

Lower School Summer Reading Resources for Families

Research shows that reading for pleasure leads to success in school, the workplace, and life. It helps kids empathize with their peers and reduces their stress levels. During the summer, kids have more time to read for enjoyment, which also offers a great opportunity to preserve and strengthen their reading skills. Set aside time for your child to read each day during the summer break--15 to 30 minutes per day is all it takes! Advance literacy and academic performance by engaging your child in reading and reading-related activities during the summer months.

- Frequent the library, start a summer book club with friends, or create a family challenge to read a certain number of books before school starts.
- Foster a love of reading through public library programs and services.
- Listen to audiobooks together.
- Increase successful reading experiences through self-selected books, librarian-supported selections, and recommendations from teachers, family members, and friends.

Below are some books that you and your child might enjoy together this summer. At the end of the list, you will find more information and resources: inspiration to look at the “windows and mirrors” of your child’s bookshelf; ideas to spark book-related conversations; and more places to look for awesome books! *Please don’t hesitate to email KateHewitt or Jenn McDonough this summer for personalized book recommendations based on the latest titles your child has enjoyed.*

Happy reading!

Picture Book Read-Aloud Recommendations For All Grade Levels:

- [Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant & Artist](#) (Julie Leung & Chris Sasaki)
- [Me & Mama](#) (Cozbi A. Cabrera)
- [Outside In](#) (Deborah Underwood & Cindy Derby)
- [Danbi Leads the School Parade](#) (Anna Kim)
- [Milo Imagines the World](#) (Matt de la Peña & Christian Robinson)
- [¡Vamos! Let’s Go Eat](#) (Raúl the Third)
- [Across the Bay](#) (Carlos Aponte)
- [I Talk Like a River](#) (Jordan Scott & Sydney Smith)
- [Magnificent Homespun Brown: A Celebration](#) (Samara Cole Doyon & Kaylani Juanita)
- [Salma and the Syrian Chef](#) (Danny Ramadan & Anna Bron)
- [Where’s Baby](#) (Anne Hunter)
- [Becoming Vanessa](#) (Vanessa Brantley-Newton)

Chapter Book Read-Aloud Recommendations For All Grade Levels:

We have tried to choose titles that will make great read-alouds across many different ages; however, as with any read-aloud, we recommend that you preview and pre-read the book before sharing it with your child. These are all available as audiobooks and we think they will make the miles pass quickly on any family road trips!

- [Ways to Make Sunshine](#) (Renée Watson)
- [The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street](#) (Karina Yan Glaser)
- [Where the Mountain Meets the Moon](#) (Grace Lin)
- [A Boy Called Bat](#) (Elana K. Arnold)
- [Dragons in a Bag](#) (Zetta Elliott)
- [Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet](#) (Zanib Mian)
- [Wishtree](#) (Katherine Applegate)
- [The Wild Robot](#) (Peter Brown)
- [Stella Díaz Has Something to Say](#) (Angela Dominguez)
- [Weekends with Max and His Dad](#) (Linda Urban)
- [Bob](#) (Wendy Mass & Rebecca Stead)
- [Song for a Whale](#) (Lynne Kelly)
- [Because of the Rabbit](#) (Cynthia Lord)

PreK-Grade 1 Book Recommendations

- Fiction: [The Paper Kingdom](#) (Helena Ku Rhee & Pasca Campion); [The Old Truck](#) (Jarrett & Jerome Pumphrey)
- Nonfiction: [Who Eats Orange?](#) (Dianne White & Robin Page); [What Do They Do with All That Poo?](#) (Jane Kurtz & Allison Black)
- Graphic novels: [Duck, Duck, Porcupine](#) (Salina Yoon); [The Shark King](#) (R. Kikuo Johnson)
- Poetry: [Firefly July: A Year of Very Short Poems](#) (Paul B. Janeczko & Melissa Sweet); [A Stick is An Excellent Thing: Poems Celebrating Outdoor Play](#) (Marilyn Singer & LeUyen Pham)
- Tales: [La Princesa and the Ped](#) (Susan Middleton Ely & Juana Martinez-Neal); [Rabbit's Snow Dance](#) (Joseph and James Bruchac & Jeff Newman)

Grades 2 and 3 Book Recommendations

- Fiction: [Amy Wu and the Perfect Bag](#) (Kat Zhang & Charlene Chua); [Skunk and Badger](#) (Amy Timberlake & Jon Klassen)
- Nonfiction: [Parrots Over Puerto Rico](#) (Susan L. Roth & Cindy Trumbore); [Machines That Think!](#) (Don Brown)
- Graphic novels: [Shirley and Jamila Save Their Summer](#) (Gillian Goerz); [Doodleville](#) (Chad Sell)
- Poetry: [My Chinatown](#) (Kam Mak); [When Green Becomes Tomatoes: Poems for All Seasons](#) (Julie Fogliano & Julie Morstad)
- Tales: [Leave Me Alone!](#) (Vera Brosgol); [After the Fall: How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again](#) (Dan Santat)

Grades 4 and 5

- Fiction: [Amina's Voice](#) by Hena Khan; [Sal and Gabi Break the Universe](#) (Carlos Hernandez)
- Nonfiction: [All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team](#) (Christina Soontornvat); [Bringing Back the Wolves: How A Predator Restored an Ecosystem](#) (Jude Isabella & Kim Smith)
- Graphic novels: [Twins](#) (Varian Johnson); [Class Act](#) (Jerry Craft); [Measuring Up](#) (Lily LaMotte & Ann Xu)
- Poetry: [Forget Me Not](#) (Ellie Terry); [The One Thing You'd Save](#) (Linda Sue Park)
- Tales: [The Jumbies](#) (Tracey Baptiste); [Baba Yaga's Assistant](#) (Marika McCoola & Emily Carroll)

THE WINDOWS AND MIRRORS OF YOUR CHILD'S BOOKSHELF

In her TED Talk [The Windows and Mirrors of Your Child's Bookshelf](#), Grace Lin tells a powerful story of her own childhood experience of literature. She encourages all of us to ensure that our children have the chance to read "mirror" books where they see their own identities and experiences reflected, as well as "window" books that immerse them in the lives of characters whose identities and experiences differ from their own. (Note that the "windows and mirrors" concept and phrase was initially coined by [Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop](#).)

Here are some criteria to consider when evaluating whether a book is a worthwhile addition to your child's bookshelf:

- Is it **engaging** - relevant, interesting, and attuned to a child's experience and point of view?
- Is it **culturally authentic** - an accurate reflection of lived experience in terms of setting, characters, speakers, events, language and illustrations? (Often the most culturally authentic texts are written/illustrated by artists who share the protagonist's identity and culture).
- Is it **joyful** - does it promote a healthy self-concept and exploration of identity?
- Is it **culturally competent** - does it resist stereotypes, generalizations or misrepresentations and foster intergroup understanding and empathy?

IDEAS TO SPARK BOOK-RELATED CONVERSATIONS

Talk to your child about the books they are reading, read the same title as your child, and model what reading looks like by reading a good book yourself. Consider these suggestions when discussing books with your child.

- **Make connections:** Make connections between your child and characters in the book. Make connections between what happens in the book and what has happened in their life. Make connections between what happens in the book and what happens in the world around them.
- **Make predictions:** Get your child thinking about what might happen next in the book at the end of different sections or chapters.
- **Activate schema:** Use what your child already knows to talk about topics in the book. Get their brains moving before the reading begins.
- **Ask questions:** Model strong questioning by thinking aloud as you read. Talk about your own questions and show your child how asking good questions helps them to better understand what they read.
- **Go on a book walk:** Sometimes, reading doesn't have to be reading every word on every page. Book walks are a great way to talk about the book—without reading it.
- **Make inferences:** Bring together big concepts by synthesizing what your child already knows with the information they have gathered from reading, and make informed guesses about how characters are feeling or about what messages the author might intend us to take away from the book.
- **Think deeply:** Kids can really surprise you if you aim high. Show them how to think deeply about what they read by asking critical thinking questions and modeling critical thinking.
- **Look at the book's print:** Talk about the print in the book, the layout, the words on the page.
- **Talk about the pictures:** Use the illustrations to pull together ideas, discuss the illustrator's craft, and to strengthen comprehension.
- **Visualize:** Make mind movies. Visualizing is one of the key components of comprehension; if your child can visualize, they're most likely understanding what they read!

FANTASTIC WEBSITES TO CONSULT FOR MORE RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- [Colours of Us](#)
- [Classroom Book a Day](#)
- [Reading Middle Grade](#)
- [Recommended books from ALSC \(Association for Library Service to Children\)](#)
- [Best Books for Young Readers](#) (Penn Graduate School of Education)
- [Best Children's Books of the Year](#) (Bank Street College of Education archive of lists)
- [Cybils Awards Books](#) (Children's and Young Adult Bloggers Literary Awards)
- [Best Books of the Year](#) (Kirkus Reviews searchable list includes Middle Grade & Picture Books)
- [Awards and Best-of-the-Year Lists](#) (Cooperative Children's Book Center)