



# READING IN FRENCH THIS SUMMER

*A Parent's Guide — Kindergarten to Grade 5*

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## Why summer reading matters

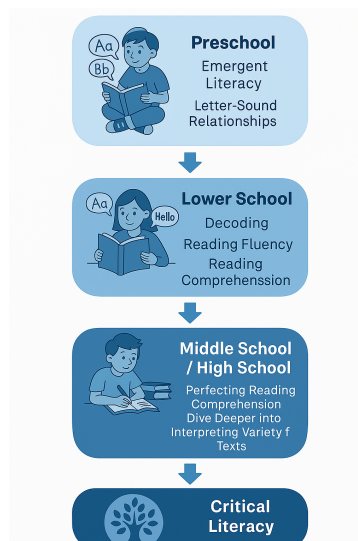
Reading is a skill that grows gradually, through repeated exposure, what we call spiral learning. A summer without practice lets some of that hard-won fluency and confidence slip. The encouraging news: just 10-20 minutes of reading a day keeps your child progressing, and the gains are double. The core reading skills your child builds in French : decoding, fluency, comprehension, transfer directly to English, so reading in French supports both languages at once. And vice versa.

This guide is for families of children from Kindergarten to Grade 5, whether your child speaks French at home or is still learning it. You don't need to do everything: pick a few ideas that fit your child's stage and make a small, enjoyable daily habit.

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## How reading develops

Reading unfolds in stages. Kindergarteners are emergent readers building letter–sound knowledge; by Lower School, children are decoding, growing fluency, and starting to comprehend; older students deepen comprehension and interpret a wider variety of texts. Knowing where your child sits helps you choose the right support, and keep expectations realistic.



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## Set realistic expectations: attention span

Reading is genuinely tiring for a developing reader: decoding new words takes real effort. A useful rule of thumb is the child's age  $\times$  2 to 5 minutes of focus. Keep sessions short and stop while it's still enjoyable; a little every day beats one long, overwhelming session.

| AVERAGE ATTENTION SPAN      |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| age $\times$ 2 to 5 minutes |                      |
| AGE                         | MINUTES OF ATTENTION |
| 2 years                     | 4 to 10 minutes      |
| 3 years                     | 6 to 15 minutes      |
| 4 years                     | 8 to 20 minutes      |
| 5 years                     | 10 to 25 minutes     |
| 6 years                     | 12 to 30 minutes     |
| 7 years                     | 14 to 35 minutes     |
| 8 years                     | 16 to 40 minutes     |

The average attention span increases with age. It represents the child's capacity to stay focused on a task at hand.

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## Choosing the right book (the “just-right” fit)

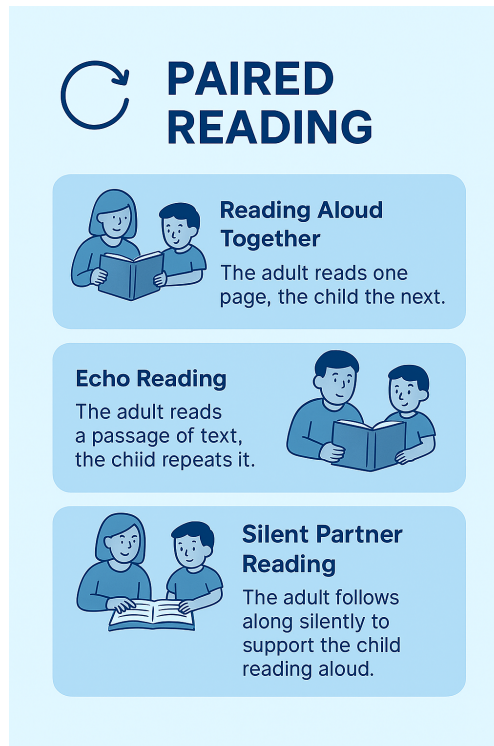
A book that's too hard kills motivation; one that's a little easy builds confidence and fluency. A simple test for early readers:

- **The five-finger rule.** Open to a page and have your child read it. Put up a finger for each word they can't read. 0–1 fingers = easy, 2–3 = just right, 4–5 = save it for reading together.
- **Follow their interests.** Dinosaurs, soccer, fairies, jokes — a motivated reader works harder. Let your child choose.
- **All formats count.** Comics, graphic novels, magazines, recipes and audiobooks are real reading. They're especially valuable for reluctant readers.

## Read together: paired & echo reading

Reading side by side is less intimidating than going it alone, and it lets your child enjoy finishing a real book with you. Three techniques work especially well:

- **Reading aloud together / paired reading.** Take turns: you read one page, your child the next.
- **Echo reading.** You read a passage with expression (tone, punctuation), then your child repeats it. This models fluent reading, which means reading smoothly and with meaning, not reading fast.
- **Silent partner reading.** Your child reads aloud while you follow along quietly, stepping in only when needed. This builds self-correction, a key skill for becoming an independent reader.



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## Read with audio support

Listening to a book while following the text helps your child connect how words sound to how they look on the page : an essential step toward accurate reading.

- **Audiobook read-along.** Your child follows the text with finger or eyes while the audio plays.
- **Delayed reading.** Listen to a passage in audio first, then have your child re-read the same passage alone.

## **READING WITH AUDIO SUPPORT**



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## **Make reading make sense: a simple before/during/after routine**

Fluency without understanding isn't reading. Wrap any book in three quick conversations, no worksheets needed:

- **Before: predict.** "Looking at the cover, what do you think happens?"
- **During: wonder & connect.** "Why did she do that? Has that ever happened to you?" Pause on a new word and talk about what it means.
- **After: retell.** "Tell me the story in your own words" or "What was your favourite part, and why?" Retelling is one of the strongest comprehension boosters.

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## **For the youngest (Kindergarten – Grade 1): play with sounds & letters**

Before fluent reading comes phonological awareness, hearing and playing with the sounds of language. For emergent readers, games matter more than drills:

- **Sound games.** "What starts like maman?", rhyming chains, clap the syllables in a word, "I spy something that starts with the sound /sssss/."
- **Letter-sound hunts.** Spot letters on signs and packaging; match the letter to its sound, not just its name.
- **Decodable books.** Series like Sami et Julie (Hachette) are built so beginners can sound words out and feel successful.
- **High-frequency words (mots outils).** Playful flashcards for little words that don't sound out (et, le, dans, est) build reading speed.

## Listen to grow as a reader: podcasts & story boxes

Audio stories build vocabulary, sentence structure, verbal comprehension and verbal memory: all foundations for reading. Perfect for the car, quiet time or bedtime.



### Podcasts — stories (Grades 1–2)

- **Les p'tites histoires:** Short, well-told stories. Ages 5–6 and up; themes vary (school, friendship, animals, emotions).
- **Une histoire et Oli:** Produced by France Inter. Tales written and read by well-known children's authors.
- **Encore une histoire:** Original stories, told clearly and simply. Well-suited to early readers (Grade 1). About 5–10 minutes.

### Interactive & educational podcasts

- **Curieux de sciences:** Curiosity-driven science for young children.
- **Les aventures de Rodolphe et Gala:** Playful educational adventures with built-in quizzes; varied vocabulary.
- **Les Odyssées:** Ages 6+. Engaging historical storytelling with rich, sophisticated language.
- **Bestioles:** Ages 7+. Detailed and fun — for insect lovers!
- **Nouvelles héroïnes:** Ages 9+. Inspiring true stories of contemporary women.
- **Autrement l'histoire:** Ages 10+. History moments explain differently.

### Audio story boxes (screen-free)

- **Lunii (“Ma Fabrique à Histoires”):** the child builds their own story by choosing characters and settings.
- **Tonies:** audio figurines for hands-free listening, great for the youngest.
- **Bookinou:** a storytelling box where family members record themselves reading your child's own books; lovely for staying connected to French-speaking relatives.

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## Apps for focused practice

Depending on your screen-time policy, these apps offer short, playful practice. Keep them as a supplement to real books, not a replacement.

- **Corneille:** for ages 3–8, endorsed by the French Ministry of Education. Phonics games plus 100+ interactive stories on an adaptive path; the “Je lis seul.e” module lets your child record and listen to their own reading. Ad-free.
- **Poppins:** for ages 5 and up. A thoughtful, research-based app designed to support key reading skills like accuracy and fluency, skills that transfer across both languages.
- **Bloups:** decoding and reading practice for beginners.
- **GraphoGame:** evidence-based letter–sound and decoding game; select your language (français vs. anglais).
- **Madame Mo:** French reading and language activities.

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## Where to find French books

- **Libraries.** Ask your local library about its French section and French e-book access; many offer free digital lending.
- **Digital French libraries.** Storyplay'r and Whisperies offer illustrated French e-books with read-aloud audio, handy for travel.
- **Comics & magazines.** BD such as Tom-Tom et Nana, Anatole Latuile, Astérix; magazines by age ; Popi and Les Belles Histoires (K–1), J'aime lire and Astrapi (Grades 2–5), Images Doc for the curious.

### A few ideas by grade

- **K–Grade 1:** albums from l'École des loisirs, Mes premières Belles Histoires, decodable Sami et Julie.
- **Grades 2–3:** first chapter books (premières lectures), J'aime lire stories, BD.
- **Grades 4–5:** Le Petit Nicolas, Le Petit Prince, longer novels and graphic novels in French.

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## Build the habit

- **Same time, every day.** Anchor reading to an existing routine: after lunch, before bed.
- **Make a cozy reading nook** and keep books visible and within reach.
- **Let them see you read.** Children copy what they observe: model reading for pleasure in French.
- **Read to a younger sibling:** a low-pressure, confidence-building audience.
- **Track it.** Use the reading log below: a sticker or check each day keeps motivation high.

### My summer reading log

*Colour a square each day you read (any format counts!).*

| M      | T | W | T | F | S | S |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Week 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Week 2 |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Week 3 |   |   |   |   |   |   |

# Tips before leaving: five things to remember

Keep these five principles in mind all summer: they matter more than any single resource.



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## Quick links

- Corneille reading app: [corneille.io](https://corneille.io)
- Lunii audio story box: [lunii.com](https://lunii.com)
- Tonies audio figurines: [tonies.com](https://tonies.com)
- Bookinou storytelling box: [mybookinou.com](https://mybookinou.com)
- Storyplay'r French e-books: [storyplayr.com](https://storyplayr.com)
- France Inter / Radio France kids podcasts: [radiofrance.fr](https://radiofrance.fr)
- *Most podcasts are free on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and major podcast apps (search by name).*

*I wish you all a very good summer. Warmly, Camille.*