

Prince William County Public Schools
Summer Reading Suggested Reading List

Elementary - Fifth Grade

The purpose of the Prince William County Public Schools Summer Reading Suggested Reading List is for students to enjoy quality literature and to continue developing their independent reading skills to support critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and citizenship. Student participation in the challenge is voluntary. Students who choose to participate will read books they self-select. Students that read during the summer can grow and explore new experiences to support life-long reading habits.

The following titles are suggestions to help foster a love of reading for pleasure. Other books selected by the student with guidance from a parent, guardian, or librarian, are also acceptable.

Author	Title	Publication Date	Annotation
Alexander, Kwame	<i>Animal Ark</i>	2017	The world’s threatened species are celebrated in gorgeously hued photos and haiku in this engaging informational picture book. Alexander and Sartore have crafted a stunning journey through the animal kingdom to provide an up-close look at dozens of animals, in poetry and photographs.
Blair, Shelia	<i>Rock, Brock, and the Savings Shock</i>	2017	Rock and Brock may be twins, but they are as different as two twins can be. One day, their grandpa offers them a plan—for ten straight weeks on Saturday he will give them each one dollar. But there is a catch! "Listen now, for here's the trick, each buck you save, I'll match it quick. But spend it, there's no extra dough, so save your cash, and watch it grow." Rock is excited—there are all sorts of things he can buy for one dollar! Brock is saving his. it is never too late to start saving.

Boston-Weatherford, Carole	<i>Box: Henry Brown Mails Himself To Freedom</i>	2010	Henry Brown wrote that long before he came to be known as Box, he “entered the world a slave.” He was put to work as a child and passed down from one generation to the next — as property. When he was an adult, his wife and children were sold away from him out of spite. Henry Brown watched as his family left bound in chains, headed to the deeper South. What more could be taken from him? But then hope — and help — came in the form of the Underground Railroad. Escape!
Barton, Carl	<i>Whoosh! : Lonnie Johnson's Super-soaking Stream of Inventions</i>	2016	Lonnie Johnson always tinkered with something. Early projects included rockets, a robot, and a powerful sound system for parties. The story documents his perseverance in overcoming obstacles, some stemming from being African American—a school aptitude test that indicated he was not cut out to be an engineer, the prejudice he and his high-school team experienced while winning the 1968 University of Alabama science fair. Barton makes clear how Johnson struggled in his unconventional line of work, and also shows the rewards of his persistence -- attending Tuskegee Institute, engineering for NASA, and developing a super-blast water gun.
Bowen, Carl	<i>Quarterback Rush or any Sports Illustrated Kids Graphic Novel book</i>	2015	The Otters keep leaving their game on the practice field and losing their football games. Wide receiver Steve Michaels must overcome his own frustrations and help Aaron Corbin, his quarterback, get past his fears and play like the champion he can be.
Brown, Monica	<i>Frida Kahlo and Her Animalitos</i>	2017	This title is based on the life of one of the world's most influential painters, Frida Kahlo, and the animals that inspired her art and life. The fascinating Mexican artist Frida Kahlo is remembered for her self-portraits, her dramatic works featuring bold and vibrant colors. Her work brought attention to Mexican and indigenous culture and she is also renowned for her works celebrating the female form.

Bryant, Jen	<i>Above the Rim: How Elgin Baylor Changed Basketball</i>	2020	Hall-of-famer Elgin Baylor was one of basketball’s all-time-greatest players—an innovative athlete, team player, and quiet force for change. One of the first professional African-American players, he inspired others on and off the court. But when traveling for away games, many hotels and restaurants turned Elgin away because he was black. One night, Elgin had enough and staged a one-man protest that captured the attention of the press, the public, and the NBA.
Chin, Jason	<i>Redwoods</i>	2015	A ordinary subway trip is transformed when a young boy happens upon a book about redwood forests. As he reads the information unfolds, and with each new bit of knowledge, he travels—all the way to California to climb into the Redwood canopy. Crammed with interesting and accurate information about these great natural wonders, Jason Chin's first book is innovative nonfiction set within a strong and beautiful picture storybook.
Garcia-Williams, Rita	<i>Clayton Byrd Goes Underground</i>	2018	Clayton is happiest when he can play his harmonica with his grandfather, Cool Papa Byrd and his band, the Bluesman. When his grandfather dies suddenly, Clayton's pain is unbearable and he has to figure out how to live life without him. Cool Papa's daughter, Clayton's mother disapproved of her father's music and gets rid of all of Cool Papa's things even his guitars. Clayton decides to run away hoping to find a place with bluesman. What he finds instead is a group of street boys making their way with beat music and dance.
Gianferrari, Maria	<i>Hawk Rising</i>	2018	A red-tailed hawk hunts as its chicks wait in a cedar tree and two human children observe from their house and backyard. Over the course of the day, he makes several failed attempts at catching prey, and the children watch as he is mobbed by crows. Eventually, as the day ends, he succeeds, carrying a squirrel back to his hungry young. Realistic ink and watercolor illustrations accompany a sensory, poetic text, setting the suburban scene and offering a dynamic, naturalistic depiction of the predator's behavior. Perspectives and colors shift, presenting breathtaking bird's- and child's-eye views of sunrises, sunsets, prey, the neighborhood, and more.

Fleming, Candance	<i>Giant Squid</i>	2016	Fleming artfully introduces readers to a mysterious sea monster that glides through the deepest and darkest reaches of the ocean. Double-page close-ups are excellently detailed, and the dark color palette adds to the eerie, deep-sea feel. Bit by bit, each illustration focuses on a particular part of the sea creature until the entire squid is portrayed in a dramatic foldout spread. A final diagram and a list of further reading add a scientific bent to this visually stunning exploration of a mysterious creature.
Floca, Brian	<i>Moonshot!: the Flight of Apollo 11</i>		A fresh, expanded edition of Floca's tribute to the first moon landing. How is the revised edition different? The text is more inclusive (no longer implying that only men worked in NASA's control room) and more expressive. A double-page spread acknowledges and depicts racially diverse groups of individuals representing the thousands of men and women who planned the mission, designed and built the spacecraft, and made the spacesuits. Includes a fuller portrayal of the mission, including the night spent on the moon, Eagle's crucial docking with Columbia, and the capsule's dramatic reentry into Earth's atmosphere.
Grundmann, Emmanue	<i>When Elephants Listen With Their Feet: Discover Extraordinary Animal Senses</i>	2021	This book highlights the extraordinary ways some creatures' unique senses are highly developed. The text is graceful and often humorous, with an extensive vocabulary. Each section begins with a short introduction to the sense, usually comparing it to humans' use of it. The text is organized by the five senses. There is a section that describes animals that use Earth's electromagnetism and one section on those that use vibrations. For example, the termite will bang its head against the wall using a specific, rapid rhythm to warn the others if the colony is being attacked. An index of animals offers additional information about each creature and the corresponding page number.

Haynes, Richard	<i>Orangutan Hats and Other Tools Animals Use</i>	2021	Move over, humans! We're not the only creatures who can invent and use tools to keep ourselves fed, warm, safe, healthy, comfortable—even entertained. Thanks to the careful observations of biologists working in the field, we now know that elephants use sunscreen, long-tailed macaques floss their teeth, assassin bugs use bait to lure their prey, orangutans make pillows, and crows will go sledding just for fun. Who's the clever one now, eh?
Lê, Minh	<i>Lift</i>	2020	Iris loves to push the elevator buttons in her apartment building, but when it's time to share the fun with a new member of the family, she's pretty put out. That is, until the sudden appearance of a mysterious new button opens up entire realms of possibility, places where she can escape and explore on her own. But when she's forced to choose between going at it alone or letting her little brother tag along, Iris finds that sharing a discovery with the people you love can be the most wonderful experience of all.
Levine, Gail Carson	<i>Writing Magic: Creating Stories that Fly</i>	2014	Newbery Honor author Gail Carson Levine shares the secrets of her writing success, including how to get ideas, creating beginnings and endings, writing great dialogue, developing memorable characters, and more.
Lombard, Jenny	<i>Drita, My Homegirl</i>	2008	Drita is a ten year old, Muslim Albanian refugee from Kosovo now living in Brooklyn, New York. Maxie is African American, one of the in-crowd that wants nothing to do with the newcomer--until their 4th grade social studies teacher charges Maxie with interviewing Drita about her story. The two girls learn both their differences and their connections: Drita's mother is having a breakdown; Maxie cannot confront her grief about her mother's death in a car accident three years before. The message connecting schoolyard bullying with war is heavy, but the girls' growing friendship and respect for one another is touching, as is the climax when Maxie presents her report about what Drita left behind.
Luper, Eric	<i>Key Hunters: The Mysterious Moonstone</i> or any book in the <i>Key Hunters Series</i>	2016	Cleo and Evan are curious about where the librarian disappears to at the back of the library, so they follow her into a magical library full of locked books and find a letter which tells them that the previous librarian is trapped between the covers of one of the enchanted books, and that they must find her.

Magoon, Kekla	<i>The Season of Styx Malone</i>	2018	Caleb, the narrator of the story and older brother Bobby Gene meet Styx Malone, a mysterious, lanky, smooth-talking teenager. The boys embark on an adventure of a lifetime that encompasses rule breaking, laugh-out-loud, and nail-biting fun. Magoon creates a summer adventure with humor, heart, and a touch of melancholy. A hopeful story with a captivating cast of characters.
Marks, Janae	<i>From the Desk of Zoe Washington</i>	2020	On her 12th birthday, Zoe Washington receives a letter from her birth father, Marcus, who has been in prison her entire life. He wants to get to know her, and even though she knows her mom won't like it, she writes back. So Zoe keeps the letter a secret and begins corresponding with Marcus on a regular basis. He shares his favorite songs and encourages Zoe's baking-competition dreams. When Marcus tells Zoe he is innocent, and her grandmother agrees, Zoe begins to learn about inequality in the criminal justice system, and she and her best friend Trevor set out to find the alibi witness who can prove his innocence. Marcus doesn't want her to get involved. But keeping secrets from her mom quickly gets Zoe in over her head, jeopardizing her chances of obtaining the information she needs to save Marcus. Zoe's relationship with Marcus is at the center of the novel, but her relationships with her mother, stepfather, grandmother, and Trevor are also richly conveyed. This powerful debut packs both depth and sweetness, tackling a tough topic in a sensitive, compelling way. An extraordinary, timely, must-read debut about love, family, friendship, and justice.

Medina, Meg	<i>Merci Suárez Can't Dance</i>	2021	A follow-up to the Newbery Medal-winning <i>Merci Suarez Changes Gears</i> , this books follows another year of highs and lows in the life of Cuban American middle schooler Merci Suárez. Life is a little different for Merci Suárez in seventh grade. Her older brother, Roli, is off at college; her grandfather Lolo’s Alzheimer’s is more pronounced; and she has to regularly babysit her Tía Inés’ spirited young twins. She also finds a new responsibilities at school too. She works in the school store alongside her classmate Wilson, who she might have a crush on, and is still at odds with classmate Edna. The struggles with friendships, responsibility, school, crushes, and jealousy that Merci and her friends face will strike a chord with many readers.
Montgomery, Heather L.	<i>Something Rotten: A Fresh Look at Roadkill</i>	2018	Montgomery’s story—part memoir, part scientific overview—begins with a squashed snake and follows her as she learns more and more about the animals she finds run over on the side of the road. With wry humor, gory detail, and great enthusiasm, the author explains how this mystery, and others, are being solved thanks to civilian scientists who pick up and/or report roadkill sightings to science centers. “The book is not,” she writes, “for squeamish souls.” But budding naturalists or eco-activists will find it a smashing read.
National Geographic	<i>National Geographic Book of Nature Poetry: more than 200 Poems with Photographs that Float, Zoom, and Bloom!</i>	2015	Former U.S. Children’s Poet Laureate J. Patrick Lewis has compiled a selection of poems from poets both well-known and obscure. Each poem is paired with captivating photos, which, on every page, show an element of nature that fits along with the various themed sections. The selections represent a variety of styles, time periods, countries of origin, lengths, and themes; all are set against a stunning backdrop.

Rusch, Elizabeth	<i>The Mighty Mars Rovers: The Incredible Adventures of Spirit and Opportunity</i>	2017	On June 10, 2003, a little rover named Spirit blasted off on a rocket headed for Mars. On July 7, 2003, a twin rover named Opportunity soared through the solar system with the same mission: to find out if Mars ever had water that could have supported life. A thrilling addition to the acclaimed Scientists in the Field series, <i>The Mighty Mars Rovers</i> tells the greatest space robot adventure of all time through the eyes—and heart—of Steven Squyres, professor of astronomy at Cornell University and lead scientist on the mission.
Sepahban, Lois	<i>Paper Wishes</i>	2016	In 1942, ten-year-old Manami's family is forced into the Manzanar internment camp. Heartbroken by the loss of her dog, Yujiin, Manami becomes mute; her emotional trauma is sensitively portrayed. Manami recovers her voice when she needs it most, and the story closes on a hopeful note. Readers ready for a somber story should find this novel about Japanese American internment honest and engaging.
Sotomayor, Sonia	<i>Turning Pages: My Life Story</i>	2018	As the first Latina Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor has inspired young people around the world to reach for their dreams. But what inspired her? For young Sonia, the answer was books! They were her mirrors, her maps, her friends, and her teachers. They helped her to connect with her family in New York and in Puerto Rico, to deal with her diabetes diagnosis, to cope with her father's death, to uncover the secrets of the world, and to dream of a future for herself in which anything was possible.
Williams-Garcia, Rita	<i>One Crazy Summer</i>	2010	Delphine, 11, and her two younger sisters don't know what to expect when their dad puts them on a plane to visit their mother, who abandoned the family years ago. It is 1968 and their mother is active in Oakland's Black Power movement. The girls hope to visit Disneyland, but instead, their mother sends them to a camp run by the Black Panthers. As the summer wears on, the sisters learn about themselves, their mother, and their country during a pivotal moment in African American history. Delphine both blames and longs for her mother, and in the end these two strong characters find a measure of reconciliation. If this is your child's first exposure to historical fiction, she may be hooked.

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