

Rising First and Second Grade Summer Reading Suggestions 2026

Read with a grown-up or read-to-self books

National Geographic Readers from National Geographic (various authors)

Children are fascinated by the world around them and National Geographic has a huge array of books, at various reading levels to feed that curiosity. The *Little Kid's First Big Book* series is another excellent non-fiction choice.



Acorn books from Scholastic (various authors)

Scholastic's early reader line, Acorn, is aimed at early readers. With easy-to-read text, a short-story format, plenty of humor, and full-color artwork on every page, these books will boost reading confidence and fluency. These are just a few of the series in the line.



Unlimited Squirrels (series) or anything else by Mo Willems (Elephant and Piggie, Knuffle Bunny, The Pigeon Books, etc.)

Mo Willems has stopped writing the Elephant & Piggie books and has moved on to the equally hilarious *Unlimited Squirrels*. This nutty series combines fact and fiction with silliness and “a-corny” jokes. It is written at a slightly higher reading level than Elephant & Piggie.





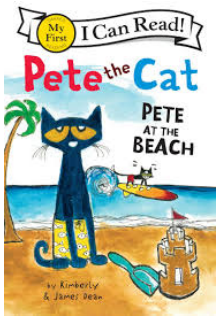
***Princess in Black* (series) by Shannon Hale & Dean Hale**

Who says princesses don't wear black? When trouble raises its (monster) head, Princess Magnolia ditches her flouncy dresses and becomes the Princess in Black! She's a master at multi-tasking, but can she keep her secret?



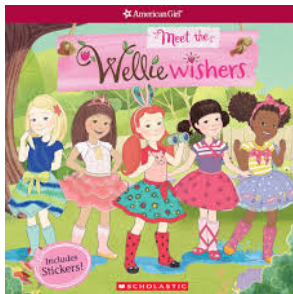
***Fly Guy* (series) by Tedd Arnold**

Boy and fly meet and so begins a beautiful friendship. Er, and so begins a very funny friendship. Using hyperbole, puns, slapstick, and silly drawings, bestselling author/illustrator Tedd Arnold creates an easy reader that is full of fun. This book is a Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor book!



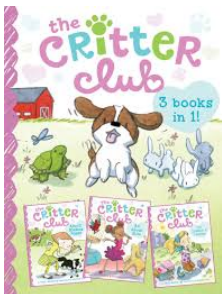
***Pete the Cat* (series) by James Dean from the "I Can Read!" collection.**

The "I Can Read" books are leveled readers that use basic language, word repetition, sight words, and illustrations—perfect for emerging readers. Other "I Can Read" collections include *Little Critter*, *Biscuit the Puppy*, *Duck, Duck, Dinosaur*, *Splat the Cat*, *Fancy Nancy*, *Pinkalicious*, *Amelia Bedelia* and many more.



***Wellie Wishers* from American Girl**

From American Girl, meet the WellieWishers, a sweet and silly group of girls who each have the same big, bright wish: to be a good friend. Join them in playful early chapter books, as they step into their colorful garden boots, and get ready for stomping in mud puddles, putting on shows, and helping friendships grow.



Critter Club

It's Spring Break in Santa Vista, and everyone has big plans...everyone except for Amy, that is! As her best friends head out of town on exciting adventures, Amy resigns herself to helping out at her mom's vet clinic. At least she'll be around cute animals! But when Santa Vista's cold and elusive millionaire, Marge Sullivan, brings her puppy Rufus for a check-up, Amy encounters an unexpected mystery. After her friends return home, the girls get to the bottom of what happened to Rufus—and discover a way to help other lost and lonely animals in their town.

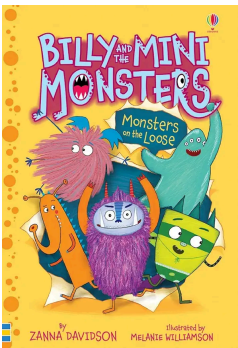


Dragon Masters

DRAGON MASTERS has it all! Dragons, a Dragon Stone, a king, a wizard, and magic! In the first book in this fully-illustrated series, 8-year old Drake is snatched up by King Roland's soldier and taken to the castle. He is to be trained as a Dragon Master. At the castle, he is joined by three other young Dragon Masters-in-training: Ana, Rori, and Bo. The Dragon Masters must learn how to connect with and train their dragons--and they must also uncover their dragons' special powers. Does Drake have what it takes to be a Dragon Master? What is his dragon's special power?

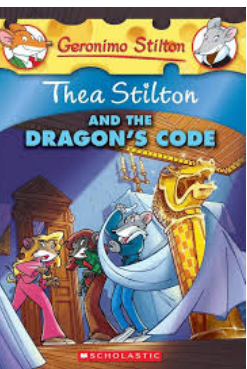
Dory Fantasmagory

As the youngest in her family, Dory really wants attention, and more than anything she wants her brother and sister to play with her. But she's too much of a baby for them, so she's left to her own devices—including her wild imagination and untiring energy. Her siblings may roll their eyes at her childish games, but Dory has lots of things to do: outsmarting the monsters all over the house, moving into the closet, and exacting revenge on her sister's favorite doll. And when they really need her, daring Dory will prove her bravery and finally get exactly what she has been looking for.



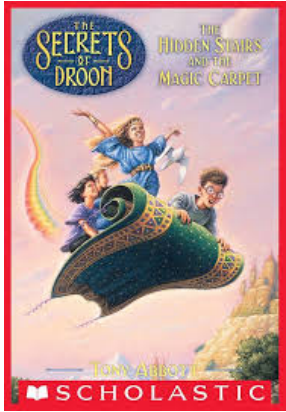
Billie and the Mini Monsters

Billy's pet Mini Monsters have decided it would be fun to go to school. Billy thinks this is a TERRIBLE IDEA. Little does he realize they've snuck into his school bag until it's too late... now there are monsters on the loose. There are monsters in the classroom, monsters on the playground, and worst of all, monsters in the cafeteria. Will Billy be able to rescue them before it's too late? Divided into six chapters, it contains comic strips as part of the story.



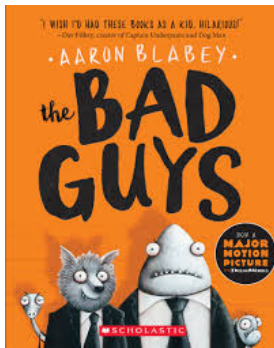
Geronimo and Thea Stilton

The Thea and Geronimo Stilton book series chronicles the adventures of two mouse siblings who are journalists. Geronimo Stilton, a timid newspaper editor, is often reluctantly pulled into global escapades, solving mysteries and learning about different cultures. His sister, Thea Stilton, a daring special correspondent, leads a group of five talented students, the Thea Sisters, on thrilling quests around the world. These books are known for their vibrant illustrations and unique fonts, making them engaging for young readers. Both series emphasize positive themes like friendship, courage, and teamwork, often incorporating educational facts into their exciting plots.



The Secrets of Droon

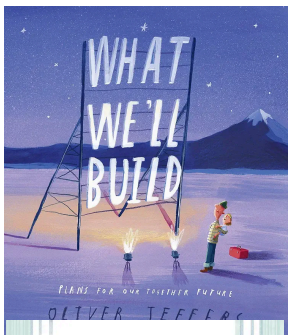
The "Secrets of Droon" series follows three ordinary kids, Eric, Julie, and Neal, who discover a magical rainbow staircase in Eric's basement. This stairway leads them to the enchanting world of Droon, a realm filled with fantastical creatures and ancient magic. In Droon, they befriend Princess Keeah, a young wizard, and Galen, the first wizard of Droon. Together, they constantly battle the evil sorcerer Lord Sparr, who seeks to conquer Droon with his army of Ninns and other dark forces. The series is known for its fast-paced adventures, imaginative settings, and ongoing quest to protect Droon from various magical threats.



***The Bad Guys* by Aaron Blabey**

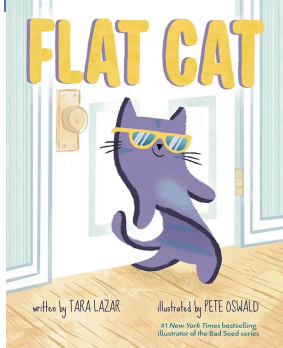
The story follows Mr. Wolf, Mr. Snake, Mr. Piranha, Mr. Shark, and later, Mr. Tarantula. Tired of being labeled as villains, Mr. Wolf convinces his reluctant friends to attempt good deeds and change society's perception of them. Their well-intentioned efforts often go hilariously awry, leading to chaotic and unexpected adventures. Despite their fumbling attempts, the gang frequently finds themselves saving the day from even greater threats, like mad scientists or alien invaders. The series is known for its fast-paced action, quirky humor, and appealing graphic novel style, making it a popular choice for young readers.

Family Read Alouds



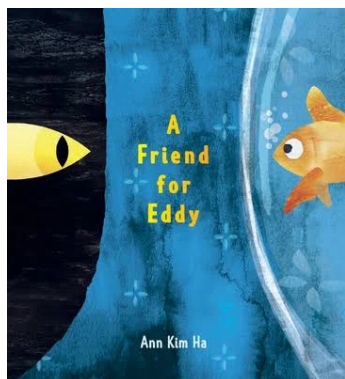
***What We'll Build* Oliver Jeffers**

A father and daughter set about laying the foundations for their life together. Using their own special tools, they get to work, building memories to cherish, a home to keep them safe, and love to keep them warm. A rare and enduring story about a parent's boundless love, life's endless opportunities, and all we need to build a future together. The perfect baby shower gift or gift for new parents!



***Flat Cat* by Tara Lazar**

Flat Cat was born flat. He wasn't squashed by an out-of-control ice cream truck or smushed in a waffle iron. He was just flat. This slick, sly cat could stray and roam anywhere he pleased, keen and unseen. And wouldn't you know it, Flat Cat liked it just like that. That is until one day, when Flat Cat accidentally fell splish splosh right in the wash. And when he emerged from the dryer, Flat Cat wasn't flat at all. He was adorably puffy and downright fluffy! And Flat Cat wasn't sure how he felt about that.



A Friend for Eddy by Ann Kim Ha

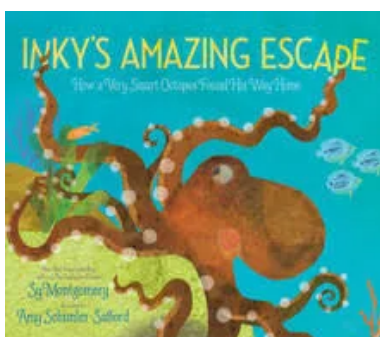
Eddy is a lonely goldfish stuck inside his fishbowl. He would love to have a friend to swim and play and blow bubbles with. Soon, on the other side of the glass, he spies not one but two new friends. After days of playing games together, Eddy leaps out of his bowl to be closer to them. And that's when he realizes that his two friends are really the inquisitive eyes of A CAT! Oh, no! Luckily for Eddy, friendship can be found in unexpected places.

THE HARE WHO WOULDN'T SHARE STEVE SMALL



The Hare Who Wouldn't Share by Steve Small

Hare is proud of his turnip patch and doesn't want to share it with anyone. When the rabbits move in nearby, they invite Hare for carrot soup but he's much happier being alone. Still, when a huge boar comes to the woods in search of his next meal, Hare feels he should warn his neighbors. Can they find a way to help each other stay out of danger?



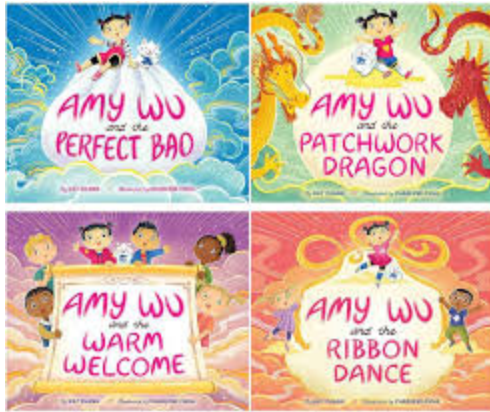
Inky's Amazing Escape by Sy Montgomery

Inky was a real octopus who famously escaped from an aquarium in New Zealand without leaving a trace. Inky the Octopus: The Official Story of One Brave Octopus' Daring Escape by Erin Guendelsberger, which tells the same story from Inky's point of view.

The Food Group by Jory John

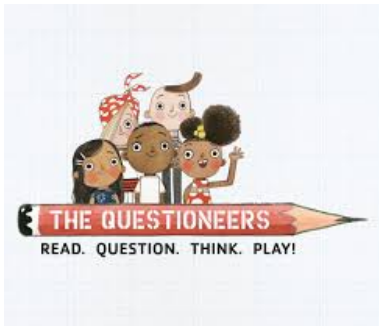
From the New York Times bestselling duo Jory John and Pete Oswald comes the six charming stories of the Food Group Series. Pickup the first book and meet The Bad Seed, a grumpy and mischievous character who may not be so bad after all. In the follow-up book to The Bad Seed, we meet the next best thing: The Good Egg, a very good egg, indeed! Next comes the third book, The Cool Bean, who discovers that being cool means being kind and always being yourself. In the fourth book, meet The Couch Potato! A laidback potato who realizes there is much more to life than slouching on the couch. In the fifth book comes The Smart Cookie, who realizes there is much more to intelligence than perfect scores. Finally, we have the 6th book, The Sour Grape. The Grape with a bunch of grudges who learns there's a sweeter way to roll.





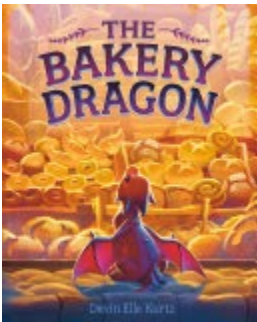
Amy Wu by Kat Zhang

Funny, fierce, and fearless Amy Wu loves trying new things but sometimes gets caught up in wanting her efforts to turn out perfectly. Whether it's making a delicious bao, crafting a dragon that expresses her culture, finding the words to welcome a new student, or learning to Chinese ribbon dance, Amy overcomes her doubts and enjoys the perfectly imperfect outcome of her endeavors with the help of her family and friends.



The Questioners by Andrea Beaty

This is a unique and exciting series that integrates STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) into spirited stories full of adventure, friendship, and science! The Netflix show “Ada Twist, Scientist” is based on The Questioners.



The Bakery Dragon Devin L. Kurtz

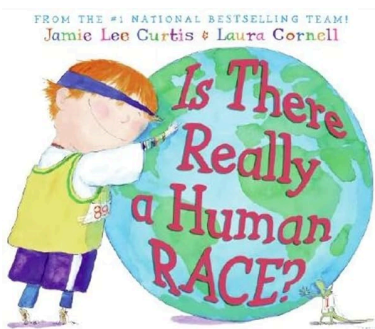
Ember fears he'll never collect a respectable hoard of gold until a chance encounter with a baker causes his fortunes to turn (and his stomach to grumble). As the little dragon soon discovers, the gold you make is way better than the gold you steal—and gold that is shared? That's best of all.

The Book With No Pictures

B.J. Novak

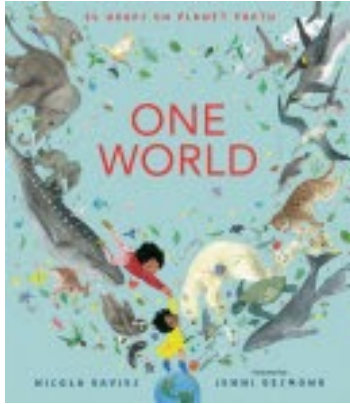
The Book with No Pictures by BJ Novak

This book might possibly exceed the (grown-up's) reasonable limit for sheer silliness. A book with no pictures might sound boring but the thing is, the person reading it has to say the words. Even if it means singing about blueberry pizza. This is a perennial favorite among GHS students... even the fifth graders, who have been hearing it since they were in Kindergarten, still ask me to read it!



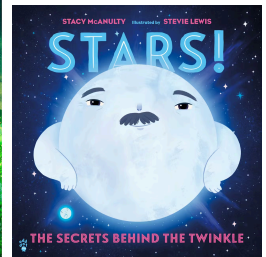
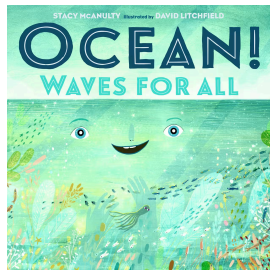
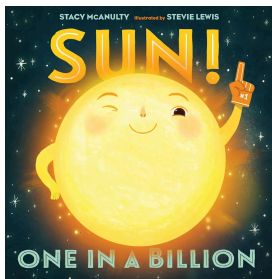
Is There Really a Human Race by Jamie Lee Curtis

Written with Jamie Lee Curtis's humor and heart and illustrated with Laura Cornell's worldly wit, Is There Really a Human Race? Is all about relishing the journey and making good choices along the way—because how we live and how we love is how we learn to make the world a better place, one small step at a time



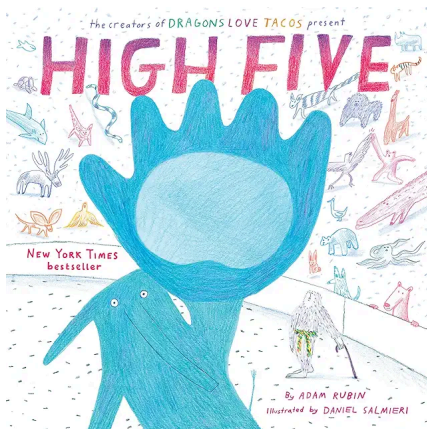
***One World 24 Hours on Planet Earth* by Nicola Davies**

Our planet is always turning. It may be midnight in London, but in different time zones other living things are waking up, ready to hunt or feed or fight. As the clock strikes twelve, two sisters are spirited away on a journey to glimpse, in the span of a moment, extraordinary biodiversity: a mother polar bear and her cubs hunting seals in Svalbard, tiny turtles in India following the moon toward the sea, and enormous whale sharks gulping plankton in the Philippines. Quietly profound, this glowing tribute to the natural world—and reminder of its fragility—blends accessible science, lyricism, sweeping artwork, and a call for climate awareness into an ideal companion book for Earth Day, or any wondrous day on Earth.



***Our Universe series* by Stacy McAnulty**

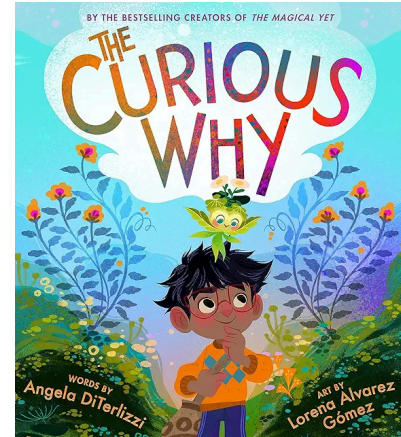
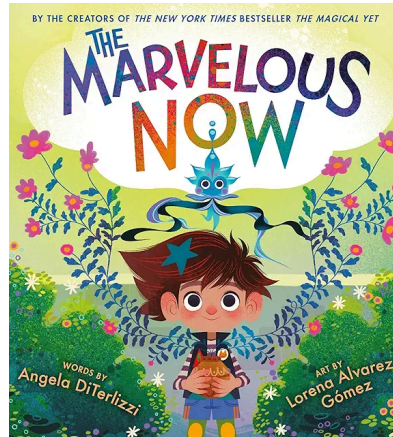
Stacy McAnulty's fact-filled and fun-filled Our Universe picture book series invites children to explore our solar system from the points of view of the celestial bodies that hang out among the stars. These charming and humorous “autobiographies” are beautifully illustrated by such artists as Steve Lewis and David Litchfield.



***High Five* by Adam Rubin**

Discover the lost art of the high five and improve your slapping skills just in time for the annual high five contest! From hand-limbering stretches to lessons on five-ing with finesse, readers are guided through a series of interactive challenges, each goofier than the next.

Acclaimed creative duo Adam Rubin and Daniel Salmieri have dreamed up another one-of-a-kind, laugh-out-loud book that kids will beg to read again and again.

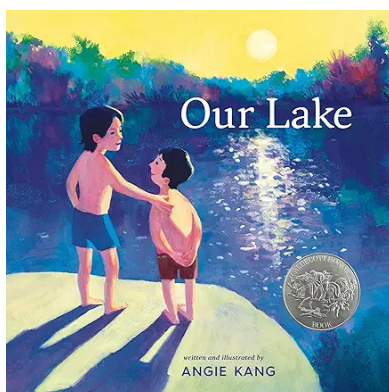


The Magical Yet, The Marvelous Now, The Curious Why

Each of us, from the day we're born, is accompanied by a special companion—the Yet. Can't tie your shoes? Yet! Can't ride a bike? Yet! Can't play the bassoon? Don't worry, Yet is there to help you out. *The Magical Yet* is the perfect tool for parents and educators to turn a negative into a positive when helping children cope with the inevitable difficult learning moments we all face. Whether a child or an adult, this encouraging and uplifting book reminds us that we all have things we haven't learned ... yet!

Missed the bus? Flubbed a test? Got overwhelmed in a crowd? When you're feeling big feelings or having a bad day, it can be hard to calm your racing mind and stay present. *The Marvelous Now* gives kids the tools to see that *this* is the moment where you need to be! Through accessible, rhythmic verse by Angela DiTerlizzi and colorful, joyful illustrations by Lorena Alvarez Gómez, the Now will help young readers learn to regulate their emotions, reset, and reach their happy place.

If it's one of those days, never fear: Your new friend the Curious Why will show you that there's always something new to discover about the world around you! Do you want to know where the dinosaurs went? How crayons are made? Or what makes a bee sting? With lively verse by Angela DiTerlizzi and vibrant illustrations by Lorena Alvarez Gómez, this companion to the bestselling *The Magical Yet* will open young minds to a remarkable world of possibilities, and remind readers that it's much easier than they think to have fun. All they need is a little curiosity!



***Our Lake* by Angie Kang**

On a sweltering hot day, a little boy mirrors his brother as he takes off his shirt, stretches, and walks toward the edge of the tall rock, ready to dive into the cool lake waters glistening below. Only this time, Father is not here. And the water looks so far away. How can he take the plunge?