

The Summer Reading Challenge

“There is more treasure in books than in all the pirates’ loot on Treasure Island... and best of all, you can enjoy these riches every day of your life.” —Walt Disney

Suggested Reading List

Poetry

Dragons, Dragons by Eric Carle
For Laughing Out Loud: Poems to Tickle Your Funnybone by Jack Prelutsky
Mice are Nice by Nancy Larrick
Something Big Has Been Here by Jack Prelutsky

Early Readers

My Name is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz by Monica Brown. A bilingual narrative that follows young Celia Cruz’s life as she becomes a well-known singer in her homeland of Cuba, then moves to New York City and Miami where she charms everyone with her talent in singing salsa.
So You Want to be President? by Judith St. George. A fun book filled with inspiring facts about the United States Presidents that leaves kids believing that they can be whatever they aspire to be.

Elementary Readers

Adventure

Two in the Wilderness by Sandra Weber. A true story about a mother and daughter who take a journey through the Adirondack Mountains. Join them as they explore the mountains’ history – both geological and cultural – with a here-and-now account of their ups and downs through this rugged landscape.
Snow Treasure by Marie McSwigan. An exciting and suspenseful tale about a group of Norwegian children who are assigned a daring adventure to remove their town’s gold from the local banks and hide it before the Germans steal it all during the German occupation in 1940.

Fantasy and Mystery

Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster. Bored Milo is suddenly drawn out of his hum-drum existence by the appearance of a tollbooth in his bedroom, where once through, he goes on exciting adventures and encounters countless odd characters.
Cricket in Times Square by George Selden. Chester the Cricket jumps into the picnic basket of unsuspecting New Yorkers who take him home with them. Chester then needs to learn how to adapt to his new city life, all the while mystifying the Big Apple with his unfamiliar chirping.

Friendship

Drita, My Homegirl by Jenny Lombard. This is the story of two fourth graders who become close friends. Drita is a refugee from Kosova who has just arrived in New York City and Maxie is a precocious child who lives with her supportive grandmother and her widowed father.

Crow Boy by Taro Yashima. This is the story of a shy mountain boy from a small Japanese village who is an outcast at his school, yet continues to leave his home at dawn and return at sunset in order to attend the school, and eventually gains acceptance through his numerous talents.

Humor

Owls in the Family by Farley Mowat. This book tells of two owls that go on exhilarating adventures in a quaint neighborhood and turn one particular house topsy-turvy.
The Fortune Tellers by Lloyd Alexander. This is an original folktale set in Cameroon about a young man who visits and then becomes the village fortune-teller. It’s a story full of adventure and sly humor.

History

Rosetta, Rosetta, Sit by Me! by Linda Walvoord. This chapter book is based on the life of Rosetta Douglass, daughter of orator and abolitionist Frederick Douglass, and follows her struggles at being the only African-American student at the Female Seminary in Rochester, NY.

Peppe the Lamplighter by Elisa Bartone. Peppe and his family are immigrants living in Little Italy in lower Manhattan around 1900. The story follows Peppe as he gets a job as a lamplighter in order to help bring in income for his family and contribute to his community.

Sports:

Dad, Jackie and Me by Myron Uhlberg. A narrative that takes place during 1947 in Brooklyn and follows the growing relationship of a young boy and his deaf father through their shared joy of baseball and Jackie Robinson joining the Dodgers.

Abner Doubleday: Boy Baseball Pioneer by Montrew Dunham. This book recounts the life of Abner Doubleday, highlighting his enthusiasm and love of baseball and recognizes him as a heroic general who fought bravely in two wars.

Middle School Readers

Adventure

Good Night, Maman by Norma Fox Mazer. This story follows a French brother and sister as they escape from the Holocaust during WWII. By foot at first and then by boat, the siblings head to the United States for safety.

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen. A story of survival, a young man named Brian must learn to live in the wilderness alone after he is the only survivor of a plane crash. Brian is only able to adapt to his surroundings when he stops pitying himself and understands that no one can help him but himself.

Friendship

After Tupac and D Foster by Jacqueline Woodson. A group of friends in a safe Queens neighborhood love Tupac Shakur’s music. But it is only when they meet D, a girl who has seen too much loss and too many foster homes in her young life, do they truly understand and appreciate the rapper’s meaningful lyrics.

Nothing’s Fair in the Fifth Grade by Barthe DeClements. This story follows Elsie who at first has no friends in school and is disliked by everyone for stealing lunch money, until a girl named Jenny befriends her. This is a read full of friendship, the real world, and fifth grade.

Humor

Aliens for Breakfast by Jonathan Etra. Join the zany escapade of Richard, a young boy who discovers that his bowlful of Alien Crisp cereal is home to a tiny alien named Aric, who explains that he has come to save Earth from the evil Dranes, a rival alien race, and elicits Richard to help him.

How to Eat Fried Worms by Thomas Rockwell. Billy may soon regret telling his friends that he could eat almost anything when the claim leads to a disgustingly delectable dare.

Historical

Stonecutter by Leander Watts. Albion Straight is an apprentice stonecutter in 1835 in the Genesee valley in rural New York. Learn with him and feel his anxiety when a strange visitor hires him to work at Goodspell, an eerie, half-finished mansion.

Jazmin’s Notebook by Nikki Grimes. Jazmin Shelby lets us into her life, which is filled with foster homes and makeshift living arrangements inside her sister’s apartment, by showing us glimpses of her notebook that is filled with observations of her neighborhood, family, and dreams in Harlem during the 1960s.

Sports

Hang Tough, Paul Mather by Alfred Slote. Paul Mather is a baseball lover who has leukemia. His sickness continually takes him away from the pitcher’s mound and into a hospital bed. Paul, however, is determined to keep playing the game he loves and help bring his team to victory, no matter what the odds.

S.O.R. Losers by Avi. Cheer on the South Orange River (S.O.R.) School as the non-athletic members of the soccer team play against other schools, and their parents and teachers push them to preserve their winning streak.

Special thanks goes to the NYS Education Department’s Division of Library Development and librarians across the state for their help.