented in comic book format.



DiCamillo, Kate. [*Raymie Nightingale*](#).

Hoping that if she wins a local beauty pageant her father will come home, Raymie practices twirling a baton and performing good deeds as she is drawn into an unlikely friendship with a drama queen and a saboteur.

Draper, Sharon. [*Blended*](#).

Piano-prodigy Isabella, eleven, whose black father and white mother struggle to share custody, never feels whole, especially as racial tensions affect her school, her parents both become engaged, and she and her stepbrother are stopped by police.

Elliott, Zetta. [*Dragons in a Bag*](#).

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.

Giles, Lamar. [*The Last Last-Day-of-Summer*](#).

When adventurous cousins Otto and Sheed Alston accidentally extend the last day of summer by freezing time, they find the secrets between the unmoving seconds are not as much fun as they expected.

Higuera, Donna Barbra. [*Xolo: How One Good Dog Saved Humankind*](#).

It is said the mighty feathered serpent god, Quetzalcoatl, helped create the earth. He is the hero who stole back the bones of humanity from the evil god of the Underworld. In his quest to bring humans to the earth, Quetzalcoatl's dog-headed twin brother, Xolotl, was present. Not much is known of Xolotl, the god of lightning, death, and misfortune. A true monster. This is what really happened.

Jamieson, Victoria. [*All's Faire In Middle School*](#).

Homeschooled by Renaissance Fair enthusiasts, eleven-year-old Imogene has a hard time fitting in when her wish to enroll in public school is granted

Johnson, Varian. [*The Parker Inheritance*](#).

In 2007, Abigail Caldwell, the first female, and African American city manager for the town of Lambert, South Carolina, was forced to resign after covertly digging up the municipal tennis courts in search of buried treasure. Now, a



decade later, the late Abigail's twelve-year-old granddaughter Candice is following the same arcane clues, hoping to uncover the Parker inheritance. But who was Parker?

Kelly, Erin Entrada. [*You Go First*](#).

Charlotte, twelve, and Ben, eleven, are highly-skilled competitors at online Scrabble and that connection helps both as they face family issues and the turmoil of middle school.

Keller, Tae. [*When You Trap a Tiger*](#).

When Lily and her family move in with her sick grandmother, Lily traps a tiger and makes a deal with him to heal Halmoni. Newbery Medal, 2021.

Medina, Meg. [*Merci Suarez Changes Gears*](#).

Thoughtful, strong-willed sixth-grader Merci Suarez navigates difficult changes with friends, family, and everyone in between.

Meriano, Anna. [*Love Sugar Magic: A Dash of Trouble, Book 1*](#).

Wanting to be a part of her family's Dia de Los Muertos preparations, Leonora sneaks out of school to discover her mother, aunt, and older sisters have been keeping a secret.

Older, Daniel Jose. [*Dactyl Hill Squad*](#).

Older weaves historical facts with dinosaur-inspired fancy to fashion a Civil War-era New York City, rooted in real events and attitudes, in which dinosaurs still roam and a diverse band of orphans resists corrupt authorities during the Draft Riots of 1863.

Pennypacker, Sara. [*Pax*](#).

After being forced to give up his pet fox Pax, a young boy named Peter decides to leave home and get his best friend back.

Phelen, Matt. [*Knights Vs. Dinosaurs*](#).

With the realm at peace and few dragons about, the Knights of the Round Table are bored, so Merlin sends them to face the most terrible lizards of all dinosaurs.



Scieszka, Jon. [*The Plant Planet.*](#)

Carbon dioxide is out of control on Earth, and the fate of humankind rests in the paws of four experimental, untested animal astronauts who are seeking another habitable planet; first destination is the plant planet which at first looks perfect, except that the abundant plant life can think for itself--and it thinks that it really does not like the AstroNuts.

Selznick, Brian. [*Big Tree.*](#)

Sycamore seed siblings Merwin and Louise must use their wits and imaginations to navigate a mysterious and often dangerous world, filled with talking plants, monsters, meteors, and the fear of never finding the right conditions to set down roots and become big trees.

Sell, Chad. [*The Cardboard Kingdom.*](#)

Follows the adventures of a group of neighborhood children who create costumes from cardboard and use their imagination in adventures with knights, robots, and monsters.

Timberlake, Amy. [*Skunk and Badger.*](#)

The last thing Badger wants is a roommate, and certainly not Skunk, but since the house does not belong to him he does not have a choice; and soon everything in Badger's quiet and ordered life studying rocks is turned upside down (and where on earth did all the chickens come from)--but after he drives Skunk and his chickens away, Badger starts to miss his roommate and sets out to find him and make amends.

Yang, Kelly. [*Front Desk*](#) (and others in the series)

Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?



Nonfiction:

Brown, Don. [*Rocket to the Moon!*](#)

On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong took "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" when the Apollo 11 landed on the moon. But it wasn't just one man who got us to the moon. The Moon Landing explores the people and technology that made the moon landing possible. Instead of examining one person's life, it focuses on the moon landing itself, showing the events leading up to it and how it changed the world. The book takes readers through the history of rocket building: from ancient Chinese rockets, to "bombs bursting in air" during the War of 1812, to Russia's Sputnik program, to the moon landing all in comic book format.

Brown, Tricia. [*Children of the First People: Fresh Voices of Alaska's Native Kids.*](#)

Alaska is a mythic land brought closer through these stories of Native kids doing things like playing basketball and seal hunting in the harsh environments of the icy north.

Browne, Mahogany L. [*Woke: A Young Poet's Call to Justice.*](#)

A collection of poems by women that reflects the joy and passion in the fight for social justice, tackling topics from discrimination to empathy, and acceptance to speaking out.

Duncan, Alice Faye. [*Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop: The Sanitation Strike of 1968.*](#)

The story of nine-year-old Lorraine Jackson, who accompanied her sanitation worker father to the Memphis Sanitation Strike of 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s final stand for justice before his assassination.

Halligan, Katherine. [*HerStory: 50 Women And Girls Who Shook Up The World.*](#) Celebrate fifty inspiring and powerful women who changed the world and left their mark in this lavishly illustrated biography compilation.

Hockney, David. [*A History of Pictures for Children.*](#)

From cave paintings to video games, this book shows how and why pictures have been made, linking art to the human experience.



Johnson, Rebecca L. [*When Lunch Fights Back: Wickedly Clever Animal Defenses.*](#)

Presents the various types of defense mechanisms used by animals, including the bone spikes of the African hairy frog, the deadly poison of the blue-spotted N. taracua termite, and the hammer-like punch of the peacock mantis shrimp.

Shetterly, Margot Lee. [*Hidden Figures: Young Readers' Edition.*](#)

The untold true story of four African-American women who helped launch our nation into space.

Sidman, Joyce. [*The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian's Art Changed Science.*](#)

Explores the extraordinary life and scientific discoveries of Maria Merian, who discovered the truth about metamorphosis and documented the science behind the mystery in this visual biography that features many original paintings by Maria herself.

Swanson, Jennifer. [*Beastly Bionics: Rad Robots, Brilliant Biomimicry, and Incredible Inventions Inspired by Nature.*](#)

From robots that protect people and gather information to everyday inventions, like reflectors on the roads and ice-proof coatings for airplanes, to new sources of renewable energy, this book dives into the ways that nature can give us ideas on how to improve our world. Discover more than 40 examples of technology influenced by animals, learn about some of the incredible creatures who have inspired multiple creations, and meet some of the scientists and the stories behind their inventions.

Thornhill, Jan. [*The Triumphant Tale of the House Sparrow.*](#)

Presents the history of the house sparrow, from its beginnings in the Middle East to its spread with the growth of agriculture around the world, and discusses its population decline in recent years.

Weatherford, Carole Boston. [*Box: Henry Brown Mails Himself to Freedom.*](#)

Henry Brown wrote that long before he came to be known as "Box," he "entered the world a slave." He was put to work as a child and passed down from one generation to the next - as property. When he was an adult, his wife and



children were sold away from him out of spite. Henry Brown watched as his family left, bound in chains, headed to the deeper South. What more could be taken from him? But then hope - and help - came in the form of the Underground Railroad. Escape! The author, in poems, narrates Henry Brown's story of how he came to ship himself in a box from slavery to freedom.

Wholleben, Peter. [*Can You Hear the Trees Talking?*](#)

A global advocate for forests and our relationship with trees shares the mysteries and magic of the forest in language kids can understand. Includes quizzes and hands-on activities.

Woollcott, Tory. [*The Brain: The Ultimate Thinking Machine.*](#)

Provides an inside look at the human brain, the most advanced operating system in the world, by exploring topics such as how our senses work in relation to the brain and how we remember things. Presented in comic book format.



Fifth Grade

Required Reading:

Bruchac, Joseph. [*Rez Dogs*](#).

Twelve-year-old Malian lives with her grandparents on a Wabanaki reservation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yellowhorn, Eldon. [*Sky Wolf's Call*](#).

The authors reveal how Indigenous knowledge comes from centuries of practices, experiences, and ideas gathered by people who have a long history with the natural world. Indigenous knowledge is explored through the use of fire and water, the acquisition of food, the study of astronomy, and healing practices.

Additionally, fifth grade students should choose 1 biography from the list below.

Biography:

Bruchac, Joseph. [*Chester Nez and the Unbreakable Code: A Navajo Code Talker's Story*](#).

As a boy, Chester Nez was taught his native language and culture were useless, but he was later called on to use his Navajo language to help create an unbreakable military code during WWII.

Sorell, Traci. [*Classified: The Secret Career of Mary Golda Ross, Cherokee Aerospace Engineer*](#)

Mary Golda Ross designed classified projects for Lockheed Air Corporation as the company's first female engineer. Find out how her passion for math and the Cherokee values she was raised with shaped her life and work.

Dauids, Charise. [*Sharice's Big Voice: A Native Kid Becomes a Congresswoman*](#).

This autobiography tells the remarkable story of Sharice Davids, one of the first Native American women elected to Congress and the first LGBTQ congressperson to represent Kansas.



Coulson, Art. [*Unstoppable: How Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team Defeated Army.*](#)

In the autumn of 1912, the football team from Carlisle Indian Industrial School took the field at the U.S. Military Academy, home to the bigger, stronger, and better-equipped West Points Cadets. Sportswriters billed the game as a sort of rematch, pitting against each other the descendants of U.S. soldiers and American Indians who fought on the battlefield only 20 years earlier. But for lightning-fast Jim Thorpe and the other Carlisle players, that day's game was about skill, strategy, and determination. Known for unusual formations and innovative plays, the Carlisle squad was out to prove just one thing--that it was the best football team in all the land.

Rappaport, Doreen. [*Wilma's Way Home: the Life of Wilma Mankiller.*](#)

A picture book biography of Wilma Mankiller, the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation.

Capaldi, Gina. [*Red Bird Sings: The Story of Zitkala-Sa, Native American Author, Musician, and Activist.*](#)

Zitkala-Sa finds that she can sing through her music, but also by writing stories and giving speeches and being an activist for Native American rights.

Other Suggested Reading:

Fiction:

Alexander, Kwame. [*Booked.*](#)

Twelve-year-old Nick loves soccer and hates books, but soon learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams.

Auxier, Jonathan. [*Sweep: The Story Of A Girl And Her Monster.*](#)

In nineteenth-century England, after her father's disappearance Nan Sparrow, ten, works as a "climbing boy," aiding chimney sweeps, but when her most treasured possessions end up in a fireplace, she unwittingly creates a golem.

Blake, Ashley Herring. [*Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World.*](#)

Twelve-year-old Ivy Aberdeen's house is destroyed in a tornado, and in the aftermath of the storm, she begins to develop feelings for another girl at school.



Callender, Kacen. [*Hurricane Child*](#).

Born on Water Island in the Virgin Islands during a hurricane, which is considered bad luck, twelve-year-old Caroline falls in love with another girl--and together they set out in a hurricane to find Caroline's missing mother.

Cartaya, Pablo. [*Marcus Vega Doesn't Speak Spanish*](#).

After a fight at school leaves Marcus facing suspension, Marcus's mother takes him and his younger brother, who has Down syndrome, to Puerto Rico to visit relatives they do not remember or have never met, and while there Marcus starts searching for his father, who left their family ten years ago and is somewhere on the island.

Chokshi, Roshani. [*Aru Shah and the Song of Death*](#).

Accused of stealing the god of love's bow and arrow, Aru has ten days to find the real thief or risk being kicked out of the Otherworld.

Craft, Jerry. [*Class Act*](#).

Eighth grader Drew Ellis recognizes that he isn't afforded the same opportunities, no matter how hard he works, that his privileged classmates at the Riverdale Academy Day School take for granted. To make matters worse, Drew begins to feel as if his good friend Liam might be one of those privileged kids and is finding it hard not to withdraw, even as their mutual friend Jordan tries to keep their group of friends together. Presented in comic book format.

Creech, Sharon. [*Walk Two Moons*](#).

After her mother leaves home suddenly, thirteen-year-old Sal and her grandparents take a car trip retracing her mother's route. Along the way, Sal recounts the story of her friend Phoebe, whose mother also left.

Draper, Sharon. [*Blended*](#).

Piano-prodigy Isabella, eleven, whose black father and white mother struggle to share custody, never feels whole, especially as racial tensions affect her school, her parents both become engaged, and she and her stepbrother are stopped by police.



Flake, Sharon. [*Unstoppable Octobia May*](#).

In 1953 ten-year-old Octobia May lives in her Aunt's boarding house in the South, surrounded by an African American community which has its own secrets and internal racism, and spends her days wondering if Mr. Davenport in room 204 is really a vampire--or something else entirely.

Holm, Jennifer. L., [*The Lion of Mars*](#).

Bell has spent his whole life on Mars. When a virus breaks out and all of the adults get sick, Bell and the other kids are oddly immune, leaving it up to them to face the unknown to save their families.

Keller, Tae. [*When You Trap a Tiger*](#).

When Lily and her family move in with her sick grandmother, Lily traps a tiger and makes a deal with him to heal Halmoni. Newbery Medal, 2021.

Kelly, Erin Entrada. [*We Dream of Space*](#).

The story of three siblings who struggle with their own personal anxieties following the explosion of the Challenger in 1986.

Magoon, Kekla. [*The Season of Styx Malone*](#).

Caleb Franklin and his younger brother, Bobby Gene, spend an extraordinary summer with their new, older neighbor, Styx Malone, a foster boy from the city.

Medina, Meg. [*Merci Suarez Changes Gears*](#).

Thoughtful, strong-willed sixth-grader Merci Suarez navigates difficult changes with friends, family, and everyone in between.

O'Donnell, Tom. [*Homerrooms & Hall Passes*](#).

In the mystical realm of Bríandalör, every day the brave and the bold delve into hidden temples or forgotten dungeons, battling vile monsters and evil wizards to loot their treasure hoards. But in their free time, they meet up once a week to play Homerrooms & Hall Passes--a role-playing game where they assume the characters of average American eighth graders. But when the five young adventurers are magically transported into their H&H game by an ancient curse, they must band together to survive their toughest challenge yet: middle school.



Ryan, Pam Muñoz. [*Mañanaland*](#).

Twelve-year-old Max, who loves the legend Buelo tells him about a mythical gatekeeper who can guide brave travelers on a journey into tomorrow, sets out on a dangerous quest to discover if he is true of heart and what the future holds, armed with a treasured compass, a mysterious stone rubbing, and Buelo's legend as his only guides.

Sumner, Jamie. [*Roll With It*](#).

Twelve-year-old Ellie, who has cerebral palsy, finds her life transformed when she moves with her mother to small-town Oklahoma to help care for her grandfather, who has Alzheimer's disease.

Saeed, Aisha. [*Amal Unbound*](#).

In Pakistan, Amal holds onto her dream of being a teacher even after becoming an indentured servant to pay off her family's debt to the wealthy and corrupt Khan family.

Varnes, Allison. [*Property Of The Rebel Librarian*](#).

Twelve-year-old June Harper, shocked when her parents go on a campaign to clear the Dogwood Middle School library of objectionable books, starts a secret banned books library in an empty locker.

Yang, Kelly. [*Front Desk*](#) (and others from the series)

After emigrating from China, ten-year-old Mia Tang's parents take a job managing a rundown motel, despite the nasty owner, Mr. Yao, who exploits them, while she works the front desk and tries to cope with fitting in at her school.

Nonfiction:

Berman, Kathleen Cornell. [*Birth of the Cool : How Jazz Great Miles Davis Found His Sound*](#).

Explores the childhood and early career of the noted jazz trumpeter who gained fame performing at the first Newport Jazz Festival in 1955.

Browne, Mahogany L. [*Woke: A Young Poet's Call to Justice*](#).

A collection of poems by women that reflects the joy and passion in the fight for social justice, tackling topics from discrimination to empathy, and acceptance to speaking out.



Curtis, Andrea. [*Eat This! : How Fast-Food Marketing Gets You To Buy Junk \(and how to fight back\).*](#)

A comprehensive compilation of fast-food marketing practices aimed at youth and ways kids can recognize and combat them.

Dupuis, Jenny Kay and Kacer, Kathy. [*I Am Not A Number.*](#)

Based on the life of co-author Jenny Kay Dupuis' grandmother, *I Am Not a Number* is a hugely necessary book that brings a terrible part of Canada's history to light in a way that children can learn from and relate to.

Grandin, Temple. [*Calling All Minds.*](#)

Temple Grandin explores how to experiment and how to think about science for young readers.

Halligan, Katherine. [*HerStory: 50 Women And Girls Who Shook Up The World.*](#)

Celebrate fifty inspiring and powerful women who changed the world and left their mark in this lavishly illustrated biography compilation.

Hudson, Wade. [*We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices.*](#)

What do we tell our children when the world seems bleak, and prejudice and racism run rampant? With 96 lavishly designed pages of original art, poetry, and prose, fifty diverse creators lend voice and comfort to young activists.

Jarrow, Gail. [*Spooked!: How A Radio Broadcast and The War of the Worlds Sparked the 1938 Invasion of America.*](#)

Describes the panic induced when listeners believed Orson Welles' radio broadcast of "The War of the Worlds" to be news of an alien invasion, discussing the context in which the broadcast was aired and why it was so convincing.

Rappaport, Doreen. [*42 Is Not Just a Number.*](#)

An eye-opening look at the life and legacy of Jackie Robinson, the man who broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball and became an American hero.



Soontornvat, Christina. [*All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boy's Soccer Team.*](#)

Chronicles the 2018 seventeen-day rescue operation that saved twelve young players of the Wild Boars soccer team and their coach after they became trapped in a cave in northern Thailand.

Whitney, David. [*Get Coding! Learn HTML, CSS and JavaScript and Build a Website, App and Game.*](#)

All you need to get started is a computer and this programming guide, a book that's just right for beginners of any age to develop real coding skills. Follow the step-by-step instructions through six missions and you will learn HTML, CSS, and JavaScript.

Woollcott, Tory. [*The Brain: The Ultimate Thinking Machine.*](#)

Provides an inside look at the human brain, the most advanced operating system in the world, by exploring topics such as how our senses work in relation to the brain and how we remember things. Presented in comic book format.

