

Summer Reading List for Incoming Fourth Grade Students

Animal Tales

Avi. *Poppy*. (series) A heroic mouse defends her community against an evil owl in an exciting story of adventure.

DiCamillo, Kate. *Tale of Despereaux*. This is the story of Despereaux Tilling, a small mouse of unusual talents, the princess that he loves, the servant girl who longs to be a princess, and a devious rat determined to bring them all to ruin. This is also a great book on tape for the whole family to enjoy on long car trips.

King-Smith, Dick. *The School Mouse*. Flora, the world's most educated mouse, helps save her family during a crisis. Try other titles by this same author!

Mass, Wendy. *A Mango Shaped Space*. Afraid that she is crazy, thirteen-year-old Mia, who sees a special color with every letter, number, and sound, keeps this a secret until she becomes overwhelmed by school, changing relationships, and the loss of her beloved cat.

Park, Linda Sue. *Archer's Quest*. Twelve-year-old Kevin Kim helps Chu-mong, a legendary, tiger riding king of ancient Korea return to his own time. This book is packed with fantasy, historical fiction, and a great explanation of the Chinese Zodiac.

Vande Velde, Vivian. *Smart Dog*. Fifth-grader Amy agrees to help a friendly dog who has escaped from the local university, because the dog (a "science experiment") is not only smart enough to talk but also extremely polite. Can Amy and Sherlock manage to stay half a step ahead of the researchers, who plan to dissect Sherlock's brain?

Stories about Family and Friends

Blume, Judy. *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*. (series) As Peter struggles with relationships with friends and family he finds his demanding two-year-old brother, Fudge, an ever increasing problem. Laugh out loud fun!

Clements, Andrew. *Lunch Money*. Greg has a talent- he knows how to make money. This time he wants to sell his self-created comic books in school for a profit. Another winning school story by Clements! Try other titles by this same author.

Creech, Sharon. *Granny Torelli Makes Soup*. With the help of her wise old grandmother twelve-year-old Rosie manages to work out the problems in her relationship with her best friend Bailey, the boy next door. Also by the same author: *Love that Dog* and *Walk Two Moons*.

Larson, Kirby. *Hattie Big Sky*. After inheriting her uncle's homesteading claim in Montana, 16 year old orphan Hattie Brookes travels from Iowa in 1917 to make a home for herself and encounters some unexpected problems related to the war being fought in Europe. Great to read after Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* series.

Mackel, Kathy. *Mad Cat*. Tough-as-nails catcher Madelyn Catherine (you'd better call her MadCat) is excited at the prospect of seeing the Norwich, New Hampshire, Sting, her fast-pitch softball team, upgraded into national contenders. But then she realizes that the change means cutting weaker players to make room for stars from other local teams. A winner of a sports novel that explores what it means to compete.

Morgenstern, Susie. *A Book of Coupons*. The new fifth-grade teacher, Monsieur Noel, or "Mr. Christmas," gives each child a book of coupons that excuse the holder for infractions of the rules. But the real gift he gives them is a love for learning--he will give them a "whole year of lessons for free." Morgenstern's witty and poignant tribute to great teachers everywhere proclaims what education should be about. Translated from the French.

Peck, Richard. *A Long Way From Chicago*. A boy recounts his annual summer trips to rural Illinois with his sister during the Great Depression to visit their larger-than-life grandmother. Filled with adventure and much humor. White, Ruth. *Tadpole*. In rural Kentucky in 1955, Serilda Collins, single mother of four lively girls, discovers that her orphaned nephew is in need of help. The girls come to his rescue in many humorous and touching situations.

Fantasy and Adventure

Banks, Lynn Reid. *The Indian in the Cupboard*. (series) A nine-year-old boy receives a plastic Indian, a cupboard, and a little key for his birthday and finds himself involved in adventure when the Indian comes to life in the cupboard and befriends him.

Edwards, Julie Andrews. *The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles*. The wonderful tale of Lindy, Tom, and Ben's adventures as they try to reach Whangdoodleland. A favorite of those who love fantasy!

Gutman, Dan. *Jackie and Me: Magic Baseball Card Series*. (series) With the help of baseball cards, a boy can travel through time to famous baseball games in history and meet the players in person in various circumstances.

Berstein, Nina. *Magic by the Book*. Siblings Anne, Emily, and Will, find a mysterious book among those brought home from the local library in Queens. As the children read the book, it becomes apparent that the stories are all about them (since Edward Eager is explicitly mentioned the echo of his *Seven-Day Magic* is likely intentional), and they get pulled into a series of fantastical adventures drawing directly from Green's *Robin Hood*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, an illustrated encyclopedia of bugs, and *War and Peace*. A fun romp that celebrates the joys of reading.

Hale, Shannon. *Princess Academy*. While attending a strict academy for potential princesses with the other girls from her mountain village, Miri discovers unexpected talents and connections to her homeland. 2005 Newbery Honor Book. Also try *Goose Girl* and *Enna Burning* by the same author.

Ibbotson, Eva. *The Secret of Platform 13*. Odge Gribble, a young hag, accompanies an old wizard, a gentle fey, and a giant ogre on their mission through a magical tunnel from their island to London to rescue their king and queen's son, who had been stolen as an infant. A real page turner!

Martin, Ann & Godwin, Laura. *The Doll People*. A family of porcelain dolls that has lived in the same house for one hundred years is taken aback when a new family of plastic dolls arrives and doesn't follow The Doll Code of Honor. The next book in the series *The Meanest Doll in the World* is often fun to read first with its fast paced action and suspense.

Paulsen, Gary. *Hatchet*. After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the Canadian wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce.

Scieska, Jon. *Time Warp Trio*. (series) The zany time traveling trio of Fred, Joe, and Sam never fail to amuse and educate in their crazy adventures.

Myths and Legends

d'Aulaires, Ingri and Edgar Parin. *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek myths*. Lavishly illustrated introductions to the myths of Ancient Greece. If you enjoy this, you may also like d'Aulaires' *Norse Gods and Giants*. Both a must read before the *Lightening Thief* (series)

Hodges, Margaret. *Merlin and the Making of the King*. Hodges' retelling of three Arthurian legends is beautiful in its simplicity; her stories retain the full flavor of the legends but remain accessible. Trina Schart Hyman's artwork is reminiscent of detailed medieval manuscripts. If you enjoy this title, see Gerald Morris's *The Squire's Tale* above.

Osborne, Mary Pope. *Favorite Medieval Tales*. Nine medieval tales, including "Finn MacCoul," "Beowulf," "The Sword in the Stone," and "Robin Hood and His Merry Men," are retold in this elegant volume. Each story opens with a short quote in the tale's original language, introducing readers to the evolution of the English language. Inspired by medieval art and illuminated manuscripts, Howell's paintings complement the well-researched text.

Yolen, Jane. *Not One Damsel in Distress: World Folktales for Strong Girls*. Yolen has collected more than a dozen formerly obscure folktales from around the world featuring strong and combative women heroes such as Burd Janet, Atalanta, and Bradamante, and has narrated them with verbal flourishes taken from the oral tradition. If you liked this, you may also enjoy Jane Yolen's *Mightier than the Sword: World Folktales for Strong Boys*.

Poetry

Florian, Douglas. *Summersaults: Poems & Paintings*. In 28 exuberant poems, Florian writes of hazy days, fly balls, and swimming holes—a celebration of all things summery.

George, Kristine O'Connell. *Fold me a Poem*. Haiku poems describe how a young boy creates a world filled with origami creatures. A new picture book for all ages. Also go to the author's website at www.kristinegeorge.com for origami ideas and instruction.

Janeczko, Paul, selector. *A Poke in the I: A Collection of Concrete Poems*. This book's playful vision that "the arrangement of letters or words on the page, the typefaces chosen, and the way space is used, add meaning to the poem beyond that contained in the actual words" never wavers. The visual ingenuity is justified by equally clever poetry. Raschka's strong vertical lines and bold colors add energy to the collection, at the base of which lie the twin themes that language is neither static nor dull. And don't miss the latest title from the same author: *A Kick in the Head*.

Soto, Gary. *Neighborhood Odes*. Twenty-one poems, all odes, celebrate life in a Hispanic neighborhood. With humor, sensitivity, and insight, Soto explores the lives of children. Diaz's contemporary black-and-white illustrations, which often resemble cut paper, effortlessly capture the varied moods of this remarkable collection. With a glossary of thirty Spanish words and phrases.

Nonfiction

Curlee, Lynn. *Brooklyn Bridge*. The Brooklyn Bridge receives handsome tribute here as a great accomplishment of engineering and human labor. Full-page paintings provide impressive views of the underwater excavation of foundations, the construction of the anchoring towers, and the suspension of cables. While the text explains the technical aspects of construction, it also recounts the costly efforts of the Roebling family and the laborers.

D.K. Publishing. *Eye Witness Books: China; Tree; Fossil; Weather; Ocean*. Any in this series of great non-fiction books with amazing pictures and captions would be great reading on a long summer afternoon.

Goodall, Jane. *The Chimpanzees I Love: Saving Their World and Ours*. Goodall centers her discussion on the animals: their tool use, interactions among family groups (especially mothers and their young), and intelligence and emotions. Descriptions of the chimpanzees are richly detailed and filled with personality. Goodall's affectionate relationship with the chimpanzees is evident in the photos from forty years of research. Final chapters explain the dangers faced by chimpanzees not only in the wild but in captivity.

Kramer, Steven. *Hidden Worlds: Looking Through a Scientist's Microscope*. This book profiles Dennis Kunkel, whose expertise lies in the use of microscopy. The text discusses the nature of microscopic images, the role of technical equipment in research, and the reliance of science on observation. Kunkel's colorized microphotographs are enhanced by the sharp layouts.

Montgomery, Sy. *The Tarantula Scientist*. This book follows Sam Marshall on an expedition to South America to investigate several tarantula species. Information about spider basics, spider silk, and how to observe your own local spiders is woven into the main narrative. The color photography is so interesting that even the squeamish may take a second look at the hairy tarantulas portrayed in close detail.

Descriptions of books are edited from a variety of sources such as Horn Book Guide Online, Capitol Choices 2005, previous summer reading lists, and individual cataloging records.