



Looking for Something to Read?

In the following sections, we've tried to arrange the chapter books from easier to more challenging texts within genres.

If a reader is unsure if a book is at their reading level, we encourage students to use the “*5 finger rule*.” Using this technique, the reader opens a page at random, reads it silently and holds up a finger for any word they don't understand. At the end of the page they count the fingers raised. If 0-1 the book is aimed at their reading level, 2-4 the book would be a challenge and 5 or more it would be difficult to read on their own.

Many of these books, especially the challenging ones, would be great to read aloud on a rainy afternoon.

Remember the public library runs reading programs at various times throughout the year and their librarians also love to recommend books!

Margot Clark & Liza Morrison, MPH Librarians

Popular Fiction

SHREDDERMAN: SECRET IDENTITY (SERIES) Wendelin Van Draanen
Fifth grader Nolan Byrd is being bullied. Nolan creates a “cyber-superhero” alter ego called “Shredderman” and the bully learns a lesson. Short chapters and comic book style illustrations move these stories along.

NASTY, STINKY SNEAKERS Eve Bunting
Colin thinks he has a good chance to win a prize for his smelly shoes. When the sneakers vanish, Colin, convinced it is rival Jack Dunn's doing, decides to steal Jack's reeking shoes. Imagine Colin's surprise when he discovers he is wrong and that Jack's shoes have now also disappeared?

AMBER BROWN IS GREEN WITH ENVY (SERIES) Paula Danziger
Told by Amber, these books are funny and positive stories that explore what it is like to be in blended families, sibling rivalry, and other topics of interest kids.

ALVIN HO: ALLERGIC TO GIRLS... Lenore Look
Follow the adventures of the shy, fearful and funny Alvin who never talks at school but has a lot to say about life with his family and his friends. Along the way you learn about his family life (his dad likes to use Shakespearean insults and his grand father sews), his Chinese American heritage, classical music, Japanese food and baseball.

CLASSIC SPORTS, EXTREME SPORTS (SERIES) Matt Christopher
Look for these series if you like to read stories about sports and athletes that include problem solving with team mates as well as mysteries to be resolved. There are titles for every sport including skateboarding, snowboarding, golf, football, soccer, baseball and more. At the website, you can select books by sport and by reading level.
<http://www.mattchristopher.com>.

THE LANDRY NEWS Andrew Clements
Clement writes popular books about elementary school life. A new fifth-grade student in Mr. Larson's class is barely noticed by classmates or her teacher until she publishes her first edition of the *Landry News*, and creates a transformation of teacher, students, and even herself. If you like this, try Clements many other popular books too.

THE WARRIORS (SERIES) ERIN HUNTER
Do you like to read about the world from an animal's point of view? Follow this series of books about four clans of wild cats that share a forest according to the laws of their ancestors. In book one, an ordinary house cat named Rusty wanders into the forest and a suspenseful adventure occurs.

LAWN BOY Gary Paulsen
When a 12 year old boy is given his grandfather's old lawnmower he starts a lawn mowing business. When his stock broker neighbor starts giving him advice, things get out of hand but he may never have to work a summer again! This funny book has quirky characters and snappy dialog.

SCAT Carl Hiaasen
A most fearsome biology teacher disappears on a trip to the Florida Everglades. Was she a victim of foul play? Is it the reckless greed of developers and illegal oil drillers? If you like mysteries with wacky characters, care about the environment and can laugh at Hiaasen's quirky sense of humor, you'll like this story. Also try **Flush** and **Hoot**.

Mysteries & Adventure Fiction

BUNNICULA (SERIES)

Deborah and James Howe

Talking animals and a vampire bunny? This popular series features many funny misunderstandings and mysterious events.

ENCYCLOPEDIA BROWN (SERIES)

Donald Sobol

Ten-year old detective Encyclopedia Brown (named for his famous computer-like brain) works with his police chief father to solve these classic mysteries. The solutions and logic used in each case are explained in the back of the book.

HERCULEAH JONES MYSTERIES (SERIES)

Betsy Byars

In this mystery series, kid detective Herculeah, along with her private investigator mom and police-detective dad, keep you guessing “who did it?” You might try *Tarot Says Beware*, *The Dark Stairs* or others by this Newbery Award winning author.

NANCY DREW MYSTERIES (SERIES)

Carolyn Keene

Do you enjoy a classic? Reading the classic or updated (*Nancy Drew Notebooks & The Nancy Drew Files*) versions, many continue to enjoy these detective stories. If you like these, you might also check out *The Hardy Boys* and *The Three Investigators* series.

THE INVENTION OF HUGO CABRET

Brian Selznick

This award-winning book is in part a graphic novel. It is nearly half filled with wonderful illustrations that help move the story along. Follow the mystery of Hugo, an orphan and clock keeper living in a busy Paris train station, as his treasured notebook of secret drawings is stolen and his life intersects with a bookish girl and eccentric man who runs a toy booth in the station.

FROM THE MIXED-UP FILES OF MRS. BASIL E. FRANKWEILER

E.L. Konigsburg

This classic story is still enjoyed for its subtle humor and familiar theme of running away. Two kids wind up living at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and become involved in solving a mystery for the museum. A 1968 Newbery Medal winner, it also makes a good read aloud.

JOHNNY DIXON MYSTERIES (SERIES)

John Bellairs

This mystery/thriller series was originally written by John Bellairs. Well-written sequels have also been penned by Brad Strickland. Some titles include *The Drum, the Doll and the Zombie* and *The Eyes of the Killer Robot*. These supernatural tales feature interesting plots, well-developed characters, and edge-of-your-seat suspense. They are sufficiently creepy to appeal to readers too young for Stephen King but having outgrown R.L. Stine.

HATCHET

Gary Paulsen

Paulsen writes many popular adventure stories for kids and young adults. His most popular books are about wilderness survival and adventure. In his classic story *Hatchet*, 13 year old Brian survives a plane crash in Canada only to spend 54 days on his own in the wilderness. The novel chronicles his adventures as he learns to build a fire, to fish and to hunt in order to survive. This story continues in several sequels.

Fantastical Fiction

TIME WARP TRIO (SERIES)

Jon Scieszka

You can learn a lot of interesting facts while you follow the time warp adventures of three friends from Brooklyn. Read about Joe, Fred and Sam as they try to come back from ancient Rome, the land of Vikings, the year 2095, and many other interesting times. Find out more about the latest Time Warp Trio book or the animated television series at <http://www.guysread.com> and <http://www.timewarptrio.com>

MOLLY MOON (SERIES)

Georgia Bing

If you like the *Series of Unfortunate Events* books, you'll also like the creepy characters who try and stop Molly - a plucky British orphan - on her many adventures after she finds a book in the library that teaches her the art of hypnotism.

THE TALE OF DESPERAUX

Kate DiCamillo

A fable disguised as an adventure tale about the brave mouse Desperaux and his love for the human princess Pea. Featuring dungeons and rats and a quest for justice, *The Tale of Desperaux* is a story about light and hope and the power of love. Sure to be loved by young and old, boys and girls, this story makes a great read aloud. Newbery Award Winner 2003.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

C.S. Lewis

This famous series includes the popular title *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. It follows the adventures of four British siblings as they travel through a wardrobe that leads them into the land of Narnia. The stories are allegorical and are infused throughout with a sense of faith and hope.

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Roald Dahl

This is arguably the most well known children's story by Roald Dahl, the famous British author. Dahl combines quirky humor with main characters that gain our sympathy. His fantastical settings and magical happenings are always engaging. If you like it, try the sequel, *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*.

INKHEART

Cornelia Funke

Translated from German and made into a popular movie, Inkheart is part of a popular series of books that include Inkspell and Inkdeath. In Inkheart you meet Meggie, a book lover, and her Dad, a book binder with a unique ability to make characters in books come alive. A suspenseful story that is full of magic. Recommended for more mature readers.

WHEN YOU REACH ME

Rebecca Stead

Sixth grader Miranda lives with her mom in New York City. Find out why she keeps finding mysterious notes that predict the future, why she and her best friend Sal aren't getting along, and what her obsession with the book *A Wrinkle In Time* has to do with it all in this excellent mix of realism and science fiction. Newbery Award winner 2009.

REDWALL (SERIES)

Brian Jacques

These are wonderful adventure stories that feature beautiful writing and intricate plots about the animals of Redwall Abbey as they experience good battling with--and ultimately triumphing over--evil. The series follows the tradition of a medieval quest story. This acclaimed British series was also made into an animated television program. Great read aloud!

Historical Fiction

SARAH PLAIN AND TALL

Patricia MacLachlan

After their mother dies, a sister and brother are surprised when their father advertises in the newspaper for a wife. Find out who replies in this gentle and sweet Newbery Award winning story about life on the American Plains at the turn of the century. If you like comparing "the book vs. the movie," watch the Hallmark television version of this story (starring Meryl Streep & Christopher Walken.) Great family entertainment.

SNOW TREASURE

Marie McSwigan

Norwegian children help their town protect its gold during World War II. Since a group of adults can't remove the gold without the Germans finding out, the townspeople develop a daring plan involving the children carrying the bullion on their sleds down to the river where it will be loaded onto a ship for the United States. Drama and suspense keep the story moving along.

BUD, NOT BUDDY

Christopher Paul Curtis

Set during the American Depression in the 1930s, an orphaned runaway named Bud copes with the adult world with his numbered "Rules and Things." His few treasures from his former life with "Momma" are kept in a battered suitcase. One, a flyer advertising a musical group, leads him on a fantasy journey to an amazing reality. Winner of the Newbery Medal in 2000.

AL CAPONE DOES MY SHIRTS

Gennifer Choldenko

Sibling relationships and family dilemmas are at the heart of this story. Set in 1935 on the infamous Alcatraz Island, this often humorous story begins when Moose Flanagan's family moves to the Island so his Dad can be a prison guard. Told in the first person by twelve year old Moose, there are plenty of references to the famous mob boss Al Capone who is imprisoned on the Island and figures into the plot.

A SINGLE SHARD

Linda Sue Park

This author from Rochester New York takes the reader along on a quest as the hero, a 12th century orphaned Korean boy, pursues his dreams of becoming an artist. With vivid imagery and likable characters, we witness the hero go from living under a bridge to receiving a royal commission for the famous celadon ceramic work done in his village. A Newbery Award winner in 2001, this book is good to read aloud.

KEEP SMILING THROUGH

Ann Rinaldi

Ann Rinaldi is a very popular historical fiction writer. Many details of home life during World War II in New Jersey come alive in this story of 10 year old Kay and her struggles with an unloving home situation. When her German grandfather is arrested, her bravery is tested. Kay's willingness to sacrifice for her family and for the War makes for a sometimes sad and realistic story.

THE WITCH OF BLACKBIRD POND

Elizabeth George Speare

The setting is the American colonies during the frightening period of witch hysteria. Forced to leave her sunny Caribbean home for bleak Connecticut, Kit struggles to fit in. When she befriends an old Quaker woman, Kit is accused of being a witch. A slow beginning turns into an engrossing story about the ways people try to fit into society. And the price you must sometimes pay if you don't. A Newbery Award winner and a classic.