

Friends School Haverford
2010
Summer Reading for Students Entering Grade 4

We feel it is important for your child to be read to regularly over the summer. This list suggests just a few good books and authors. This is only the tip of a wonderful iceberg, so explore further on your own! You'll find a lot to share and enjoy with your child.

When reading aloud, try to choose books you like, perhaps your old favorites. Encourage your child to reach for a book when in need of quiet recreation. Be sure to discuss the books together.

Fourth graders are in a wonderful in-between stage where they are ready to enjoy the more sophisticated picture books, still like some of the easy readers and easier series, and are starting to explore denser novels. Be sure to encourage any of these types of reading your student enjoys; don't assume that he/she is "beyond" picture books, many of which have advanced vocabulary and plots that require mature inference skills. The picture books on this list (and most of the books in the Caldecott winners list) are all appropriate for rising fourth graders.

Picture Books, Both Fiction and Nonfiction

- Adler, David: **America's Champion Swimmer: Gertrude Ederle.** The true story about the first woman to swim the English Channel.
- Berne, Jennifer: **Manfish: a story of Jacques Cousteau.** A good pictorial introduction to the life of an extremely important and influential inventor and naturalist.
- Boulton, Jane: **Only Opal: The Diary of a Young Girl.** Excerpts from the poetic memoir of a girl raised by foster parents in early 1900s Oregon, with lovely illustrations by Barbara Cooney.
- Bryant, Jen: **A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams.** An interesting recent biography of the famous poet.
- Cole, Brock: **Buttons.** A "noodle" tale – a tale of an outrageously foolish family and their funny problems when father loses his buttons.
- Coppinger, Tom: **Curse in Reverse.** The hungry, tired old witch wants to reward the poor couple who help her – but a witch can only bestow curses. The couple lives in fear of her curse until they finally realize that it was, in a very unexpected way, a blessing.
- Deans, Karen: **Playing to Win.** The true story of Althea Gibson, the first African American to win at Wimbledon and one of the greatest U.S. tennis players.
- Demi: **Gandhi.** A simple picture-book biography of the Indian leader.
- Gerstein, Mordicai: **What Charlie Heard.** A picture book biography of Charles Ives, the American composer, and his quirky sense of music.

Hannah, Julie: **The Man Who Named the Clouds**. A biography of Luke Howard, a Quaker meteorologist who first classified clouds by type.

Keller, Laurie: **Do unto Otters: a Book about Manners**. Etiquette always seems to make good fodder for humor – and somehow the lessons about manners actually shine through.

Lendler, Ian: **An Undone Fairy Tale**. This rather sophisticated picture book shows what happens when you read the book too quickly for the noodle-headed construction workers to get the next page ready...

Lewin, Ted: **Sacred River**. A picture book celebration of the Ganges river, illustrated with Lewin's wonderful watercolor paintings.

Lyon, George Ella: **Mother to Tigers**. The true story of Helen Martini, a pioneering zookeeper from New York City.

The **Max Axiom** series. This comic book format series is an excellent and enjoyable introduction to many science and nature topics, such as electricity, food chains, magnetism, light, adaptation etc. Various authors.

McCully, Emily: **The Escape of Oney Judge**. Based on true events in the life of one of Martha Washington's slaves, who fled to New England and resisted several attempts to return her to her "owner".

Meddaugh, Susan: **Martha Speaks**. Martha the dog gains the power of speech when she eats alphabet soup. This leads to situations that are partly good, partly bad, but always funny.

Muth, Jon: **Zen Shorts**. A giant panda moves into the neighborhood and tells stories that really make people think. This Caldecott Honor Book from 2005 has already become a great favorite in many families.

Nobisso, Josephine: **John Blair and the Great Hinckley Fire**. This is a true story of a heroic railroad porter who, in 1894, saved many train passengers from a forest fire that engulfed their train. This story is appropriate for most rising third graders, but please preview it and decide whether your own student is ready for it at this time.

O'Malley, Kevin: **Once upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude**. A brother and sister construct a fairy tale together – with hilarious results.

Polacco, Patricia: **Pink and Say**. A touching Civil War adventure about the friendship between two boys.

Provensen, Alice: **My Fellow Americans: a Family Album**. Each page or two-page spread celebrates a different category of historical Americans – writers, financiers, architects, musicians, abolitionists, suffragists, etc.

Reynolds, Susan: **The First Marathon: The Legend of Pheidippides**. Carefully researched from ancient writings, this retelling of the classical Greek story includes dramatic illustrations.

San Souci, Robert: **Sukey and the Mermaid**. A folktale about a girl, mistreated at home, who is befriended by a beautiful mermaid.

- Schanzer, Rosalyn: **How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning**. The story of Franklin, concentrating on his experiments with electricity, written in a very light and playful tone.
- Seuss, Dr.: **And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street**. Marco's tall tales get wilder and wilder in this wonderful classic, but fortunately he keeps them all in his imagination!
- Singer, Marilyn: **Bottoms Up!** A factual survey of interesting animal bottoms, with a description of how they are useful in the animal's lives.
- Sis, Peter: Tibet: **Through the Red Box**. This quirky and dream-like book tells of the magical adventures in Tibet that his father used to recount. Critics are divided about this book – is it for children or adults? Is it art, rather than a story? This could be a very interesting picture book for parents and children to read and discuss together.
- Stanley, Diane: **Shaka, King of the Zulus**. This carefully researched picture biography presents the life of the famous leader from the early 1800s.
- Van Allsburg, Chris: **The Sweetest Fig**. A vain and greedy man thinks he has found the magic item that will make him the richest man on earth – but he hasn't reckoned with his downtrodden little dog.
- Watt, Melanie: **Scaredy Squirrel**. Scaredy Squirrel is worried about everything, and children love reading the lists he compiles.
- Zschock, Martha Day: **Journey around Philadelphia from A to Z**. A wonderful picture book celebration of things you can see in Philadelphia right now – I can think of no one book that is more likely to interest our students in touring and enjoying their own home city.

CHAPTER BOOKS and COLLECTIONS of POETRY or TALES

- Abbott, Tony: **The Secrets of Droon** series. These are just slightly harder to read than the *Magic Treehouse* books, and although they lack the historical and nature facts that give the *Magic Treehouse* books extra value, they are full of magical adventures.
- Alexander, Lloyd: **The Book of Three**. Taran, the assistant pig keeper, craves heroic adventure and is mixed up in more than he bargained for in this fantasy. This first book in the series stands alone very well, but a student who loves it will want to read the other four.
- Arnold, Louise: **Golden and Grey**. The story of a little ghost who wants to help a lonely, unhappy boy, and the variously funny and satisfying adventures that result.
- Bellairs, John: **The House with a Clock in Its Walls**. This very creepy supernatural mystery is perfect for some rising fourth graders, but too much for some, so be aware of your own student's comfort level before recommending it.
- Berman, Len: **And Nobody Got Hurt! The World's Weirdest, Wackiest True Sports Stories**. The title says it all.

- Brown, Susan Taylor: **Robert Smalls Sails to Freedom**. This short chapter book tells the true story of an American slave who stole a confederate ship during the Civil War and sailed to the North with his friends and family.
- Byars, Betsy: **The Not-Just-Anybody Family**. The gripping and amusing adventures of a trio of children being raised in poverty by their grandfather.
- Cooney, Doug: **The Beloved Dearly**. An ambitious boy decides to make money by providing pet funerals to his schoolmates. A funny novel that ends with the realization that grief isn't so funny, and that a funeral can be a healing time.
- Dahl, Roald: **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**. This combination of rags-to-riches and over-the-top silliness makes for a very satisfying read-aloud.
- D'Aulaire, Ingri: **D'Aulaire's Greek Myths**. This classic has inspired many children to a life-long interest in mythology and classical culture. If your child likes it, try D'Aulaire's **Norse Gods and Giants** as well.
- De Paola, Tomie: **26 Fairmount Avenue**. The author's true and very amusing memoir, this book works well with a wide range of ages.
- DiCamillo, Kate: **Because of Winn-Dixie**. A non-perfect dog complicates life for a girl.
- Draper, Sharon: **Ziggy and the Black Dinosaurs** series. This modern mystery series is in the traditional "mystery-solving chums" mold, and will make good read-alouds for students of this age.
- Eager, Edward: **Half Magic**. This book is dated in some ways, but children of this age still love the magical adventures of the children who find a magic charm that grants wishes – but only *half* of what you wish for.
- Enright, Elizabeth: **The Saturdays**. A New York City set of siblings decides to pool their allowances, so each Saturday one of the children can go do something really special. Originally published in 1941, but still in print and still greatly enjoyed today. There are sequels about the same family, as it moves to the country and deals with World War II.
- Erickson, John: The **Hank the Cowdog** series. Hank is quite a character, and the mysteries he solves are never quite what he thinks they are – which adds a wonderful element of humor. These are also a favorite read-aloud for many parents.
- Estes, Eleanor: **The Moffats**. Like *The Saturdays* above, *The Moffats* is a book decades old, dealing with the life of a family of siblings; and like *The Saturdays*, *All-of-a-Kind Family*, and many others, children still love this book.
- Fardell, John: **The 7 Professors of the Far North**. Crazy science adventure. One of my (physicist) husband's favorite read-alouds *ever*.
- Feiffer, Jules: **A Room with a Zoo**. What happens when an animal-loving girl is allowed to have all sorts of pets in her room? The author gave a humorous makeover to a real-life situation to create this novel.
- Florian, Douglas: **Comets, Stars, the Moon, and Mars**. A collection of poems about space.

- The **Geronimo Stilton** series. This series of light mouse detective adventures appeals to many students of this age. By various unattributed authors.
- Greenburg, Dan: The **Zack Files** series. Zack is always getting into silly supernatural adventures – whether with his great-grandfather, reincarnated as a cat; or whether with a ghost, or psychic powers.
- Griffin, Adele: **Witch twins**. Sisters with magical powers have adventures, some humorous and some not so humorous, as they deal with life between two households.
- Hale, Bruce: The **Chet Gecko** series. These humorous mysteries for children have a school setting.
- Hirsch, Odo: **Bartlett and the Ice Voyage**. Bartlett the voyager takes on an unreasonable mission for his impetuous young queen, and succeeds through cleverness and perseverance. This book should appeal to young fans of fantasy novels as well as those who just like adventure.
- Hopkins, Lee Bennett, ed.: **Got Geography!** A collection of poems about geography.
- Herriot, James: **James Herriot's Treasury for Children**. Herriot's many years as a country vet in England yielded a trove of stories, and these illustrated tales are much enjoyed by animal-loving children.
- Horvath, Polly: **Everything on a Waffle**. Eleven-year-old Primrose Squarp is living with her Uncle Jack because her parents have gone missing. Through her variously hilarious or poignant adventures, she never gives up hope of their safe return.
- Ibbotson, Eva: **Which Witch?** The chief evil wizard must marry, but whom? He puts together a sort of pageant of evil witches, one of whom is secretly – gasp – *good!*
- Katz, Alan: **Take Me out of the Bathtub and Other Silly Dilly Songs**. Ridiculous parodies, set to well-known tunes, which your child will love to sing.
- Katz, Susan: **Mrs. Brown on Exhibit and Other Museum Poems**. Class trips to museums, told in poems and illustrations. Clearly the author lives around here, because you'll recognize things from various Philadelphia museums in the poems – like the giant heart from the Franklin Institute, and the Soap Lady from the Mutter Museum!
- Kinney, Jeff: **Diary of a Wimpy Kid**. This quick read is a huge favorite with children of this age, and really deals with some age-appropriate social issues – including what happens when you take a friend for granted.
- Levine, Gail Carson: **The Princess Tales** series. For children who like fairy tales, these are perfect. Each short novel is a fractured version of a fairy tale – or maybe a combination of several.
- Lewis, C.S.: **The Chronicles of Narnia**. I particularly recommend *Prince Caspian*, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, and *The Silver Chair* for this age.
- Lowry, Lois: **Anastasia Krupnik**. Anastasia loves her life, but things are about to change, in this fine book and its sequels.

MacDonald, Betty: **Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle** series. When parents in her little town can't deal with their children's behavior, they call Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle for her outrageous (but always effective) advice.

Max Axiom science series (various authors). Max is a "super scientist", and in this excellent nonfiction comic book series, he explains various science topics in a clear and entertaining manner.

McDonald, Megan: **Judy Moody** series. These books are a great favorite of third, fourth and fifth grade girls.

McKissack, Patricia: **The Dark-Thirty**. Literary ghost stories with a Southern flair.

Merrill, Jean: **The Pushcart War**. When trucks become so large that they're taking over New York City – and making it impossible for the pushcarts to operate – the pushcart vendors organize and decide to take matters into their own hands. This venerable story of David versus Goliath is still beloved.

Moses, Shelia: **Sallie Gal and the Wall-a-kee Man**. When Sallie Gal breaks a family rule, she needs to make things right with her conscience – and with her mother.

Ormondroyd, Edward: **David and the Phoenix**. This old book is still in print because of its enduring popularity. David discovers the Phoenix, a learned and rather conceited bird, living on the hill in back of his new house. The Phoenix takes David on a series of magical adventures. The ending is very bittersweet, but children of this age are well able to understand it.

Orr, Wendy: **Nim's Island**. A girl who lives with her scientist father on a lonely island contacts a lonely author for help when her father disappears. A satisfying adventure.

Pericoli, Matteo: **The True Story of Stellina**. The true story of a rescued bird that becomes an unusual pet, with beautiful illustrations.

Prelutsky, Jack: **New Kid on the Block** (poems). Jack Prelutsky is one of the most famous and beloved writers of poetry for today's children, and this collection will have something to please almost anybody. If this is a hit, try **Monday's Troll** or **The Dragons Are Singing Tonight** by the same author.

Prior, Natalie: The **Lily Quench** series. Lily is a chivalrous heroine, and this series of fantasy adventures will satisfy fantasy-loving girls and boys.

Rex, Adam : **Frankenstein Makes a Sandwich**. These poems are wonderfully silly, and the pictures are great.

Rovetch, Gerda: **There Was a Man Who Loved a Rat**. These poems are very quirky, and kids love them!

Sachar, Louis: **Sideways Stories from Wayside School**. Each chapter is a self-contained episode about a quirky and humorous day at Wayside School.

Schwartz, Alvin: **Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark**. These folk tales and urban legends can be quite creepy, so be aware of your student's comfort level before recommending this collection.

Selden, George: **The Cricket in Times Square**. The adventures of the metropolitan cricket and his friends are as popular as ever.

Sharp, Margery: **The Rescuers**. This fairly sophisticated mouse adventure has wonderful illustrations by Garth Williams that really enhance the reading experience. Consider reading this book aloud to your student, as the vocabulary is quite difficult for most elementary schoolers.

Shields, Carol. **Brain Juice: Science Fresh Squeezed**. Intriguing little poems about science topics.

Silverstein, Shel: **Where the Sidewalk Ends** (Poems). This collection of Shel Silverstein's poems has become a classic of American children's literature.

Sobel, Donald: **The Encyclopedia Brown series**. These classics have become such a part of American culture that every child should read at least a few of the self-contained chapters some time in his/her school life, and some children will want to read them all.

Stevenson, James: **Sweet Corn**. Stevenson, a famous artist, draws pictures of things in his daily life and writes poems that bring them from the ordinary into the wonderful. This poem collection and its sequels are not to be missed.

Stolz, Mary: **Stealing Home**. A boy has to adjust to sharing his home and his life with a cranky elderly relative.

Taylor, Sidney: **All-of-a-Kind Family**. The adventures of a Jewish family living in New York City in the early 1900s. This great classic is a perfect read-aloud.

Van Draanen, Wendelin: The **Shredderman** series. This fine series of school mysteries is popular with fourth graders.

Wesley, Valerie Wilson: **Willimena Rules** series. Willimena is full of plans that get her into difficulties at school and at home.

White, E.B.: **Charlotte's Web**. This classic story of friendship and kindness appeals to nearly every child.

Wilder, Laura Ingalls: **Little House on the Prairie, Farmer Boy, On the Banks of Plum Creek**. I particularly recommend these three of Wilder's books for this age.

MAGAZINES

Appleseeds. Each issue focuses on a single theme, bringing together a number of interesting short articles and activities. A very fine magazine for this age group.

Ask. Each issue focuses on one non-fiction topic, and contains non-fiction, comic strips, and activities about the topic. Very pictorial, very informative, very entertaining.

Kids Discover. Like **Ask** above, but concentrating on facts and photographs, rather than including comic strips and activities. Some children prefer one, some the other.

Spider. **Spider** is a literary magazine for 6-9 year olds, full of high-quality fiction and poetry. If your student is growing out of **Spider**, try **Cricket** magazine, for 9-12 year olds.

Zoobooks. Each issue of **Zoobooks** takes an in-depth, non-fiction look at one animal or animal family.

The report of the Commission on Reading, [Becoming a Nation of Readers](#), states, “The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.