

Acton Memorial Library Children's Department

2nd Grade Suggested Reading

PICTURE BOOKS

J PICBOOK ARMAND

Armand, Glenda

All aboard the schooltrain (2023)

Climbing aboard a "train" to a better life, third grader Thelma joins other African American children on the walk to school. Drawing on family history, the author reframes her mother Thelma's childhood as a series of imagined train rides—first to a one-room school, then, in class, further on to dazzling destinations like Oz and Treasure Island and back in time to hear about Harriet Tubman and other heroes.

J PICBOOK DICKINSON

Dickinson, Emily

Hope is the thing with feathers (2024)

Emily Dickinson's classic is brought to life in vibrant hues. In the beginning, a variety of tiny birds dance across the page, as a young pencil-outlined child collects a dropped feather. The lines of the poem alternate pages, as the child, friends, neighbors, and birds weather rain and wind, but still come out smiling.

J PICBOOK EDWARDS

Edwards Richmond, Susan

Bioblitz!: Counting Critters (2022)

You might be amazed at the large number of insects, birds, and small mammals that inhabit even a very small plot of land. In this story Gabriel's dad, a ranger for the local municipal park, is helping with a Biodiversity Day (or Bioblitz), and he invites Gabriel and his cousin Ava to participate.

J PICBOOK ELLIOTT

Elliott, David

At the poles (2023)

The stark, cold landscapes of Earth's poles may seem inhospitable, but their snowy hollows and glacial waters hide an astounding variety of creatures, from the tiny, fascinating tardigrade to the mysterious giant squid, from the fleet-footed Arctic hare to the majestic polar bear.

J PICBOOK EMMONS

Emmons, Lauren

No cats in the library (2024)

Clarisse, a stray cat, is fond of books, and she sometimes eavesdrops on adults reading to children. Though unable to interpret the "dark, squiggly lines" of text, she enjoys looking at the pictures. When she discovers a public library, she's determined to get inside. Attempting to enter through the door, she is turned away. Undeterred, she slides down the book-drop chute!

J PICBOOK FANG

Fang, X

We are definitely human (2024)

On a starry night in the countryside, "something" (clearly a flying saucer) crashes near Mr. and Mrs. Li's house. Investigating by flashlight, Mr. Li discovers three oddly shaped strangers (clearly aliens), but he is pacified by their quick assurance, "We are DEFINITELY human." They only want to fix their car (spaceship), so after spending the night with the Lis, they visit the local general store, get what they need, and--with the help of the kind townsfolk---repair their car (spaceship) and return to outer space.

J PICBOOK LE
Built to last (2024)

Lê, Minh

Two friends are a happy team, building bigger and more elaborate constructions together--which, seen through their eyes, become elaborate fantasy creations, like gently smiling sea dragons and city-destroying monsters. But every finished project somehow ends up in pieces. As little guys, they laugh over the disasters and start again with even bigger dreams. But when their truly magnificent floating construction crashes to earth, the ever-frustrated older boys are ready to call it quits as friends.

J PicBook Lindstrom **Lindstrom, Carole**
We are Water Protectors (2020)

An Indigenous girl explains why water is sacred, before she speaks of the foretold black snake that will destroy the land, referring to the polluting oil pipelines that course through the earth.

J PICBOOK RUNDELL **Rundell, Katherine**
The zebra's great escape (2024)

Mink, awake long after other children are in bed, hears a strange noise and goes to investigate. She's astonished to find a baby zebra in the foliage. Mink sneaks Gabriel up to her apartment bedroom (no easy task) and learns he's been separated from his parents and is desperate to be reunited. The unlikely pair formulates a plan to find Gabriel's family.

J PicBook Scott **Scott, Jordan**
I Talk Like a River (2020)

Sometimes a few words can transform a child's life. In this autobiographical story, a boy who stutters is given a new way to think about his speech.

J Picbook Sorell **Sorell, Traci**
Powwow Day (2022)

When River first wakes up on tribal powwow day, she feels a surge of excitement before remembering that there will be "no dancing./ No jingle dress competition for me./... I can't dance like I could before I got sick." A tender and inspiring view of Indigenous traditions.

J Picbook Sturgell **Sturgell, Todd**
Except Antarctica! (2021)

Turtles are found on every continent EXCEPT Antarctica. But not for long! Follow along as a rogue group of determined animals embark on an adventure in this funny animal picture book for kids.

J PicBook Wang **Wang, Andrea**
Watercress (2021)

Based on the author's own memories of being the child of Chinese immigrants in Ohio, the story follows a young girl and a memorable car trip with her family. Caldecott Medal Winner.

J PICBOOK WANG **Wang, Ann Suk**
The house before falling into the sea (2024)

A child and her family take in refugees during the Korean War in this poignant picture book about courage and what it really means to care for your neighbors.

J PICBOOK WONG-KALU
Kapaemahu (2022)

Wong-Kalu, Hinalaimoana

According to legend, four dual-spirited travelers (known as mahu) journeyed from Tahiti to Hawaii, bringing their gentle ways and miraculous cures. To thank the mahu for their gifts, Hawaiians transported four large boulders to Waikiki Beach, and the mahu transferred their healing powers to the stones. Revered for generations, the stones were forgotten during colonial times but have since been recovered.

J PICBOOK ZOBOLI
Mr. Lepron's mystery soup (2024)

Zoboli, Giovanna

Mr. Lepron, a very handsome hare with a bright shiny coat and lovely long ears, makes a tasty vegetable soup so renowned that he eventually starts a factory to manufacture it. But the inventive dreams that seem to power Mr. Lepron's soup-making soon turn to nightmares, and his real-life business begins to suffer complaints.

EARLY CHAPTER BOOKS

J EZreader American Girl Melody
Melody Lifts Her Voice (2022)

Alston, Bria

Melody Ellison loves singing and gardening, and is inspired by friends and family and the Civil Rights Movement to make changes in her community.

J EARLYCHAPTER Atinuke
Too Small Tola (2022)

Atinuke

Three delightful tales from a renowned Nigerian storyteller introduce a heroine who is every bit as mighty as she is small.

J EARLYCHAPTER BARROWS
Stella & Marigold (2025)

Barrows, Annie

Two sisters, Stella and Marigold, do all the regular things, like go to school, but they also share adventures (both real and imagined) and secret sister things.

J EARLYCHAPTER BROACH
Bulldozer's Big Rescue (2025)

Broach, Elise

Young Bulldozer is a shy machine who loves to play but feels uneasy about meeting his new neighbors as he wishes summer could "last forever." While Bulldozer is nervously meeting with Millie and Jay, a frightened cat gets stuck in a tree, and it is up to the three new pals to come to its rescue.

J EARLYCHAPTER COVEN
Lucy Lancaster has a secret (2025)

Coven, Willow

Magic isn't real. At least that's what Lucy Lancaster thinks. But then she develops a stubborn case of the hiccups, and mysterious events start to happen.

J FIC DIMOPOULOS
The remarkable rescue at Milkweed Meadow (2023)

Dimopoulos, Elaine

Butternut, a young rabbit who loves stories, makes friends among the other animals and birds of Milkweed Meadow, and convinces them to help her rescue a litter of orphaned coyote pups.

J EARLYCHAPTER EZOMOGHENE**Ezomoghene, Sophia*****The trickster in the vase (2024)***

There's one thing twins Eddie and Nosa Osagie know, it's NEVER go into Baba's study when he's not home. But one day, the brothers want is to play soccer with the ball in the study. The boys sneak through the office, but with one wrong move, they accidentally knock over a dusty bronze vase and unleash a trickster spirit, Eshu!

J Fic Goodner**Goodner, David*****Kondo & Kezumi Visit Giant Island series (2020)***

Kondo is big. Kezumi is little. They live on an island with fruit trees and berry bushes and flutter-birds and fluffle-bunnies. When a surprise bottle washes ashore, they discover a map with a mysterious message: WE ARE NOT ALONE.

J EARLYCHAPTER KORSH**Korsh, Kate*****Newbie fairy (2024)***

Oona is a newbie fairy whose magic doesn't always go the way she hopes. She's a slug fairy, and did you know slug slime is essential to the entire fairy world? She longs to be as glamorous and important as the Tooth Fairy, but it's hard to get a promotion when all of her spells seem to go slightly sideways--and when so many of them involve enchanted underwear!

J EZREADER LEWIS**Lewis, Cicely*****Imani picks up the pieces (2024)***

It's bad enough that Imani had a slow start to her research project. But when disaster strikes the night before it's due, she's really in trouble. Will Imani be able to pick up the pieces in time to give her report?

J EARLYCHAPTER McDONALD**McDonald, Megan*****Bunny and Clyde (2024)***

These buddies, a rabbit and a chipmunk, are sick and tired of being good. They want to know what it's like to be baddies, and they want thrills and excitement, but they're going to need some experience making mischief. Next thing you know, they're hardened criminals!

J EZREADER McGEE**McGee, Joe*****Lost in the library (2024)***

The Junior Monster Scouts--Franky, Wolfy, and Vampyra--love to read. They are in the library of Castle Dracula when Wolfy hears what sounds like a piano. The group follows the noise, revealing a hidden passageway. Behind a secret door, the trio discover the source of the music: a ghostly girl, unable to speak, playing the piano.

J Fic Medina**Medina, Juana*****Juana and Lucas: Muchos Changes (2021)***

Juana lives in Bogotá, where she enjoys life with her family and dog, Lucas, but big changes are coming--Juana has a stepfather (Luis) now, and her mom is expecting a baby! (series)

J EARLYCHAPTER MENSAH**Mensah, Bernard*****Rise of the green flame (2024)***

Eight-year-old Kwame is eager to start Nkonyaa School and learn calabash magic, yet none of the teachers can figure out what kind of magic is in his calabash--but when one of Kwame's new friends is possessed by an evil magic his power is revealed. Magic, adventure, and friendship come together in this action-packed, fully illustrated early chapter book series.

J Fiction Messenger**Messenger, Jonathan*****The Fuzzy Apocalypse (2020)***

Eight-year-old Finn is the first kid born in space and he spends his days looking for a new planet to inhabit with his three best friends and his robot, Foggy.

J FIC MILLER**Miller, Chanel*****Magnolia Wu unfolds it all (2024)***

A self-proclaimed sock detective inside her parents' New York City laundromat, 10-year-old Magnolia Wu and Iris, a new friend from California, set off across the city to solve the mystery of each missing sock, meeting people and uncovering the unimaginable along the way.

J EARLYCHAPTER PLATT**Platt, Christine*****Frankie and friends: Breaking news (2023)***

In a charming new chapter-book series, Frankie emulates her journalist mama by reporting on household news with the help of her sister and an unlikely news crew—including her doll Farrah, Robert the toy robot, and her tabby cat, Nina Simone.

J FIC REX**Rex, Adam*****The story of Gumluck the Wizard (2023)***

Gumluck, a young wizard, does his best to help the local townspeople (and a small ghost named Butterscotch) with his sometimes wonky magic. He is accompanied by his grumpy raven sidekick, Helvetica. First in a series.

J EARLYCHAPTER SELFORS**Selfors, Suzanne*****Sam Squirrel (2025)***

Sam Squirrel is eagerly awaiting Mother Nature's appearance at the end of a long winter. But Mother Nature doesn't appear, winter persists, and the worried woodland creatures gather to discuss their predicament. Sam and an elk prince head to Mother Nature's cottage to seek an end to the wild weather, but the problem quickly becomes clear: an exhausted Mother Nature has left for vacation, leaving her granddaughter Willow to house-sit and care for the woods.

J EARLYCHAPTER Trinh**Trinh, Linda*****The mystery of the painted fan (2023)***

Jacob is tired of being the baby of the family. He is ready to fully express himself in all of the ways that feel right to him, but not everyone seems as eager to accept change—even his own parents. He still loves hockey, yet he also wants to try something new, even if others may not understand. Confused and frustrated, Jacob turns to the beautiful fan his Grandma Nôi gave him, which features all of the Vietnamese zodiac animals. With the mysterious fan, Jacob finds the power to remain true to himself, and show his family who he could be.

J FIC VALENTI**Valenti, Karla*****Wrath of the rain god (2024)***

This first book in Valenti's Legendarios series follows nine-year-old twins Emma and Martín on an electrifying adventure. When they move from Cuernavaca, Mexico, to Illinois, their abuela gifts them a book of Mexican legends. The book turns out to be more than a going away present...it's a magical item that transports them directly into the legends!

GRAPHIC

J GRAPHIC ALVARADO

Alvarado, Jenny

Pencil & Eraser: we have a dull-emma! (2024)

At the start of a new school year Eraser notices best friend Pencil has a dull point, so they must leave the comfort of their desk and venture out to find a sharpener before Stella and her classmates return from recess.

J Graphic Applegate

Applegate, Katherine

Doggo and Pupper (2021)

Nudged by a new friend, an older dog rediscovers how to let loose in this goofy illustration-driven early reader.

J Graphic Feuti

Feuti, Norm

Beak & Ally. Unlikely Friends (2021)

What do you get when you cross a crusty alligator and a perky bird? -- A surprising friendship you'll be sure to cheer for!

J GRAPHIC HUMPHREY

Humphrey, Anna

Fluffle bunnies. 1, Buns gone bad (2024)

A fluffle of wild bunnies is born in the park. As Biggie, Boingy, and Flop begin to explore, they quickly realize that bark beasts (dogs) and sky snacks (bees) are scarier than expected. Worst of all, the chipmunks steal their nest, forcing them to take refuge in a public bathroom before lodging in a trashcan--where they face macho raccoons. Realizing they must rely on their wits; the bunnies work to outsmart their foes and reclaim the park as their home.

J GRAPHIC KANTOROVITZ

Kantorovitz, Sylvie

Monti and Leo : a newcomer in Pocketville (2024)

Pocketville is a quiet little town and when a new resident, Leo the lizard, moves in, everyone starts gossiping about him. Monti the mole is initially annoyed at Leo; the lizard takes Monti's favorite resting spot, buys the last cinnamon rolls, and checks out the library book Monti wanted. But Leo is also kind and willing to share and the two become fast friends!

J GRAPHIC MARTIN

Martin, Stephen W.

The case of the missing spot (2023)

When the Invisible Man's invisible dog Spot goes missing, he turns to Nancy Spector, an eight-year-old detective, and her grumpy dog Jinx, for help.

J Graphic Pilkey

Pilkey, Dav

Cat Kid Comic Club (2020)

Dog Man sidekick Li'l Petey and tadpole Molly are running a weeklong comics workshop for 21 quarrelsome froggies while the frogs' father, bionic fish Flippy, tries to enforce decorum.

J GRAPHIC SHARP

Sharp, Sid

Bog Myrtle (2024)

Two sisters, one cheerful (Beatrice) and one grumpy (Magnolia), live in a drafty old house with a family of helpful spiders. When Beatrice is gifted magic yarn from a giant forest spider named Bog Myrtle, she and the spiders set to work knitting up a perfectly warm sweater. But greedy Magnolia sees only the opportunity for profit, and quickly converts the old house into a magic sweater factory. The exhausted spiders are driven to strike, and Bog Myrtle is not pleased...

**J Graphic Smith
Pea, Bee, & Jay (2020)**

Smith, Brian

Get ready to roll with Pea, Bee, & Jay in this brand-new early reader graphic novel series, perfect for fans of Narwhal & Jelly, emerging readers, and comic lovers alike!

**J Graphic Tabor
*Sir Ladybug (2022)***

Tabor, Corey R.

Ladies and gentlebugs, presenting the duke of the dandelion patch, champion of truth and justice, the one, the only--Sir Ladybug! Sir Ladybug never shies away from a quest, so when a caterpillar needs rescuing from a "monster" (a hungry chickadee), Sir Ladybug and his trusty friends hatch the perfect (delicious) plan.

**J GRAPHIC WEINER
*The Frog Daddy (2025)***

Weiner, Andrew

Once again, your favorite daddy-daughter duo buckles up for a wild bedtime story—this one about the time a wizard turned Andy into a frog!

**J GRAPHIC YACCARINO Yaccarino, Dan
*The Luna Sisters: Battle for the moon blossom (2025)***

Luna wants the Moon Blossom all for herself! And Nera wants the Moon Blossom all for herself! Oh no! Someone else wants it too! The Galactic Groovy Goat is going to gobble it up!

BIOGRAPHIES

**J BIO Abdul-Qaadir, B. Abdul-Qaadir, Bilqis
*Lion on the inside : how one girl changed basketball (2023)***

A powerful and inspiring true story about Bilqis Abdul-Qaadir, a young Muslim-American woman who, at the top of her basketball career, must make a choice between wearing her hijab and playing the sport.

**J BIO BEACH, A.C. DeLems, Caitlin
*Pitch perfect and persistent! (2023)***

Discover the untold yet inspiring story of Amy Beach, musician extraordinaire and the first successful woman composer in America. With perfect pitch and fierce persistence, Amy Beach always knew she had to make music. There was just one BIG problem. Her mother believed it was not proper for a young lady to take on a musical career. But give in or give up? Not Amy Beach!

**J Biography Brooks, G. Slade, Suzanne
*Exquisite : The Poetry And Life Of Gwendolyn Brooks (2020)***

A picture-book biography of celebrated poet Gwendolyn Brooks, the first Black person to win the Pulitzer Prize.

**J BIO CLEMENTE R. Alonso, Nathalie
*Call me Roberto! (2024)***

In this stirring biography of Puerto Rican baseball player Roberto Clemente, Alonso celebrates the athlete's contributions to baseball and human rights. The book kicks off with Clemente's childhood in Puerto Rico, then follows his arc to the major league, joining the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1955. Many fans appreciate the player's "bold style, but not everyone is quick to embrace a Black man from Puerto Rico."

J Biography Hawking, S. Krull, Kathleen

Stay curious!: a brief history of Stephen Hawking (2020)

A picture-book biography on science superstar Stephen Hawking, whose visionary mind revolutionized our concept of reality and whose struggle with ALS inspired millions.

J BIO PARKER, C.S.

Harrington, Janice N.

Rooting for plants (2023)

A look at the life and work of an early-20th-century African American botanist. Charles S. Parker, a young plant enthusiast from Spokane, grew up to do pioneering research on ferns and fungi throughout the country. His studies of one genus of fungi—*Hypholoma*—yielded new species that now bear his name.

J BIO RAMIREZ, M.

RAMIREZ, M.

Daughter of the light-footed people (2024)

From the copper canyons of Mexico her swift footsteps echo. Clip clap, clip clap. Experience a 60-mile run with indigenous athlete Lorena Ramirez, who captured the world's attention when she won an ultramarathon in Mexico wearing a skirt and rubber sandals-the traditional clothes of the Rarámuri, "the light-footed people".

J BIO TABEL, J.

Yasuda, Anita

Up, up, ever up! (2024)

Junko Tabei was the first woman to summit Mt. Everest. Junko loved hiking as a child and as an adult joined a mountaineering club in Tokyo. She led a mostly female expedition to Mt. Everest and remained a passionate climber throughout her life, tackling peaks in numerous countries and working to preserve mountain landscapes.

NONFICTION BOOKS

J398.21 C539

Pinkney, Jerry

The Little Mermaid (2020)

In this captivating reimagining of Hans Christian Andersen's classic, Caldecott medalist and bestselling artist Jerry Pinkney conjures a poignant friendship story and an epic tale of redemption.

J 530.8 C539

Chin, Jason

Your Place In The Universe (2020)

Page-turn cliffhangers build a pleasing buzz of suspense as Chin guides readers from ostriches to redwood trees, past skyscrapers and Mount Everest, through Earth's layered atmosphere to the moon, and beyond the solar system to the edges of the observable universe.

J 560 STE

Stewart, Melissa

Mega-predators of the past (2022)

It is time for T. rex and his dinosaur cousins to step aside and let other mega-predators like the terror bird and the giant ripper lizard take the spotlight! Travel back to prehistoric times and meet some of the most impressive creatures to ever roam the Earth. You'll be amazed at the size and the fierceness of these lesser-known predators, many of them ancient ancestors of animals that we still see today.

J 567.914 RUB Rubin, Sean
Iguanodon's Horn (2024)

The Iguanodon's Horn follows the fascinating development of human knowledge about dinosaur fossils, specifically the animal that came to be known as the Iguanodon.

J 576.8 BEN Ben-Barak, Idan
We go way back (2023)

What is life? How did it start? Long, long ago, no one knows exactly where or when, a tiny bubble formed that was a Little Bit Different. It was the first living cell. Everyone's ancestor. And so the story of life begins.

J 594.56 PHI Phillips, Howard
Beware the blue-ringed octopus! (2023)

While the blue-ringed octopus is about the size of a golf ball and its glowing rings are pretty, they are one of the deadliest animals on the planet. Flashing their blue rings when danger occurs, blue-ringed octopuses are armed with a powerful toxin--tetrodotoxin. These critters are unique in that they are both venomous and poisonous!

J 595.799 BRO Browne, Meghan P.
The bees of Notre-Dame (2023)

When Notre Dame Cathedral burned in April 2019, the honeybees on the roof above its sacristy survived. Amid the world's sorrow at the terrible damage suffered by the storied cathedral, the bees' survival emerged as a story of hope.

J 598.35 CUS Hiller, Colette
Colossal words for kids (2024)

Each poem in this funny, funky book teaches a specific important word, as well as its meaning and spelling, in an innovative and accessible format that kids will love. Using rhythm and wordplay, the poems help build a colossal vocabulary, thinking skills and literacy - without kids even noticing! But most of all, this book delights young readers with the joy and silliness of the English language.

J 598.47 EAR Earle, Shannon
The penguin of Ilha Grande (2023)

A true and tender tale that celebrates the lasting bond that forms between a small penguin in dire straits and the man who rescued him.

J 612 BER Berne, Jennifer
A tour of the human body (2024)

A tour of the body full of amazing numbers and fantastic facts. Learn about cells, the senses, the stomach, bones and muscles, the lungs and heart, and everything that makes the body tick!

J 612.11 McA McAnulty, Stacy
Blood! Not just a vampire drink (2022)

This funny and fact-filled picture book is all about blood: where it's found, what it does, how it travels, and why vampires shouldn't drink it! From the four chambers of the heart to the platelets that clot your blood when you scrape your knee, everything you want to know about the cardiovascular system is right inside these pages. Just watch out for thirsty vampires!

J 629.1097 ROT Roth, Jonathan***Almost underwear: the how a piece of cloth traveled from Kitty Hawk to the Moon and Mars (2024)***

Travel back in time to 1903 and meet a seemingly ordinary piece of fabric, originally destined to be made into women's underwear. Instead, who should purchase the bolt but the Wright brothers, using it as the wing cover for the Flyer, which would soon make history as the first airplane to be successfully airborne. After its first-of-a-kind journey, the fabric was cut into swatches and donated to a museum. However, its adventures did not end there: one swatch made it to the moon in 1969 with Neil Armstrong, while still another landed on the surface of Mars in 2021.

J 629.89 SPI Spiro, Ruth***How to explain robotics to a grown-up (2023)***

In this tongue-in-cheek guide, a kid expert explains to young readers how to teach their grown-ups about the basics of robotics. A fantastic resource for introducing children to robotics.

J 636.73 POT Potter, Melisande***Togo to the Rescue (2024)***

Togo, a Siberian Husky born in Alaska in 1913, led a dog team in the historic serum-run to save the lives of children suffering from diphtheria in Nome in 1925. A brutal blizzard that year necessitated the use of 150 dogs to relay medicine from the capitol to Nome over the course of five days.

J 811.54 WES Westera, Bette***Fast cheetah, slow tortoise (2024)***

How do you contrast creatures as different as cheetahs and tortoises, or as similar as butterflies and moths? In this lively book of poetry, antonym pairs introduce thirty-two members of the animal kingdom. Each spread presents the voices of two unique creatures: are you more like an obedient sheep or a rebellious goat? What about a tidy pig or a messy warthog? A bossy gorilla or a meek monkey?

J 841.92 SIM Simler, Isabelle***Home (2024)***

Twenty-seven poems look inside the dwellings of animals like elf owls, cathedral termites, Sumatran orangutans, and foam-nest tree frogs. Enchanting poetry, fascinating back facts, and intricately detailed art invite young readers to be amazed by the creativity and diversity of our animal neighbors.

J 919.89 NER Neri, Greg***My Antarctica (2024)***

Antarctica is a land of extremes -- the coldest, windiest, highest, and driest place on the planet. It's a world where the sun stays hidden half of the year and where visitors must undergo a week of special training before it's safe to go outside (watch out for lava bombs!). It's also a place of stark beauty, history, and endless scientific research.