

Summer Reading for Incoming Second Graders

Fables, Folktales, and Funny Tales

Bernier-Grand, Carmen T. *Juan Bobo: Four Folktales from Puerto Rico*. Charming and colorful illustrations accompany four easy-to-read, traditional Puerto Rican noodlehead tales. The text is translated into Spanish at the end of the book.

Bryan, Ashley. *Beautiful Blackbird*. Here's a life-enhancing folktale from Zambia--how birds got their black markings--and a simple, scissors-and-brush way of using collage. Silhouetted birds, in shades of violet, yellow, green, blue, are oddly drab without markings. When Ringdove asks Blackbird, the most beautiful, to paint him a necklace of black; Blackbird complies, then promises the others touches of black, too.

Isaacs, Anne. *Swamp Angel*. An original creation in the tall-tale tradition, Isaacs' rip-roaring narrative tells of a pioneer woman's transformation into Swamp Angel, summarizes her developing abilities, and focuses on her greatest triumph: the defeat of a marauding bear.

Kellogg, Steven. *Pecos Bill*. A retelling of the American tall tale, illustrated with colorful, outrageous drawings. Don't forget this author's funny Pinkerton books as well.

Kessler, Leonard. *Old Turtle's Soccer Team*. The animals learn to play soccer and the meaning of good sportsmanship under Old Turtle's patient guidance.

Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. *The Water Gift and the Pig of the Pig*. In this magical, image-rich text, shy Isabel has two anchors in her life: her sea captain grandfather and her best friend, a pig. When things go wrong and the Pig of the Pig gets lost, Isabel must convince Grandfather not to give up on his water gift, which finds lost animals as well as water.

Stevens, Janet and Susan Stevens Crummel. *And the Dish Ran Away with the Spoon*. Dish and Spoon disappear one night, and the efforts of Cat, Dog, and Cow to locate the missing pair is the organizing theme in this postmodern version of a classic nursery favorite. Don't miss this dynamic duos newest book: *The Great Fuzz Frenzy*- hilarious!

Wiley, Margaret. *Clever Beatrice*. Young Beatrice, small but smart, ventures off into the far north woods to gamble with a rich but rather dim giant. Set in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, this is a winning tale of brain vs. brawn from the French-Canadian tradition.

Real (and Almost Real) Animal Stories

Averill, Esther. *Jenny and the Cat Club*. A wonderful reprint of an old classic. Jenny, a black cat in New York City, has many adventures with the other cats in the neighborhood who also belong to the Cat Club. (series)

Byars, Betsy. *Little Horse*. Separated from his mother, Little Horse falls into a stream and is carried away. This little horse is not just alone and scared but an equine Lilliputian, fighting for survival among giants. Byars deftly combines crisp action with a lyrically evoked setting in this gentle fantasy for beginning chapter-book readers. If you enjoy this, try Byars's *Little Horse on His Own*.

Cushman, Doug. *Inspector Hopper*. Inspector Hopper and his perpetually hungry assistant McBug solve three mysteries for their insect friends. Jump into these good books!

DiCamillo, Kate. *Mercy Watson to the Rescue*. A humorous new series about the adventures of a pig named Mercy that lives with the Watson family. Curl up with this book and a piece of hot buttered toast- Mercy's favorite food! (series)

Goble, Paul. *Dream Wolf*. A kindly wolf comes to the aid of two lost children, Tibbia and Tankius, when they wander away while gathering berries. A Master Native American story teller.

King-Smith, Dick. *Mr. Potter's Pet*. Mr. Potter's boring life changes considerably after buying an unusual mynah bird.

Marshall, James. *Fox on the Job*. Fox tries to earn money for a new bicycle in many different and funny jobs. (series) Laugh out loud humor!

Smith, Alexander. *Akimbo and the Elephant; Akimbo and the Lion; Akimbo and the Crocodile Man*. Wonderfully engaging realistic fiction about a young boy helping his father on a game preserve in Africa. Hard to keep a copy on the shelf at the library!

Voigt, Cynthia. *Stories About Rosie*. The daily life of Rosie, part springer, part spaniel, who thinks it's her family's duty to take care of her and her duty to be happy.

Family Stories

Barasch, Lynne. *Radio Rescue*. In 1923 the author's father, Robert Marx, was the youngest licensed amateur radio operator in the United States. This first-person narrative describes ten-year-old Robert's experiences learning Morse code, earning his ham license, and using his skills to assist a Florida family stranded in a hurricane. The writing and illustrations have an understated quality well suited to this story of a boy pursuing a fascinating and unusual hobby.

Hearne, Betsy. *Seven Brave Women*. From anecdotal family reminiscences, Hearne has crafted a loving yet forthright series of portraits, in which a young girl recalls the remarkable lives of seven of her female ancestors from Revolutionary War days to the unhappy years of the Vietnam War. A splendid tribute to women and their history.

Horowitz, Ruth. *Breakout at the Bug Lab*. Warned by their entomologist mom to be on their best behavior during her lab's rededication ceremony, the narrator and his little brother panic when Max, a Madagascar cockroach, escapes. If you enjoy this title, try the sequel, *Big Surprise in the Bug Tank*.

Hurst, Carol Otis. *Rocks in His Head*. A young man pursues his love of rocks until the director of a museum discovers his passion and appoints him curator despite his lack of formal education. Based on the life of the author's father.

Hurwitz, Johanna. *Elisa Michaels, Bigger & Better*. In one chapter, Elisa's mother agrees to let her eat nothing but chocolate all day long! In another chapter, Elisa gets a new babysitter. Cozily bookended with episodes about Elisa and her grandmother in Florida, these chapters in the lives of the Michaels family are easygoing and easy reading.

Look, Lenore. *Love as Strong as Ginger*. Katie wants to be like her Chinese grandma, who works cracking crab at the local factory, but GninGnin has higher expectations for her. The dignity of GninGnin's labor shines through the simple words, while the food she cooks becomes a pungent metaphor--crab "made with love as strong as ginger and dreams as thick as black-bean paste."

Polacco, Patricia. *Aunt Chip and the Great Triple Creek Dam Affair*. Turn off the TV this summer and join Aunt Chip in her madcap crusade to return the magic of reading to Triple Creek.

Steptoe, John. *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. Marfaro's two beautiful daughters one sweet and kind, one mean and bad tempered must go before the king who is choosing a wife. A classic!

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Show Way*. Beautiful, multigenerational story about a family from slavery until present day and the changes the woman in the family

have made through their sewing and quilting skills. Wonderful read aloud picture book. 2005 Caldecott Honor Book.

School Stories

Danzinger, Paula. *Get Ready for Second Grade Amber Brown*. Amber is nervous about starting second grade with a new teacher and mean Hannah Burton in her class.

Look, Lenore. *Ruby Lu, Brave and True*. Seven-year-old Ruby Lu practices her magic tricks, attends Chinese school on Saturdays, and prepares for the arrival of relatives newly emigrating from China.

Martin, Ann. *Teacher's Pet*. (series) It's the first day of school and Nancy misses her best friend, Karen, who's not in her class this year.

Recorvits, Helen. *My Name is Yoon*. Disliking the way her name looks in English, Yoon refers to herself by many other names- "cat", "bird", and "cupcake," until she becomes more comfortable in her new school.

Soto, Gary. *The Skirt*. In this cheery snapshot of a Mexican-American family in California, Miata attempts to retrieve from her schoolbus the 'folklorico' skirt she left behind.

Stanley, George Edward. *Adam Sharp: Operation Spy School*. Adam and others of IM-8 go to weekend spy school to learn new tricks- but it turns out there is a spy among their ranks. (series)

Poetry

Alarcon, Francisco X. *Iguanas in the Snow*. This collection of poems in Spanish and English celebrates not only winter but also the region of northern California where Alarcon lives. Gonzalez's illustrations capture the jubilant spirit of the bilingual poems, and children will enjoy hunting for the iguanas hidden throughout.

Demi. *In the Eyes of the Cat: Japanese Poetry for All Seasons*. Arranged according to the cycle of seasons, this collection offers a fresh, inviting glimpse into the culture of Japan and is combined with interpretive illustrations.

Schwartz, Alvin. *And the Green Grass Grew All Around: Folk Poetry From Everyone*. Full of vigorous, swinging rhythms and funny, often playfully nasty, sentiments, the pages are filled with well-known rhymes as well as new discoveries.

Scieszka, Jon. *Science Verse*. A teacher's comment ("if you listen closely enough, you can hear the poetry of science in everything") causes a boy to "start hearing everything as a science poem." Also enjoy *Math Curse* by the same author. Also try *Math Curse* by same author.

Nonfiction

Bjork, Christina. *Linnea's Windowsill Garden*. (series) This sequel to *Linnea in Monet's Garden* provides a wealth of gardening knowledge and concise directions on planting seeds and pits.

Bang, Molly. *My Light*. In a simple text, Bang tells the story of sunlight to lamplight (how energy from the sun turns into energy for electricity) from the point of view of the sun. An afterword further elucidates the concepts.

Brown, Don. *Uncommon Traveler: Mary Kingsley in Africa*. Mary Kingsley, the lonely daughter of an invalid mother and an absent adventuring father, finds her fantasies fulfilled in books, until, at thirty, she ventures beyond the confines of her house and travels to Africa. Quoting liberally from Kingsley's journals, Brown imprints his own resonant voice on this tale of an unflappable female explorer.

dePaola, Tomie. *26 Fairmount Avenue*. (series) In a disarmingly unselfconscious reminiscence, the popular illustrator recounts the events that surrounded his family's move to the address of the title, in Meriden, Connecticut, when he was five years old.

French, Vivian. *Growing Frogs*. A mother and daughter gather frog spawn from a pond to observe the metamorphosis from egg to tadpole to frog.

Gibbons, Gail. *Knights in Shining Armor*. A description of the life of a knight during the Middle Ages, from A.D. 500 to 1500.

Karas, G. Brian. *Atlantic*. Karas's oversized oceanic illustrations lend watery depth to this evocative introduction to the Atlantic Ocean.

Montgomery, Sy. *The Tarantula Scientist*. Clear, well-lit photos of hairy giant tarantulas in their habitat and the scientist at work on the forest floor convey lively information and a compelling invitation to study science in the field.

Munro, Roxie. *The Inside-Outside Book of Washington, D.C.* An armchair tour of some of Washington's famous landmarks such as the Library of Congress, the National Air and Space Museum, and the White House. After reading it, have your child try making his/her own version of the inside and outside of favorite DC places.

Pinczes, Elinor. *One Hundred Hungry Ants*. Ants head towards a picnic to get yummys in their tummies, but keep stopping to change their line formation, showing different divisions of one hundred.

Spedden, Daisy Corning. *Polar, the Titanic Bear*. An actual eyewitness account of the sinking of the steamship, Titanic.

Vyner, Tim. *World Team*. Vyner's pithy text and color-splashed watercolors explore a passion common to youngsters on six continents: soccer.

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.