

Recommended Reading 2025

PRE-K ENTERING KINDERGARTEN

***Everywhere Wonder* by Matthew Swanson** The imagination of a young boy—who explores everything from the pyramids of Egypt to a dusty footprint on the moon—and then back out again to the wonderful world right in front of him. ©2017 **Grade Level K-1**

***If You Ever Want to Bring a Circus to the Library, Don't* by Elise Parsley** If you see a poster that says "You Can Do Anything at the Library!", it is NOT giving you permission to put on a circus! But Magnolia doesn't see any problem with setting up her own big top. She's got a lot of gusto and one mean human cannonball routine. ©2017 **Grade Level K-1**

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***Good Day, Good Night* by Margaret Wise Brown** Reminiscent of the author's beloved Goodnight Moon, this shares a day—and night—in the life of a busy little bunny. ©2017 **Grade Level K-1**

***Green* by Laura Vaccaro Seeger** How many kinds of green are there? There's the lush green of a forest on a late spring day, the fresh, juicy green of a just-cut lime, the incandescent green of a firefly, and the vivid aquamarine of a tropical sea. **2013 Caldecott Honor Book, Geisel Honor Book, Kirkus Reviews Best Children's Book of ©2012 Grade Level Preschool-1**

***Hello Lighthouse* by Sophie Blackall** Tells the story of life in a lighthouse. Told through full page illustrations, this fascinating picture book tells the story of a dedicated lighthouse keeper and his growing family. ©2018 **Grade Level Preschool-3, 2019 Caldecott Medal**

***Mae Jamison: A Kid's Book About Reaching Your Dreams* by Mary Nhin** Mini Movers and Shakers children's book series comes with a cast of characters who have failed, yet succeeded despite overwhelming obstacles. In the fourth volume, we meet Mae Jamison. Find out what happens in this kids book about reaching your dreams. ©2020 **Grade Level K-1**

***Nerdy Birdy* by Aaron Reynolds and Matt Davies** Nerdy Birdy likes reading, video games, and reading about video games, which immediately disqualifies him for membership in the cool crowd. One thing is clear: being a nerdy birdy is a lonely lifestyle. When he's at his lowest point, Nerdy Birdy meets a flock just like him. He has friends and discovers that there are far more nerdy birdies than cool birdies in the sky. @2015 **Grade Level Preschool-2**

***Not Friends* by Rebecca Bender** Giraffe and Bird are not friends. After all, they fight all the time. But when they go their separate ways and a scary storm strikes, they both realize they might be better off together—even if they are still not friends. ©2017 **Grade Level K-1**

***One-osaurus, Two-osaurus* by Kim Norman** A counting book and dinosaurs celebrating make an entertaining book about numbers and counting. Ending has a Funny twist and shows how a child uses their imagination. ©2021 **Grade Level Preschool-2**

***The Panda Problem* by Deborah Underwood** Every story needs a problem. But Panda doesn't have a problem. Unless . . . Panda is the problem. Just who is the main character of this story? A funny book about how books work. ©2019 **Grade Level Preschool-2**

***Robinson* by Peter Sís** Illustrated by the author Exquisite art and a heartfelt story of adventure and friendship come together in this imaginative, magical book. ©2017 **Grade Level K-2**

***They All Saw a Cat* by Brendan Wenzel** The cat walked through the world, with its whiskers, ears, and paws . . . In this glorious celebration of observation, curiosity, and imagination, Brendan Wenzel shows us the many lives of one cat, and how perspective shapes what we see. When you see a cat, what do you see? **2017 Caldecott Honor Book ©2016 Grade Level Preschool-K**

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***Time for Kenny* by Brian Pinkey** First, Kenny must get dressed. Maybe he can wear his mom's shoes? And his grandpa's hat seems to fit perfectly on his head. Luckily, with the help of his family, Kenny is finally set to go. Then he must overcome his fear of the monstrous vacuum cleaner, learn to play soccer with his big sister, and—after all that fun—get ready for bedtime. ©2021 **Grade Level K-1**

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KINDERGARTEN ENTERING FIRST GRADE

***Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal** When Alma's father shares family stories about the origins of her long beautiful name, she gains an appreciation for its uniqueness and connection to her history. Martinez-Neal uses smudgy graphite and colored pencil to convey a soft palette that gently transports readers into Alma's rich ancestral past. ©2018 Grade Level K-3. 2019 Caldecott Honor Book

***Blue Sky White Stars* by Sarvinder Naberhaus** In this text, the same words describe both the fabric of America and the Star-Spangled Banner. Beautiful illustrations coupled with sparse text make this seemingly simple book meaningful and thought-provoking as readers weave their way through the history of the nation and its flag. ©2017 Grade Level K-2

***Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willems** - a hilarious book that kids will love. ©2003 Grade Level K-1 Caldecott Honor, 2004

***Eyes That Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho** A young Asian girl notices that her eyes look different from her peers'. They have big, round eyes and long lashes. She realizes that her eyes are like her mother's, her grandmother's, and her little sister's. They have eyes that kiss in the corners and glow like warm tea, crinkle into crescent moons, and are filled with stories of the past and hope for the future. ©2019 Grade Level K-2

***Francis: The Poor Man of Assisi* by Tomie dePaola** - a simple introduction to St. Francis of Assisi ©2011 Grade Level K-5

***Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney** - a beautiful book about love and family ©2019

***God Gave Us You* by Lisa Tawn Bergren** - a heartwarming story about God's love for children ©2011

***Hello Ruby, Adventures in Coding* by Linda Kiukas** Without requiring a computer, Hello Ruby introduces kids to a girl, Ruby, who is determined to solve any puzzle. Ruby makes friends with foxes, robots, and leopards as she strives to break down big problems into small ones. ©2015 Grade Level 1-3

***If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff** - a fun cause-and-effect story. ©1985 Grade Level K-2. Parents' Choice Award

***If You Were the Moon* by Laura Purdie Salas** If you were the moon, what would you do? You'd spin like a twilight ballerina and play dodgeball with space rocks! And more. ©2017 Grade Level 1-3

***Katherine Johnson (You Should Meet)* by Thea Feldman** About a brilliant mathematician who worked at NASA in the early 1950s until retiring in 1986. Katherine's unparalleled calculations (done by hand) helped plan the trajectories for NASA's Mercury and Apollo missions (including the Apollo 11 moon landing). ©2017 Grade Level 1-3

***Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey** - a charming story about ducklings in the city ©1941 Grade Level K-1. 1942 Caldecott Medal

***Nana in the City* by Lauren Castillo** A young boy spends an overnight visit with his nana and is frightened to find that the city where she lives is filled with noise and crowds and scary things. But then Nana makes him a special cape to help him be brave, and soon the everyday sights, sounds, and smells of the city are not scary—but wonderful. ©2014 Grade Level 1-3. 2015 Caldecott Honor Book

***Nerdy Birdy* by Aaron Reynolds and Matt Davies** Nerdy Birdy likes reading, video games, and reading about video games, which immediately disqualifies him for membership in the cool crowd. One thing is clear: being a nerdy birdy is a lonely lifestyle. When he's at his lowest point, Nerdy Birdy meets a flock just like him. He has friends and discovers that there are far more nerdy birdies than cool birdies in the sky. ©2015 Grade Level 1-2

***Outside Inside* by LeUyen Pham** - a moving picture book that captures the unforgettable moment during the pandemic when people all over the world came together. It celebrates the essential workers, frontline workers, and communities that worked with each other to protect our loved ones. ©2021 Grade Level K-2

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Panda-monium at Peek Zoo by Kevin Waldron Peek Zoo is holding an animal parade to celebrate the birth of their baby panda. But when the day arrives, nothing is ready. As Mr. Peek races around preparing, he leaves a trail of chaos — including an escaped baby panda heading for the lion's den! Thank goodness Mr. Peek's son, Jimmy, is there to save the day and ensure the crowd gets the best animal parade ever — marching proudly across a huge gatefold! ©2014 Grade Level K-1

Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant and Artist by Julie Leung Once in America, Tyrus seized every opportunity to make art, eventually enrolling at an art institute in Los Angeles. Working as a janitor at night, his mop twirled like a paintbrush in his hands. Eventually, he was given the opportunity of a lifetime--and using sparse brushstrokes and soft watercolors, Tyrus created the iconic backgrounds of Bambi. ©2019 Grade Level 1-2. American Library Association's 2021, Asian/Pacific American Award

The Little Engine That Could by Watty Piper - a lesson on perseverance and faith. ©2001 Grade Level K-2

The Proudest Blue by Ibtihaj Muhammad With her new backpack and light-up shoes, Faizah knows the first day of school is going to be special. It's the start of a brand new year and, best of all, it's her older sister Asiya's first day of hijab—a hijab of beautiful blue fabric, like the ocean waving to the sky. But not everyone sees hijab as beautiful, and in the face of hurtful, confusing words, Faizah will find new ways to be strong. ©2019 Grade Level 1-3

School's First Day of School by Adam Rex It's the first day of school at Frederick Douglass Elementary and everyone's just a little bit nervous, especially the school itself. What will the children do once they come? Will they like the school? Will they be nice to him? The school has a rough start, but as the day goes on, he soon recovers when he sees that he's not the only one going through first-day jitters. ©2016 Grade Level 1-2

Thank You, Omu! by Oge Mora Everyone in the neighborhood dreams of a taste of Omu's delicious stew! One by one, they follow their noses toward the scrumptious scent. And one by one, Omu offers a portion of her meal. Soon the pot is empty. ©2018 Grade Level K-3. 2019 Caldecott Honor Book

The Little Red Fort (Little Ruby's Big Ideas) by Brenda Maier Ruby's mind is always full of ideas. One day, she finds some old boards and decides to build something. She invites her brothers to help, but they just laugh and tell her she doesn't know how to build. When she creates a dazzling fort that they all want to play in; it is Ruby who has the last laugh. ©2018 Grade Level K-3

Thunder Boy Jr. by Sherman Alexie Thunder Boy Jr. is named after his dad, but he wants a name that's all his own. Just because people call his dad Big Thunder doesn't mean he wants to be Little Thunder. He wants a name that celebrates something cool he's done, like Touch the Clouds, Not Afraid of Ten Thousand Teeth, or Full of Wonder. *New York Times* Notable Children's Book of the Year ©2016 Grade Level 1-3

Truman by Jean Reidy Truman the tortoise lives with his Sarah, high above the taxis and the trash trucks and the number eleven bus, which travels south. He never worries about the world below...until one day, when Sarah straps on a big backpack and does something Truman has never seen before. ©2019 Grade Level 1-2

Water is Water by Miranda Paul Drip. Sip. Pour me a cup. Water is water unless it heats up. Whirl. Swirl. Watch it curl by. Steam is steam unless it cools high. ©2015 Grade Level 1-2

When Green Becomes Tomatoes by Julie Fogiano Flowers blooming in sheets of snow make way for happy frogs dancing in the rain. Summer swims move over for autumn sweaters until the snow comes back again. Starting and ending with March 20, the vernal equinox, the author marks randomly chosen days with short, free verse observations. ©2016 Grade Level 1-3

When Grandma Gives You a Lemon Tree by Jamie L. B. Deenihan When Grandma gives you a lemon tree, definitely *don't* make a face! Care for the tree, and you might be surprised at how new things, and new ideas, bloom. ©2019 Grade Level 1-2

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak ©1963 Grade Level K-3. 1964 Caldecott Medal

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FIRST GRADE ENTERING SECOND GRADE

***Alex and the Cherry Tree* by Barbara Felsoci-Miller** a heartfelt and charming story about a young girl named Alex who, on a sunny summer afternoon, decides to pick cherries from a tree to help her mother bake pies. However, after picking the cherries, Alex ends up eating them all. The story follows her journey as she learns to take responsibility for her actions and seeks a way to make amends. ©2025 Grade level 1-3

***Billy Miller Makes a Wish* by Kevin Henkes** As Billy blows out the candles on his birthday cake, an ambulance rushes down the street. Could his wish for some excitement have caused a dear neighbor friend to become ill ©2021 Grade Level 2-3

***A Bike Like Sergio's* by Maribeth Boelts** Ruben feels like he is the only kid without a bike. His friend Sergio reminds him that his birthday is coming, but Ruben knows that the kinds of birthday gifts he and Sergio receive are not the same. After all, when Ruben's mom sends him to Sonny's corner store for groceries, sometimes she doesn't have enough money for everything on the list. ©2016 Grade Level 2-3

***Blue Sky White Stars* by Sarvinder Naberhaus** An inspiring and patriotic tribute to the beauty of the American flag, a symbol of America's history, landscape, and people. ©2017 Grade Level 2-3

***Caroline's Comets: A True Story* by Emily Arnold McCully** Caroline Herschel (1750–1848) was not only one of the greatest astronomers who ever lived but also the first woman to be paid for her scientific work. ©2017 Grade Level 1-3

***Dory Fantasmagory* by Abby Hanlon** Dory has her first loose tooth, and, with her usual over-the-top excitement, she cannot stop talking about the tooth fairy. Naturally, this drives her brother and sister crazy. ©2018 Grade Level 1-3

***A Flicker of Hope* by Julian Cook** Sometimes the dark clouds overhead seem too heavy and you feel like giving up. Little candle knows all about this. Bad grades, blasted on social media, worried about making the team, and wondering who her real friends are so many hard things to deal with! All she can see is darkness. ©2018 Grade Level 2-3

***The Gravity Tree: The True Story of a Tree That Inspired the World* by Anna Crowley Redding** “A tree may seem like an *ordinary* thing. But hundreds of years ago, a tree was about to embark on an *extraordinary* journey.” Sir Isaac Newton sat under that tree and came up with the theory of gravity, a tree and an idea that has continued to inspire other scientists and people all over the world. ©2021 Grade Level 2-3

***The Kid from Diamond Street* by Audrey Vernick** Beginning in 1922, when Edith Houghton was only ten years old, she tried out for a women's professional baseball team, the Philadelphia Bobbies. ©2016 Grade Level K-3

***Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Pena** Every Sunday after church, CJ and his grandma ride the bus across town. But today, CJ wonders why they don't own a car like his friend Colby. Why doesn't he have an iPod like the boys on the bus? How come they always have to get off in the dirty part of town? ©2015 Grade Level K-2. Newbery Medal 2016, Caldecott Honor Book 2016, Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book

***Magic Treehouse Dinosaurs Before Dark* by Mary Pope Osborne** - Before Jack and Annie can find out, the mysterious tree house whisks them to the prehistoric past. Now they have to figure out how to get home. Can they do it before dark...or will they become a dinosaur's dinner? ©1992 Grade Level 2-4

***Margaret and the Moon* by Dean Robbins** A true story from one of the Women of NASA! Margaret Hamilton loved numbers as a young girl. She knew how many miles it was to the moon (and how many back). She loved studying algebra and geometry and calculus and using math to solve problems in the outside world. ©2017 Grade Level 2-3

***Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* by Carole Boston Weatherford** - a poetic look at Harriet Tubman's bravery with the Underground Railroad. ©2006 Grade Level K-3. Caldecott Honor 2007

***Patrick: Patron Saint of Ireland* by Tomie dePaola** - a vibrant story about St. Patrick's life. ©1992 Grade Level K-2

***Play It Again, Grandpa* by Jennifer Hunsicker** A young boy and his grandfather spend front-porch time playing music and learning from each other. Their music draws in family, friends, and neighbors for enjoyment, dancing, singing, and playing a variety of bluegrass instruments. A picture glossary of the instruments is included in the back as well as a brief history and explanation of bluegrass music. ©2021 Grade Level 1-3

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***The Rough Patch* by Brian Lies** Evan, a fox, and his dog are best friends and in a series of acrylic, oil, and colored pencil vignettes, they are shown attending a fair, playing games, and, most important, working in Evan's meticulously groomed garden. These loving scenes are abruptly cut short by a large spread of white space with spare text stating: "But one day, the unthinkable happened." On the opposing page, white space surrounds a grieving Evan as he mourns the loss of his dog. ©2019 **Grade Level 1-3. Caldecott Honor Book 2018**

***Spoon* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal** He's always been a happy little utensil. But lately, he feels like life as a spoon just isn't cutting it. He thinks Fork, Knife, and The Chopsticks all have it so much better than him. But do they? ©2009 **Grade Level 1-2**

***Spring According to Humphrey* by Betty G. Birney** Spring has sprung and everyone at Longfellow School, including Ms. Brisbane's class, are HAPPY-HAPPY-HAPPY! It also means Family Fun Night is coming up and all the students' families are involved in making amazing circus activities. ©2017 **Grade Level 2-4**

***Trombone Shorty* by Troy Andrews** - a true story about perseverance in music. ©2015 **Grade Level K-5. Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award 2016**

***The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams** - a touching story about love and kindness. ©1922 **Grade Level K-3**

***We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom** - a powerful story about environmental stewardship. ©20120 **Grade Level K-2. Caldecott Medal 2021**

***What's Your Favorite Color?* by Eric Carle** Fifteen beloved children's book artists draw their favorite colors and explain why they love them. This personal collection will undoubtedly inspire readers to create favorite color drawings and stories of their own! ©2017 **Grade Level 2-3**

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SECOND GRADE ENTERING THIRD GRADE

***Bad Bella* by Ali Standish** All Bella wants is a family who loves her for the dog she is. And perhaps some popcorn now and then (with extra butter). But with Christmas growing nearer and a new baby on the way, her adopted family finds that they have little patience and even less time for a dog. ©2019 Grade Level 3-4

***A Boy Called Bat* by Elana K. Arnold** Bixby Alexander Tam (nicknamed Bat), life tends to be full of surprises—some of them good, some not so good. Today, though, is a good-surprise day. Bat's mom, a veterinarian, has brought home a baby skunk, which she needs to take care of until she can hand him over to a wild-animal shelter. ©2018 Grade Level: 3-5

***Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White** - a touching story about friendship and self-sacrifice. ©1952 Grade Level 3-7. Newberry Honor 1953, Horn Book Fanfare 1952

***Dragons in a Bag* by Zetta Elliot** When Jaxon is sent to spend the day with a mean old lady his mother calls Ma, he finds out she's not his grandmother--but she is a witch! She needs his help delivering baby dragons to a magical world where they'll be safe. There are two rules when it comes to the dragons: don't let them out of the bag, and don't feed them anything sweet. ©2018 Grade Level 3-4

***Grand Canyon* by Jason Chin** Rivers wind through earth, cutting down and eroding the soil for millions of years, creating a cavity in the ground 277 miles long, 18 miles wide, and more than a mile deep known as the Grand Canyon. 2018 Caldecott Honor Book, Sibert Honor Book ©2017 Grade Level 3-5

***Henry's Freedom Box* by Ellen Levin** - a true story of a boy escaping slavery. ©2007 Grade Level K-3. Caldecott Honor 2008

***The Hero Two Doors Down* by Sharon Robinson** Based on the true story of a boy in Brooklyn who became neighbors and friends with his hero, Jackie Robinson. ©2017 Grade Level 4-5

***John Lincoln Clem: a Civil War Drummer Boy* by E. F. Abbott** Do you have what it takes to run off and join the army, leaving your family behind? That's what John Lincoln Clem, a nine-year-old boy living in Ohio, does as the American Civil War rages on. ©2017 Grade Level 3-4

***Max and Benedict: A Bird's Eye View of the Pope's Daily Life* by Jeanne Perego** - a fun introduction to the Pope's Life. ©2009 Grade Level 3-4

***The Miracles of Jesus* by Tomie dePaola** - a beautifully illustrated retelling of Jesus's miracles ©1987 Grade Level K-3

***Rocket to the Moon* by Don Brown** On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong took "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" when Apollo 11 landed on the moon. But it wasn't just one man who got us to the moon. ©2019 Grade Level 3-4

***St. John Bosco and His Big Gray Dog* by Hayley Medeiros** It is hard to believe that anyone would have ever wanted to hurt good Father John Bosco. He helped so many people. But there were times when his life was in danger. During those times, a very special guardian would appear to protect him. ©2015 Grade Level 2-4

***Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan** - a heartwarming story about family and new beginnings. ©1985 Grade Level 3-4. Newbery Medal 1986

***The Seashore Book* by Charlotte Zolotow** Hunting for seashells and building sandcastles, this tribute to the power of imagination and the tenderness of a mother-child connection is also a sweet ode to summer's greatest pastimes. ©2015 Grade Level 2-3

***Separate is Never Equal* by Duncan Tonatiuh** Seven years before Brown v. Board of Education, the Mendez family fought to end segregation in California schools. ©2014 Grade Level 3-4. Jane Addams Award

***Sergeant Reckless: The True Story of the Little Horse Who Became a Hero* by Patricia McCormick** When a group of US Marines fighting in the Korean War found a bedraggled mare, they wondered if she could be trained to a packhorse. ©2017 Grade Level 1-5

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***Sideway Stories from Wayside School* by Louis Sachar** - a funny and quirky book that kids love. ©1978 **Grade Level 3-7**

***The Sign of the Carved Cross* by Lisa M. Hendey** Katie joins her friends in being mean to the new girl, Lily. But suddenly, Katie becomes the new girl—in 1675! She has no idea how she traveled in time to a Native American village, but she's hoping the young woman she meets will be nicer to her than Katie was to Lily. ©2015 **Grade Level 3-5**

***Six Dots: A Story of Young Louis Braille* by Jen Bryant** Louis Braille was just five years old when he lost his sight. He was a clever boy, determined to live like everyone else, and what he wanted more than anything was to be able to read. ©2016 **Grade Level 2-4**

***The Undefeated* by Kwame Alexander** This poem is a love letter to black life in the United States. It highlights the unspeakable trauma of slavery, the faith and fire of the civil rights movement, and the grit, passion, and perseverance of some of the world's greatest heroes. ©2019 **Grade Level 3-4. Caldecott Medal, Newbery Honor Book, and Coretta Scott King**

***The Whisper in the Ruins (Chime Travelers)* by Lisa M. Hendey** Somebody is angry, and they're taking it out on St. Anne's. Patrick and his twin sister Katie are shocked when they learn that someone threw a brick through the St. Francis of Assisi stained glass window at St. Anne's. What would make someone angry enough to damage the beautiful old window? ©2016 **Grade Level 2-5**

***Wish* by Barbara O'Connor** "A story about a girl who, with the help of the dog of her dreams, discovers that family doesn't always have to be related--they are simply people who love you for who you are." ©2016 **Grade Level 3-5**

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THIRD GRADE ENTERING FOURTH GRADE

***Best Year Ever* by Barbara Robinson** One day the teachers ask all the students to think of compliments for their classmates, and Beth Bradley picks Imogene Herdman's name. At first, Beth can't think of anything good, but soon she begins to see Imogene in a new light. ©2011 Grade Level 4-6

***The Boy in the Back of the Class* by Onjali Q. Rauf** There used to be an empty chair at the back of Mrs. Khan's classroom, but on the third Tuesday of the school year a new kid fills it: nine-year-old Ahmet, a Syrian refugee. ©2019 Grade Level 4-5 CLIP Carnegie Medal Children's Book Award Nominee

***Brave Like My Brother* by Marc Tyler Nobleman** When Charlie's brother, Joe, is called up to fight in World War II, he promises to write letters to ten-year-old Charlie as often as he can. It won't make up for not being there to help Charlie out with the neighborhood bullies, but it's all Joe can do. ©2016 Grade Level 4-5

***The Chestertons and the Golden Key* by Nancy Carpentier Brown** Summer vacation turns into an adventure for the three Nicholl sisters when Mr. Gilbert Chesterton and his wife come to town. Eleven-year-old Clare hopes to write a detective story. Eight-year-old Cece wants to be a champion roller-skater. And ten-year-old Joan just wants to learn how to play the locked piano in the family living room. But as they befriend the Chestertons, skating accidents, surprising friendships, puppet shows, and mystery solving ensue! ©2016 Grade Level 4-5

***The Boxcar Children* by Gertrude Chandler Warner** - tells the story of four orphaned siblings, Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny, who find an abandoned boxcar and make it their home while trying to avoid a grandfather they fear. Through hard work and ingenuity, they establish a life together, solving mysteries and making friends on their adventures. ©1924 Grade Level 2-6

***The First Rule of Punk* by Celia C. Perez** There are no shortcuts to surviving your first day at a new school—you can't fix it with duct tape like you would your Chuck Taylors. On Day One, twelve-year-old Malú (María Luisa, if you want to annoy her) inadvertently upsets Posada Middle School's queen bee, violates the school's dress code with her punk rock look, and disappoints her college-professor mom in the process. ©2017 Grade Level 4-6. 2018 Pura Belpré Author Honor Book

***Flashback Four #1: The Lincoln Project* by Dan Gutman** Four very different kids are picked by a mysterious billionaire to travel through time and photograph some of history's most important events. This time, the four friends are headed to 1863 to catch Abraham Lincoln delivering his famous Gettysburg Address. ©2017 Grade Level 4-7

***Frindle* by Andrew Clements** - a mischievous fifth grader, Nick Allen, who invents a new word, "frindle," to replace "pen" as a prank against his strict language arts teacher, Mrs. Granger. The word catches on, spreading throughout the school and town, and even making it into the dictionary. ©1996 Grade Level 4-6. 1997 Christopher Award for Books for Young People, 2016 Phoenix Award

***George Washington's Spy* by Elvira Woodruff** Ten-year-old Matt Carlton and six friends are accidentally swept back in time--to Boston in 1776! The British now occupy the city, and redcoat guards are everywhere! While the boys are being held captive by a den of Patriot spies, the girls have been taken in by a wealthy Tory family. ©2012 Grade Level 4-5

***Katerina's Wish* by Jeannie Mobley** Thirteen-year-old Trina's family left Bohemia for a Colorado coal town to earn money to buy a farm, but by 1901 she doubts that either hard work or hoping will be enough, even after a strange fish seems to grant her sisters' wishes. ©2012 Grade Level 4-7

***Lifeboat 12* by Susan Hood** With Nazis bombing London every night, it's time for thirteen-year-old Ken to escape. He suspects his stepmother is glad to see him go, but his dad says he's one of the lucky ones—one of ninety boys and girls to ship out aboard the SS City of Benares to safety in Canada. ©2019 Grade Level 4-6, 2019 Golden Kite Middle Grade Fiction Award Winner, 2019 ALSC Notable Children's Book

***Lincoln and Kennedy: A Pair to Compare* by Gene Barretta** President Abraham Lincoln grew up in a one-room log cabin. President John F. Kennedy was raised in the lap of luxury. One was a Republican and one a Democrat. They lived and served a hundred years apart. ©2016 Grade Level 2-5

***Martin de Porres: The Rose in the Desert* by Gary D. Schmidt** As the illegitimate son of a Spanish nobleman and a former slave, Martin de Porres was born into extreme poverty. Even so, his mother begged the church fathers to allow him into the priesthood. Instead, Martin was accepted as a servant boy. But soon, the young man was performing miracles. 2013 Pura Belpré Award for Illustration ©2012 Grade Level 3-5

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***The Mouse with the Question Mark Tail* by Richard Peck** The tiniest mouse in the Royal Mews is such a mystery he doesn't even know his own name! He scampers off on an epic adventure in and around Buckingham Palace with a plan to seek the advice of Queen Victoria. The exhilarating journey takes him to strange and wonderful places, but will it help him discover who he is and where he came from? ©2014 **Grade Level 4-5**

***Raffie on the Run* by Jacqueline Resnick** Raffie Lipton lives a rat's dream life. In his family's subway station home, he has all the food he can forage from the treasure chests humans call trash cans, and the perfect shoebox bed for telling his brother his famous adventure stories. ©2018 **Grade Level 3–6**

***Saint Bernadette Soubirous: The Little Shepherd Girl* by Mary Fabyan Windeatt** - a hundred and fifty years ago, Lourdes was a very little village, and Bernadette, the one who started it all, was just a very simple girl of fourteen." So begins the story of Bernadette and her amazing encounters with the Blessed Virgin Mary. ©2010 **Grade Level 1-5**

***Trapped in a Video Game* by Dustin Brady** Jesse hates video games - and for good reason. You see, a video game character is trying to kill him. After getting sucked into the new game *Full Blast* with his best friend, Eric, Jesse quickly discovers that he's being followed by a mysterious figure. If he doesn't figure out what's going on fast, he'll be trapped for good! ©2018 **Grade Level 4-5**

***Wish Girl* by Nikki Loftin** Peter Stone's parents and siblings are extroverts, musicians, and yellers—and the louder they get, the less Peter talks, or even moves, until he practically fits his last name. When his family moves to the Texas Hill Country, though, Peter finds a tranquil, natural valley where he can, at last, hear himself think. ©2016 **Grade Level 4-6**

Recommended Reading 2025

FOURTH GRADE ENTERING FIFTH GRADE

Aim by Joyce Moyer Hostetter As World War II threatens the United States in 1941, fourteen-year-old Junior Bledsoe fights his own battles at home. Junior struggles with school and with anger—at his father, his insufferable granddaddy, his neighbors, and himself—as he desperately tries to understand himself and find his own aim in life. ©2016 Grade Level 5–7

Because of Mr. Terupt by Rob Buyea It's the start of fifth grade for seven kids at Snow Hill School. There's Jessica, the new girl, smart and perceptive, who's having a hard time fitting in; Alexia, a bully, your friend one second, your enemy the next; Peter, class prankster and troublemaker; Luke, the brain; Danielle, who never stands up for herself; shy Anna, whose home situation makes her an outcast; and Jeffrey, who hates school. ©2011 Grade Level 4-6

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson - a coming-of-age story about Jesse Aarons, who befriends Leslie Burke after she beats him in a footrace. Together, they create an imaginary world called Terabithia, where they escape their problems and find joy in their friendship. ©1977 Grade Level 4-7. Newbery Medal 1978

Bob by Wendy Mass It's been five years since Livy and her family have visited Livy's grandmother in Australia. Now that she's back, Livy has the feeling she's forgotten something really, really important about Gran's house. ©2019 Grade Level 5-6

Eggs by Jerry Spinelli - about two children, David and Primrose, who forge a unique friendship while grappling with loss, family dynamics, and finding their place in the world. Their contrasting backgrounds and personalities lead them on an unlikely adventure, helping each other navigate their individual struggles. ©2008 Grade Level 3-7

From the Mixed-Up Files of Basil E. Frankweiler by E.L. Konigsburg - Claudia Kincaid, a clever 12-year-old who runs away from home to the Metropolitan Museum of Art with her younger brother Jamie. While hiding in the museum, they discover a mysterious statue, a potential lost work by Michelangelo, and become entangled in the secrets of the statue's former owner, Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. ©1967 Grade Level 3-8. 1968 Newbery Medal

Girls Who Code: Learn to Code and Change the World by Reshma Saujani The world's first coders were women. Pioneers such as Grace Hopper and Ada Lovelace helped shape the programming landscape as we know it today — and yet, according to recent research from Stack Overflow, only 7.7 percent of developers in the United States are women. ©2017 Grade Level 5-6

Gone Crazy in Alabama by Rita Williams-Garcia Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern are off to Alabama to visit their grandmother Big Ma and her mother, Ma Charles. Across the way lives Ma Charles's half-sister, Miss Trotter. The two half-sisters haven't spoken in years. As Delphine hears about her family history, she uncovers the surprising truth that's been keeping the sisters apart. Grade Level 5–7. Coretta Scott King Award ©2016

Holes by Louis Sachar - follows Stanley Yelnats, who is wrongly convicted of stealing and sent to Camp Green Lake, a juvenile detention center where boys dig holes in the desert. As Stanley and other boys endure the hard labor, they uncover a family curse, a hidden treasure, and the secrets of the past. ©1998 Grade Level 4–7. Newbery Medal 1999, National Book Award 1998

The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary by Laura Shovan Emerson Elementary is closing its doors and is due to be replaced by a shopping mall. Not everyone in this multiracial fifth-grade class feels the same about the school's imminent closure. The variety of expressive writing styles for each character makes this book unique. ©2016 Grade Level 5–7

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis - The story follows four Pevensie children who discover a magical wardrobe leading to Narnia, a land frozen in eternal winter by the evil White Witch. They must help Aslan, a powerful lion, defeat the witch and restore peace to Narnia. ©1950 Grade Level 3-6

Loser by Jerry Spinelli - Donald Zinkoff, a young character who demonstrates great self-acceptance and who is not afraid to fail. With the encouragement of his family, he learns to approach life with a positive spirit and to enjoy all that it has to offer. ©1996 Grade Level 3-7. Garden State Children's Book Award 2005, William Allen White Children's Book Award Winner 2005

Recommended Reading 2025

***Prairie Lotus* by Linda Sue Park** A girl determined to fit in and realize her dreams: getting an education, becoming a dressmaker in her father's shop, and making at least one friend. Hanna, a half-Asian girl in a small town in America's heartland, lives in 1880. Hanna's adjustment to her new surroundings, and the townspeople's prejudice against Asians, is at the heart of the story. ©1996 **Grade Level 5–8**

***Mother Teresa: In My Own Words* - by Mother Teresa** It's a way to experience the love and wisdom she shared with the poor, the dying, and those in need, offering solace and hope to readers. The book aims to inspire compassion and generosity, much like her life's work. ©2020 **Grade Level 5–6**

***Rain Reign* by Ann M. Martin** - Rose Howard, a fifth-grader with autism who is fiercely devoted to her dog, Rain. When Rain goes missing during a storm, Rose embarks on a journey to find her beloved companion, learning about the world, social situations, and the importance of following rules, even when they are difficult. ©2018 **Grade Level 4-7. Schneider Family Book Award, Bank Street/Josette Frank Award, Judy Lopez Memorial Award**

***Saving Winslow* by Sharon Creech** Louie doesn't have the best luck when it comes to nurturing small creatures. So when his father brings home a sickly newborn mini donkey, he's determined to save him. He names him Winslow. ©2019 **Grade Level 5-7 ALA Notable Children's Book, Texas Bluebonnet Award Winner**

***Stargazing* by Jen Wang** Moon is everything Christine isn't. She's confident, impulsive, artistic and though they both grew up in the same Chinese-American suburb, Moon is somehow unlike anyone Christine has ever known. ©2019 **Grade Level 3-4**

***Stella by Starlight* by Sharon M. Draper** Stella lives in the segregated South in Bumblebee, North Carolina, to be exact about it. Some stores she can go into; some stores she can't. Some folks are right, pleasant; others are a lot less so. To Stella, it sort of evens out, and heck, the Klan hasn't bothered them for years. ©2016 **Grade Level 5-8**

***The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo** - a small, sickly mouse named Despereaux who falls in love with a princess. Despereaux's unusual affection for humans and his courage lead him on a journey where his fate intertwines with a kind serving girl and a rat who also desires light. **2003 Grade Level 2-5. Newbery Medal 2004**

***Two Minute Drill* by Mike Lupica** - two unlikely friends: Scott, the smart but clumsy new kid on the football team, and Chris, the star quarterback who struggles in school. Through their friendship, they learn that the will to succeed can be more valuable than raw talent, helping each other improve both academically and athletically. ©2009 **Grade Level 3-7**

***Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* by Carole Boston Weatherford** Despite fierce prejudice and abuse, even being beaten to within an inch of her life, Fannie Lou Hamer was a champion of civil rights from the 1950s until her death in 1977. Integral to the Freedom Summer of 1964. ©2015 **Grade Level 3-6. 2016 Caldecott Honor Book, Robert F. Sibert Honor Book, John Steptoe New Talent Illustrator Award**

***The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis** - the Watson family's journey from Flint, Michigan, to Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, as seen through the eyes of 10-year-old Kenny. The book explores themes of family, the Civil Rights Movement, and the impact of racism, culminating in a tragic event at the 16th Street Baptist Church. ©2016 **Grade Level 5–6. Newbery Honor 1996, Coretta Scott King, ALA best book for Young Adults**

***The War That Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley** Nine-year-old Ada has never left her one-room apartment. Her mother is too humiliated by Ada's twisted foot to let her outside. So, when her little brother Jamie is shipped out of London to escape the war, Ada doesn't waste a minute—she sneaks out to join him. 2016 Newbery Honor Book and 2016 Schneider Family Book Award ©2016 **Grade Level 5–6**

***We the Children* by Andrew Clements** - Benjamin Pratt, a boy who discovers a secret about his beloved old school that involves a real estate deal and the school's history. ©2010 **Grade Level 2-5.**

***When You Trap a Tiger* by Tae Keller** When Lily and her family move in with her sick grandmother, a magical tiger straight out of her halmoni's Korean folktales arrives, prompting Lily to unravel a secret family history. ©2020 **Grade Level 4-5. Newbery Medal and Asian/Pacific American Award**

***Who Was Anne Frank* by Ann Abramson** - explores the life of Anne Frank, from her childhood to the secret annex where she hid with her family, and delves into the legacy of her diary. ©2007 **Grade Level 5-8.**

Recommended Reading 2025

***Wonder* by R.J. Palacio** - 10-year-old August "Auggie" Pullman, a boy with significant facial differences, as he transitions from being homeschooled to attending mainstream school for the first time. Auggie navigates the challenges of navigating friendships, prejudice, and bullying while trying to be accepted by his classmates. ©2012
Grade Level 3-7. Maine Student Award, Mark Twain Award

Recommended Reading 2025

FIFTH GRADE ENTERING SIXTH GRADE

A.K.A. Genius by Marilee Haynes - "When standardized test scores identify seventh-grader Gabe Carpenter as St. Jude's resident genius, he wonders what it means to have brains when he can't even manage to open his own locker." ©2013 Grade Level 5-7

Almost Home by Joan Bauer - Sixth-grader Sugar and her mother lose their beloved house and experience the harsh world of homelessness. ©2012 Grade Level 5-8

Amina Voice by Hena Khan - Amina has never been comfortable in the spotlight. She is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except now that she's in middle school everything feels different. Soojin is suddenly hanging out with Emily, one of the "cool" girls in the class, and even talking about changing her name to something more "American." Does Amina need to start changing too? ©2017 Grade Level 6-8

Counting Thyme by Melania Conklin When eleven-year-old Thyme Owens' little brother, Val, is accepted into a new cancer drug trial, it's just the second chance that he needs. But it also means the Owens family has to move to New York, thousands of miles away from Thyme's best friend and everything she knows and loves. ©2016 Grade Level 4-7

The Dreamer by Pam Munoz Ryan - a fictionalized biography of the Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, who grew up a painfully shy child, ridiculed by his overbearing father, but who became one of the most widely-read poets in the world. Includes author's notes about the poet. ©2012 Grade Level 5-9. Pura Belpré Award Winner

The Earth Dragon Awakes by Laurence Yep - a historical fiction novel for young readers that tells the story of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake from the perspectives of two young friends, Chin and Henry. The book vividly portrays the destruction and chaos of the earthquake and subsequent fires, while also highlighting the resilience and courage of the people who survived. ©2008 Grade Level 4-7

Eleven by Tom Rogers - nothing heroic ever happened to Alex. Nothing, that is, until his eleventh birthday. When Alex rescues a stray dog as a birthday gift to himself, he doesn't think his life can get much better. ©2014 Grade Level 4-7

Finding Langston by Lisa Cline-Ransome - It's 1946. Langston's mother has just died, and now they're leaving the rest of his family and friends. He misses everything-- Grandma's Sunday suppers, the red dirt roads, and the magnolia trees his mother loved. ©2018 Grade Level 5-7. Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book, Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction

Ground Zero by Alan Gratz - a gripping novel exploring the intertwined lives of Brandon in New York on 9/11 and Reshmina in Afghanistan, 18 years later, both profoundly affected by the consequences of 9/11. ©2021 Grade Level 4-7. 2021 Grateful American Book Prize

A Handful of Stars by Cynthia Lord - When Lily's blind dog, Lucky, slips his collar and runs away across the wide-open blueberry barrens of eastern Maine, it's Salma Santiago who manages to catch him. ©2017 Grade Level 5-7

Holes by Louis Sachar - Stanley Yelnats is falsely convicted of theft and sent to Camp Green Lake, a juvenile detention center where he must dig holes all day. He suspects a curse on his family, a treasure, and a hidden history in the dry desert landscape. ©1998 Grade Level 5-6. 1999 Newbery Award

Hour of the Bees by Lindsay Eagar - While her friends are spending their summers having pool parties and sleepovers, twelve-year-old Carolina (Carol) is spending hers in the middle of the New Mexico desert, helping her parents move the grandfather she's never met into a home for people with dementia. ©2016 Grade Level 5-8

I Survived the Attacks of September 11, 2001 by Lauren Tarshis - The story of Lucas, an 11-year-old boy who is caught in the midst of the September 11 attacks while on his way to visit his uncle, a firefighter in New York City. Lucas's journey to see his uncle to discuss football is interrupted by the tragic events of that day. ©2012 Grade Level 3-7

Recommended Reading 2025

***Isabel Feeney, Star Reporter* by Beth Fantaskey** It's 1920s Chicago—the guns-and-gangster era of Al Capone—and it's unusual for a girl to be selling the *Tribune* on the street corner. But ten-year-old Isabel Feeney is unusually obsessed with being a news reporter. ©2017 **Grade Level 5-7**

***Merci Suarez Changes Gears* by Meg Medina** Merci Suarez knew that sixth grade would be different, but she had no idea just *how* different. For starters, Merci has never been like the other kids at her private school in Florida, because she and her older brother, Roli, are scholarship students. ©2018 **Grade Level 5-7, 2019 Newbery Medal**

***Restart* by Gordon Korman** - Chase doesn't remember falling off the roof. He doesn't remember hitting his head. He doesn't, in fact, remember anything. He wakes up in a hospital room and suddenly has to learn his whole life all over again. ©2017 **Grade Level 7-9, South Carolina Book Award Nominee for Junior Book, Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee for Sundogs, Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award Nominee**

***Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor** - explores the struggles of African Americans in 1930s Mississippi through the perspective of nine-year-old Cassie Logan. ©1976 **Grade Level 5-8. Coretta Scott King Award**

***Saint John Paul the Great: His Five Loves* by Jason Evert** - explores the five core passions of Saint John Paul II: Young People, Human Love, the Eucharist, Our Lady, and the Cross. The book uses previously unpublished stories and insights to reveal the depth of the saint's love for each, aiming to inspire and deepen the reader's faith. ©2014 **Grade Level 6-8**

***The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown** Though Roz, a robot, is initially viewed with suspicion when she finds herself on an isolated island, she soon becomes part of the natural order, parenting an orphaned gosling and providing shelter for the animals. But is there really a place for her within this ecosystem? ©2016 **Grade Level 5-7**

***Towers* by Jewel Parkes Rhodes** - tells the story of Deja, a young girl living in a homeless shelter in New York City, who struggles to understand the impact of the 9/11 attacks fifteen years later. As she navigates a new school and forms friendships, Deja and her classmates learn about the event and how it continues to affect their community and their families. ©2016 **Grade Level 3-7**

***Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* by Grace Lin** - inspired by lucky number 8 or good fortune is about a story-loving girl Minli's quest to change the fortune of her poor family. Minli and her family lived on the Fruitless Mountain, a mountain which bore not a single healthy rice crop. ©2009 **Grade Level 4-6. 2010 Newbery Medal**

***Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls** - The story of Billy, a young boy in the Ozarks, who dreams of owning two redbone coonhounds. He works hard to save money and eventually buys Old Dan and Little Ann, with whom he experiences the joys of hunting and the profound bond of friendship, but also faces tragedy. ©1961 **Grade Level 5-8. 1981 North Dakota Flicker Tale Children's Book Award, 1987 & 1988 Massachusetts Children's Book Award, 1989 Great Stone Face Award**

Recommended Reading 2025

SIXTH GRADE ENTERING SEVENTH GRADE

***Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati: Journey to the Summit* by Ana Maria Vazquez** - biography for young readers, highlighting Pier Giorgio's vibrant and adventurous life. It showcases his student antics, athletic prowess, social justice activism, and dedication to helping the poor. ©2004 Grade Level 5-12

***The Bronze Bow* by Elizabeth George Speare** - Daniel, a young Jew in first-century Galilee, who seeks revenge against the Romans after his father's death. Daniel, fueled by hatred and a desire for vengeance, joins an outlaw band, but his life takes a turn when he encounters Jesus of Nazareth. ©1961 Grade Level 5-7

***Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson** - Follows the author's childhood growing up as an African American girl in the 1960s and 70s, divided between South Carolina and New York. ©2004 Grade Level 5-12. **National Book Award for Young People's Literature, a Newbery Honor, and the Coretta Scott King Author Award**

***The Candymakers* by Wendy Mass** - Four children have been chosen to compete in a national competition to find the tastiest confection in the country. Who will invent a candy more delicious than the Oozing Crunchorama or the Neon Lightning Chew? ©2010 Grade Level 7-8

***Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson** - a historical fiction novel that follows 13-year-old Isabel Finch as she navigates the challenges of slavery in New York City during the American Revolution. ©2008 Grade Level 5-9. **National Book Award finalist, Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, ALA Notable Children's Books, ILA Teachers' Choices, Booklist Editors' Choice**

***City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau** - an underground city built as a refuge, residents live in darkness, relying on artificial light. When the city's power begins to fail and supplies dwindle, two children, Lina and Doon, discover clues hinting at a way out, forcing them to risk everything to save their city and find a new future above ground. ©2003 Grade Level 6-8. **The Sunshine State Young Reader's Award (Winner, Grades 6-8) and the Massachusetts Children's Book Award (Honor Book)**

***Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson** - a historical fiction novel set in Philadelphia during the devastating yellow fever epidemic of 1793. It follows 14-year-old Mattie Cook as she struggles to survive the outbreak, her family business, the Cook Coffeehouse, is threatened, and her world turned upside down. ©2000 Grade Level 5-9. **Printz Award, National Book Award for Young People's Literature, ALA Best Book for Young Adults selection**

***Full Cicada Moon* by Marilyn Hilton** - It's 1969, and the Apollo 11 mission is getting ready to go to the moon. But for half-black, half-Japanese Mimi, moving to a predominantly white Vermont town is enough to make her feel alien. ©2015 Grade Level 5-8

***Genevieve's War* by Patricia Reilly Giff** - Thirteen-year-old American girl Genevieve has spent the summer of 1939 at her grandmother's farm in Alsace, France. Then she makes an impulsive choice: to stay in France. It proves to be a dangerous decision as World War II erupts. ©2017 Grade Level 6-7

***I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb** - Malala Yousafzai's memoir about her courageous campaign for girls' education in Pakistan. It tells the story of her life in the Swat Valley, the Taliban's takeover, her near-fatal shooting, and her journey to become a global advocate for education right. ©2017 Grade Level 5-8. **2015 Grammy Award for Best Children's Album**

***I Can Make This Promise* by Christine Day** - All her life, Edie has known that her mom was adopted by a white couple. So, no matter how curious she might be about her Native American heritage, Edie is sure her family doesn't have any answers. ©2019 Grade Level 7-8. **American Indian Youth Literature Award for Best Middle School**

***In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse* by Joseph Marshall** - Jimmy McClean is a Lakota boy—though you wouldn't guess it by his name: his father is part white and part Lakota, and his mother is Lakota. When he embarks on a journey with his grandfather, Nyles High Eagle, he learns more and more about his Lakota heritage—in particular, the story of Crazy Horse, one of the most important figures in Lakota and American history. ©2015 Grade Level 6-8

***The Inquisitor's Tale: Or, The Three Magical Children and Their Holy Dog* by Adam Gidwitz** - On a dark night, travelers from across France cross paths at an inn and begin to tell stories of three children. Their adventures take them on a chase through France: they are taken captive by knights, sit alongside a king, and save the land from a farting dragon. ©2016 Grade Level 6-10. **2017 Newbery Honor Book**

Recommended Reading 2025

***Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai** - follows 10-year-old Hà as she and her family flee Vietnam after the fall of Saigon, arriving in Alabama with dreams and a new life. Told in free-verse poems, the book captures Hà's experiences of learning a new language, adapting to a different culture, and facing the challenges of immigration. ©2011 Grade Level 3-7. 2011 National Book Award for Young People's Literature, 2012 Newbery Honor

***Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy* by Gary D. Schmidt** - It only takes a few hours for Turner Buckminster to start hating Phippsburg, Maine. No one in town will let him forget that he's a minister's son, even if he doesn't act like one. But then he meets Lizzie Bright Griffin, a smart and sassy girl from a poor nearby island community founded by former slaves. ©2013 Grade Level 6-9. 2014 Newbery Honor Book

***Loyalty* by Avi** - When his father is killed by rebel vigilantes, Noah flees with his family to Boston. Intent on avenging his father, Noah becomes a spy for the British and firsthand witness to the power of partisan rumor to distort facts, the hypocrisy of men who demand freedom while enslaving others, and the human connections that bind people together regardless of stated allegiances. ©2022 Grade Level 6-7

***The Notorious Benedict Arnold* by Steve Sheinkin** - Most people know that Benedict Arnold was America's first, most notorious traitor. Few know that he was also one of its greatest war heroes. This accessible biography introduces young readers to the real Arnold: reckless, heroic, and driven. ©2010 Grade Level 6-9, 2014 Newbery Honor Book Beacon of Freedom Award, YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction, Margaret A. Edwards Award

***My Path to Heaven: A Young Person's Guide to the Faith* by Geoffrey Bliss, S.J.** - a retreat-in-a-book designed to guide Catholic children aged 9-12 through the truths of the Faith and inspire them to live holy lives. ©2005 Grade Level 5-12

***One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia** Eleven-year-old Delphine is like a mother to her two younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern. She's had to be, ever since their mother, Cecile, left them seven years ago for a radical new life in California. ©2011 Grade Level 5-7. 2012 Newbery Honor Book, Scott O'Dell Award, Coretta Scott King Award

***Reaching for the Moon: The Autobiography of NASA Mathematician Katherine Johnson* by Katherine Johnson** - As a young girl, Katherine Johnson showed an exceptional aptitude for math. In school she quickly skipped ahead several grades and was soon studying complex equations with the support of a professor who saw great promise in her. ©2020 Grade Level 6

***The Red Bandanna* by Tom Rinaldi** - Welles Crowther always kept a red bandanna with him, a gift from his father. Little did he know how that bandanna would help him in a time of crisis, during the fall of the South Tower of the World Trade Center. Readers will be fascinated by the story of an ordinary man who did extraordinary work to save lives of others while sacrificing his own. ©2017 Grade Level 6-8, Winner of the Christopher Award, Notable Social Studies Book

***Riding Chance* by Christine Kendall** - Troy is a kid with a passion. And dreams. And wanting to do the right thing. But after taking a wrong turn, he's forced to endure something that's worse than any juvenile detention he can imagine-he's "sentenced" to the local city stables where he's made to take care of horses. ©2016 Grade Level 6-8

***The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett** - the story of Mary Lennox, a spoiled and lonely orphan, who is sent to live with her uncle in a gloomy English manor after the deaths of her parents. ©1911 Grade Level 5-8

***So Be It* by Sarah Weeks** - She doesn't know when her birthday is or who her father is. In fact, everything about Heidi and her mentally disabled mother's past is a mystery. When a strange word in her mother's vocabulary begins to haunt her, Heidi sets out on a cross-country journey in search of the secrets of her past. ©2004 Grade Level 6-8

***Soar* by Joan Bauer** Jeremiah is the world's biggest baseball fan. He *really* loves baseball and he knows just about everything there is to know about his favorite sport. So when he's told he can't play baseball following an operation on his heart, Jeremiah decides he'll do the next best thing and become a coach. ©2017 Grade Level 6-7 Texas Bluebonnet Award Nominee, Vermont Golden Dome Book Award Nominee, William Allen White Children's Book Award Nominee, and Bluestem Book Award Nominee

***Stella by Starlight* by Sharon M. Draper** - Stella lives in the segregated South; in Bumblebee, North Carolina, to be exact about it. Some stores she can go into. Some stores she can't. Some folks are right, pleasant. Others are a lot less so. S2015 Grade Level 6-8. PA Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee, Vermont Golden Dome Book Award Nominee, Judy Lopez Memorial Award for Children's Literature Nominee, NAACP Image Award Nominee, NCTE Charlotte Huck Award, Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award Nominee

Recommended Reading 2025

***The Story of the Trapp Family Singers* by Maria von Trapp** - Baroness Maria Augusta Trapp tells in her own beautiful, simple words the extraordinary story of her romance with the baron, their escape from Nazi-occupied Austria, and their life in America. ©1949 **Grade Level 7-12**

***Strongheart Wonder Dog of the Silver Screen* by Candace Fleming** - Based on a true story, this absorbing novel from the duo behind *Giant Squid* and other books introduces Strongheart, a German shepherd that worked as a police dog in Germany until his discovery by Hollywood director Larry Trimble in the early 1920s. ©2018 **Grade Level 6-7**

***Wait Till Helen Comes: A Ghost Story* by Mary Downing Hahn** - a ghost story about Molly and her brother Michael, who are wary of their new, troubled step sister Heather. Heather claims to be talking to the ghost of a child named Helen, who warns Molly and Michael of danger. ©1986 **Grade Level 4-7. 1989 Young Reader's Choice Award**

***The Wednesday Wars* by Gary D. Schmidt** - a poignant coming-of-age story involving the funny misadventures of Long Island, New York, seventh-grader Holling Hoodhood and his unlikely discovery of Shakespeare in the turbulent academic year of 1967-1968. ©2007 **Grade Level 5-9. 2008 Newbery Honor**

***The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin** - mystery where sixteen unlikely people are drawn together by the strange will of eccentric millionaire Samuel W. Westing. They must play a game to determine who among them murdered Westing and to claim his vast fortune, a game filled with clues, intrigue, and unexpected twists. ©1978 **Grade Level 5-8. 1979 Newbery Medal, finalist for the National Book Award for Children's Literature in 1981**

***Wolf Hollow* by Lauren Wolk** Growing up in the shadows cast by two world wars, Annabelle has lived a mostly quiet, steady life in her small Pennsylvania town. Until the day new student Betty Glengarry walks into her class. ©2016 **Grade Level 6-8. 2017 Newbery Honor Book**

Recommended Reading 2025

SEVENTH GRADE ENTERING EIGHTH GRADE

***Absolutely Truly* by Heather Vogel Frederick** - Truly Lovejoy is accustomed to change. Her father's military career means they move often. But the kind of change that comes when her father loses an arm in Afghanistan and decides to move the family to middle-of-nowhere Pumpkin Falls to take over the family bookstore is a little more than Truly can handle. ©2014 Grade Level 7-8

***Ali Cross* by James Patterson** - Ali Cross has always looked up to his father, former detective and FBI agent Alex Cross. While solving some of the nation's most challenging crimes, his father always kept his head and did the right thing. Can Ali have the same strength and resolve? ©2010 Grade Level 5-7

***As Brave as You* by Jason Reynolds** - Genie's summer is full of surprises. The first is that he and his big brother, Ernie, are leaving Brooklyn for the very first time to spend the summer with their grandparents all the way in Virginia—in the COUNTRY! ©2016 Grade Level 6-8. Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book, Schneider Family Book Award

***The Boy in the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible...on Schindler's list* by Leon Leyson** - The only memoir published by a former Schindler's list child, perfectly captures the innocence of a small boy who goes through the unthinkable. Leon Leyson (born Leib Lezjon) was only ten years old when the Nazis invaded Poland and his family was forced to relocate to the Krakow ghetto. ©2015 Grade Level 6-9

***The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba** - a memoir by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer about a young boy in Malawi who, facing a devastating drought, learns to build a windmill from scrap materials using his knowledge gained from library books. ©2009 Grade Level 6-8. CCBC Choices, Junior Library Guild Selections, Outstanding Science Trade Book

***Code Girls the True Story of the American Girls Who Broke Code in WWII* by Lizz Mundy** - More than ten thousand women served as codebreakers during World War II, recruited by the U.S. Army and Navy. While their brothers and boyfriends took up arms, these women moved to the nation's capital to learn the top secret art of code breaking. ©2018 Grade Level 8–Up

***Code Orange* by Caroline B. Cooney** - a New York City teenager, Mitty Blake, who discovers old smallpox scabs in an antique textbook. Mitty's subsequent fear of contracting the disease leads him to be targeted by terrorists who plan to weaponize the virus, forcing him to become a hero in order to save his city. ©2005 Grade Level 7-12

***The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen** - a young Jewish girl, Hannah, is magically transported to 1940s Poland during the Holocaust. Initially apathetic to her family's history, Hannah finds herself thrust into the horrors of the concentration camp, forcing her to confront the past and the lessons it holds. ©1988 Grade Level 6-8

***Endurance Young Readers Edition* by Scott Kelly** - Discover the extreme challenges of long-term spaceflight, the pressures of living in close quarters with people from many countries, the extremely dangerous risk of colliding with space junk and the unnerving feeling of not being able to help if tragedy strikes at home. ©2018 Grade Level 8-9

***Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan** - The novel focuses on Esperanza, the only daughter of wealthy Mexican parents, and the events that occur after her father's murder and her subsequent move to California due to the actions of Esperanza's uncles, Tio Luis and Tio Marco. ©2002 Grade Level 8-9. Jane Addams Children's Book Award for Older Children, California Young Readers Medal Nominee for Middle School/Junior High, Judy Lopez Memorial Award for Children's Literature,, Pura Belpré Award for Narrative

***Father Damien and the Bells* by Arthur & Elizabeth Sheehan** - tells the story of Father Damien, a priest who dedicated his life to caring for lepers on the island of Molokai in the 1800s. ©2004 Grade Level 4–10

Recommended Reading 2025

***Flygirl* by Sherri L. Smith** - All Ida Mae Jones wants to do is fly. Her daddy was a pilot, and years after his death she feels closest to him when she's in the air. But as a young black woman in 1940s Louisiana, she knows the sky is off limits to her, until America enters World War II, and the Army forms the WASP-Women Airforce Service Pilots. ©2010 Grade Level 8-9

***Half Moon Summer* by Elaine Vickers** - Two seventh graders, Drew and Mia, forge a powerful friendship while training for a half-marathon. Drew, facing his father's diagnosis, and Mia, dealing with her family's financial struggles, find solace and support in each other's company, discovering that friendship can sustain them through life's toughest challenges. ©2023 Grade Level 5-8. **Whitney Award finalist for Best Middle Grade Novel, Triple Crown Award finalist**

***The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien** - Tells the story of Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit who reluctantly joins a group of dwarves and a wizard on a quest to reclaim their treasure from a dragon. This adventure leads Bilbo on a journey of self-discovery, where he finds courage and resourcefulness he never knew he possessed. ©1937 Grade Level 7-12. **Nominated for the Carnegie Medal, 1938 received the New York Herald Tribune prize for best juvenile fiction**

***I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives* by Caitlin Alifirenka** - It started as an assignment. Everyone in Caitlin's class wrote to an unknown student somewhere in a distant place. ©2015 Grade Level 6-8

***In Honor of Broken Things* by Paul Acampora** Three unlikely friends become partners in heartbreak and hope during a middle school pottery class in this powerful, poignant novel—perfect for fans of Gordon Korman and Lynda Mullaly Hunt. Through art, football, failure, faith, and trust, the friends help one another to piece things back together again. ©2022 Grade level 6-8

***A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story* by Linda Sue Park** - The girl, Nya, is fetching water from a pond that is two hours' walk from her home: she makes two trips to the pond every day. The boy, Salva, becomes one of the "lost boys" of Sudan, refugees who cover the African continent on foot as they search for their families and for a safe place to stay. ©2011 Grade Level 6-8

***A Night Divided* by Jennifer A. Nielsen** - With the rise of the Berlin Wall, Gerta finds her family suddenly divided. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. Gerta knows it is dangerous to watch the wall, yet she can't help herself. ©2018 Grade Level 7-8

***Okay for Now* by Gary Schmidt** - Follows Doug Swieteck, a struggling teenager, as he navigates a difficult period in his life, including a new school, an abusive father, and his brother's return from the Vietnam War. ©2013 Grade Level 6-8

***Projekt 1065* by Alan Gratz** - a historical fiction novel set during World War II, following Michael O'Shaunessey, a young Irish spy in Nazi Germany. Michael infiltrates the Hitler Youth, using his photographic memory to steal blueprints for a secret Nazi jet plane, Projekt 1065, and help downed Allied airmen. ©2016 Grade Level 5-8. **2016 Parents' Choice Award for Historical Fiction, 2018 Dorothy Canfield Fisher Book Award**

***Refugee* by Alan Gratz** - Historical novel that braids the stories of three young refugees in three different time periods and settings: 1938 Berlin, 1994 Cuba, and 2015 Syria. The circumstances of all the kids and families are dire, and their journeys are fraught with imminent danger. ©2017 Grade Level 7-8

***Remember Us* by Jacqueline Woodson** - a young girl named Sage who grapples with the changing world around her, particularly the devastating fires burning down her Bushwick neighborhood in the 1970s. ©2023 Grade Level 5-8

***Resistance* by Jennifer Nielsen** - Chaya Lindner is a teenager living in Nazi-occupied Poland. Simply being Jewish places her in danger of being killed or sent to the camps. After her little sister is taken away, her younger brother disappears, and her parents all but give up hope, Chaya is determined to make a difference. ©2018 Grade Level 8-9

***Sunshine* by Jarrett J. Krosoczka** - a graphic novel memoir exploring the author's experiences in high school volunteering at a camp for children with serious illnesses. ©2023 Grade Level 7-9. **2023 Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Nonfiction**

***Terror at Bottle Creek* by Watt Key** - In this gritty, realistic wilderness adventure, thirteen-year-old Cort is caught in a battle against a Gulf Coast hurricane. Cort's father is a local expert on hunting and swamp lore in lower Alabama who has been teaching his son everything he knows. But when a deadly Category 3 storm makes landfall, Cort must unexpectedly put his all skills-and bravery-to the test. ©2016 Grade Level 6-9

Recommended Reading 2025

***You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen* by Carole Brown Weatherford** - *I WANT YOU!* says the poster of Uncle Sam. But if you're a young black man in 1940, he doesn't want you in the cockpit of a war plane. Yet you are determined not to let that stop your dream of flying. ©2016 Grade Level 8-10, Jane Addams Children's Book Award for Older Children, California Young Readers Medal Nominee for Middle School/Junior High,, Judy Lopez Memorial Award for Children's Literature, Pura Belpré Award for Narrative

***Where the Water Takes Us* by Alan Barillaro** - the story of Ava, who is sent to stay with her grandparents while her mother is on bed rest during a difficult twin pregnancy. Ava grapples with anxiety and feels a strong sense of impending doom for her mom. ©2023 Grade Level 5-8