

# SUMMER READING LIST\*

## Libraries ROCK! ~ Grades 3-4

Suggested music-themed summer reading  
compiled for the Connecticut Department of Education  
by Linda Williams, Connecticut State Library

### PICTURE BOOKS

**A Band of Angels:** A Story Inspired by the Jubilee Singers by *Deborah Hopkinson*, illustrated by *Raul Colon*

The daughter of a slave forms a gospel singing group and goes on tour to raise money to save Fisk University. | [ALA](#), [NCTE](#) | Lexile: 740

**A Symphony of Whales** by *Steve Schuch*, illustrated by *Peter Sylvada*

Young Glashka's dream of the singing of whales, accompanied by a special kind of music, leads to the rescue of thousands of whales stranded in a freezing Siberian bay. | [NCSS](#), [NSTA](#) | Lexile: 600

**Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin** by *Chieri Uegaki*, illustrated by *Qin Leng* (2014)

With the help of her memories of the time she spent in Japan with her ojiichan, which is a professional violinist, a young girl named Hana practices and practices playing her violin for her school talent show. | [ILA](#), [Nutmeg 2017](#) | Lexile: 930

### CHAPTER BOOKS

**John Lincoln Clem:** a Civil War Drummer Boy by *E. F. Abbott*

A fictional retelling of the legend of John Clem, who ran away from his Ohio home to become a drummer boy during the Civil War, and became famous when he was captured in 1863 and was exchanged after a short stay in Andersonville prison. | [NCSS](#), [Connecticut Author](#) | Lexile: 680

**Little Rat Makes Music** by *Monika Bang Campbell*

Little Rat loves the violin but hates to practice, until her teacher suggests she perform a duet with one of the advanced students at the holiday concert. | [ALA](#) | Lexile: 520

**The Song from Somewhere Else** by *A. F. Harrold*, illustrated by *Levi Pinfold*

Saved from bullies by the class misfit, Nick, Frank is drawn to Nick's house by strange music, discovers he has

incredible secrets that bring danger, and decides to help him as he helped her. | Lexile: 690

**Dear Hank Williams** by *Kimberly Willis Holt*  
In Rippling Creek, Louisiana, in 1948, eleven-year-old Tate writes letters to her favorite country singer, sharing her dreams of becoming a singer and revealing that her mother is in prison. | [VOYA Perfect Tens](#) | Lexile: 820

**Fly Away** by *Patricia MacLachlan*

While in North Dakota helping her Aunt Frankie prepare for a possible flood, Lucy finds her voice as a poet with the help of her two-year-old brother Teddy, the rest of their family, and a few cows. | [ILA](#), [Connecticut Author](#) | Lexile: 490

**The First Rule of Punk** by *Celia C. Pérez*

Twelve-year-old María Luisa O'Neill-Morales (who really prefers to be called Malú) reluctantly moves with her Mexican-American mother to Chicago and starts seventh grade with a bang--violating the dress code with her punk rock aesthetic and spurning the middle school's most popular girl in favor of starting a band with a group of like-minded weirdos. | [ALA](#) | Lexile: 670

**Sydney & Simon:** Go Green! by *Paul A. Reynolds*, illustrated by *Peter H. Reynolds*

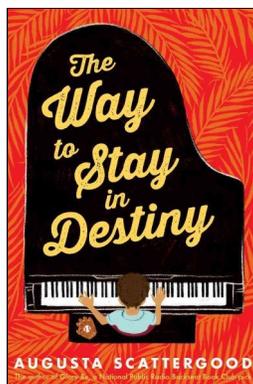
After discovering that a green sea turtle was harmed by plastic in the ocean, twin mice Sydney and Simon come up with a creative campaign to increase recycling and reduce the amount of trash created in their home, school, and town. | Lexile: 750

**The Way to Stay in Destiny** by *Augusta Scattergood*

Sixth-grader Theo leaves everything behind to live with his Uncle Chester, a Vietnam War veteran and loner, in Destiny, Florida, but he is drawn to play the piano in Miss Sister's dance school and soon makes friends with the feisty Anabel, a baseball fanatic who invites Theo to help solve a mystery. | Lexile: 650

**A Crooked Kind of Perfect** by *Linda Urban*

Ten-year-old Zoe Elias, who longs to play the piano but must resign herself to learning the organ, instead, finds that her musicianship has a positive impact on her workaholic mother, her jittery father, and her school social life. | Lexile: 730



# SUMMER READING LIST\*

## POETRY

**Under the Mambo Moon** by Julia Durango  
Contains poems about the different people who stop by Marisol's father's music store on a hot summer night, looking for just the right songs to make their hearts fly home. | [NCSS](#) | Lexile: 840

**Hip Hop Speaks to Children: A Celebration of Poetry with a Beat** by Nikki Giovanni  
More than 50 poems and an accompanying CD introduce poetry with a beat. | [NCTE](#)

## NONFICTION

**Soldier Song: A True Story of the Civil War** by Debbie Levy, illustrated by Gilbert Ford  
Provides an account of the important role of songs in rallying Union and Confederate troops during the American Civil War. | [NCSS](#)

**Let's Clap, Jump, Sing, & Shout: Dance, Spin, & Turn it Out!: Games, Songs, & Stories from an African American Childhood** by Pat McKissack, illustrated by J. Brian Pinkney  
A collection of classic, culturally inspired hand clap games, circle games, songs and poems, including "Eenie, Meenie Sassafras," "Little Sally Walker" and "Amazing Grace." | Lexile: 990

**The Beatles Were Fab (And They Were Funny)** by Kathleen Krull & Paul Brewer, illustrated by Stacy Innerst (2013)  
Chronicles the legendary band's rise to prominence and highlights the humor of each member. | [NCTE](#) | Lexile: 860

## BIOGRAPHY

**Red Bird Sings: The Story of Zitkala-Sa, Native American Author, Musician, and Activist** by Gina Capaldi, illustrated by Q. L. Pearce  
Insight into the life of Gertrude Simmons, a Native American girl who left the Yankton Sioux reservation in South Dakota for a boarding school in Indiana at age eight, learned to express herself through music and words, and went on to become an activist for Native American rights. | [NCSS](#) | Lexile: 940

**Jimi** : Sounds Like a Rainbow: A Story of the Young Jimi Hendrix by Gary Golio, illustrated by Javaka Steptoe

An illustrated biography of rock musician Jimi Hendrix, focusing on his childhood, and describing how he developed his unique vision and artistic talents. | [ALA](#), [NCTE](#) | Lexile: 900

**Duke Ellington** by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney

A brief recounting of the career of this jazz musician and composer who, along with his orchestra, created music that was beyond category. | [ALA](#), [NCSS](#), [NCTE](#) | Lexile: 800.

**The Music of Life: Bartolomeo Cristofori & the Invention of the Piano** by Elizabeth Rusch, illustrated by Marjorie Priceman

Presents the life of the inventor of the piano, explaining why, how, and when he created the musical instrument. | [NCTE](#), [NSTA](#) | Lexile: 980

**When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson the Voice of a Century** by Pam Munoz Ryan, illustrated by Brian Selznick

An introduction to the life of Marian Anderson, extraordinary singer and civil rights activist, who was the first African American to perform at the Metropolitan Opera, whose life and career encouraged social change. | [ALA](#), [NCTE](#), [NCSS](#) | Lexile: 920

**The Music in George's Head: George Gershwin Creates Rhapsody in Blue** by Suzanne Slade, illustrated by Stacy Innerst

A tribute to George Gershwin depicts a young man who hears music everywhere as he grows up and composes his masterpiece, "Rhapsody in Blue." | [NCSS](#) | Lexile: 680

**Danza!:** Amalia Hernandez and el Ballet Folklórico de México by Duncan Tonatiuh

Celebrates the life of the dancer and founder of *El Ballet Folklórico de México* as well as the cultural history of dance in Mexico. | Lexile: 980

**Hello, I'm Johnny Cash** by G. Neri

A portrait of the legendary country music star is told through lyrical free verse that conveys information about his impoverished childhood and the extraordinary talent that enabled his career and rise to success on the world stage. | [ALA](#), [NCSS](#) | Lexile: 1020

\*Many listed books were selected as exemplary by one or more of the following organizations: the *American Library Association* (ALA), the *International Literacy Association* (ILA), the *National Council for the Social Studies* (NCSS), the *National Council of Teachers of English* (NCTE), the *National Science Teachers Association* (NSTA), the *American Association for the Advancement of Science* (AAAS) or the *United States Board on Books for Young People* (USBBY).



# SUMMER READING

## Favorites & Classics

For Grades 3-4

### **My Name Is Maria Isabel**

by *Alma Flor Ada*

Third grader María Isabel, born in Puerto Rico and now living in the U.S., wants badly to fit in at school; and the teacher's writing assignment "My Greatest Wish" gives her that opportunity. | Lexile: 880

### **Mr. Popper's Penguins** by *Richard Atwater*

The unexpected delivery of a large crate containing an Antarctic penguin changes the life and fortunes of Mr. Popper, a house painter obsessed by dreams of the Polar regions. | Lexile: 910

### **Tuck Everlasting** by *Natalie Babbitt*

The Tuck family is confronted with an agonizing situation when they discover that a ten-year-old girl and a malicious stranger now share their secret about a spring whose water prevents one from ever growing any older. | Lexile: 770

### **Madeline** by *Ludwig Bemelmans*

Madeline, smallest and naughtiest of the twelve little charges of Miss Clavel, wakes up one night with an attack of appendicitis. | Lexile: 480

### **Freckle Juice** by *Judy Blume*

Andrew wants freckles so badly that he buys Sharon's freckle recipe for fifty cents. | Lexile: 370

### **The Stories Julian Tells** by *Ann Cameron*

Relates episodes in seven-year-old Julian's life which include getting into trouble with his younger brother Huey, planting a garden, what he did to try to grow taller, losing a tooth, and finding a new friend. | Lexile: 520

### **James and the Giant Peach** by *Roald Dahl*

Wonderful adventures abound after James escapes from his fearful aunts by rolling away inside a giant peach. | Lexile: 870

### **Because of Winn-Dixie** by *Kate DiCamillo*

Ten-year-old India Opal Buloni describes her first summer in the town of Naomi, Florida, and all the good things that happen to her because of her big ugly dog Winn-Dixie. | Lexile: 610

### **The Hundred Dresses** by *Eleanor Estes*

In winning a medal she is no longer there to receive, a tight-lipped little Polish girl teaches her classmates a lesson. | Lexile: 870

### **My Father's Dragon** by *Ruth Stiles Gannett*

A young boy determines to rescue a poor baby dragon who is being used by a group of lazy wild animals to ferry them across the river on Wild Island. | Lexile: 990

### **Misty of Chincoteague** by *Marguerite Henry*

Paul and his sister Maureen's determination to own a pony from the herd on Chincoteague Island, Virginia, is greatly increased when the Phantom and her colt are among the ponies rounded up for the yearly auction. | Lexile: 750

### **The Story of Ferdinand** by *Munro Leaf*

Ferdinand likes to sit quietly and smell the flowers, but one day he gets stung by a bee and his snorting and stomping convince everyone that he is the fiercest of bulls. | Lexile: 710

### **The Tales of Uncle Remus**

as told by *Julius Lester*

A retelling of the African American tales about the adventures and misadventures of Brer Rabbit and his friends and enemies. | Lexile: 760

### **Pippi Longstocking** by *Astrid Lindgren*

Escapades of a lucky little girl who lives with a horse and a monkey — but without any parents — at the edge of a Swedish village. | Lexile: 870

### **Sarah, Plain and Tall**

by *Patricia MacLachlan*

When their father invites a mail-order bride to come live with them in their prairie home, Caleb and Anna are captivated by their new mother and hope that she will stay. | Lexile: 560

### **Archer's Quest** by *Linda Sue Park*

Twelve-year-old Kevin Kim helps Chu-mong, a legendary king of ancient Korea, return to his own time. | Lexile: 690



# SUMMER READING

## Favorites & Classics

*For Grades 3-4*

### **Little Red Riding Hood** by Jerry Pinkney

A sweet little girl meets a hungry wolf in the forest while on her way to visit her grandmother. | Lexile: 840

### **Pink and Say** by Patricia Polacco

Say Curtis describes his meeting with Pinkus Aylee, a black soldier, during the Civil War, and their capture by Southern troops. Based on a true story about the author's great-great-grandfather. | Lexile: 590

### **Tar Beach** by Faith Ringgold

A young girl dreams of flying above her Harlem home, claiming all she sees for herself and her family. Based on the author's quilt painting of the same name. | Lexile: 790

### **Grandfather's Journey** by Allen Say

A Japanese American man recounts his grandfather's journey to America which he also undertakes later, and the feelings of being torn by a love for two different countries. | Lexile: 560

### **Knights of the Kitchen Table**

by Jon Scieszka

Joe receives a magic book for his birthday present from his uncle. Joe, Fred, and Sam are transported to a time when evil knights, fire-breathing dragons, and vile-smelling giants roamed the land. | Lexile: 630

### **Where the Sidewalk Ends**

by Shel Silverstein

A boy who turns into a TV set and a girl who eats a whale are only two of the characters in this collection of humorous poetry illustrated with the author's own drawings.

### **Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters**

by John Steptoe

Mufaro's two beautiful daughters, one bad-tempered, one kind and sweet, go before the king, who is choosing a wife. | Lexile: 720

### **All-of-a-Kind Family** by Sydney Taylor

The adventures of five sisters growing up in a Jewish family in New York in the early twentieth century. | Lexile: 750

### **Charlotte's Web** by E. B. White

Wilbur, the pig, is desolate when he discovers that he is destined to be the farmer's Christmas dinner until his spider friend, Charlotte, decides to help him. | Lexile: 680

### **The Velveteen Rabbit** by Margery Williams

By the time the Velveteen Rabbit is dirty, worn out, and about to be burned, he has almost given up hope of ever finding the magic called Real. | Lexile: 820

### **Dragonwings** by Lawrence Yep

In the early twentieth century a young Chinese boy joins his father in San Francisco and helps him realize his dream of making a flying machine. | Lexile: 870

### **Lon Po Po** by Ed Young

Three sisters staying home alone are endangered by a hungry wolf who is disguised as their grandmother. | Lexile: 670

### **Rumpelstiltskin** by Paul O. Zelinsky

A strange little man helps the miller's daughter spin straw into gold for the king on the condition that she will give him her first-born child. | Lexile: 740

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## SERIES

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**Ramona** series by Beverly Cleary

**Amber Brown** series by Paula Danziger

**Bink & Gollie** series by Kate DiCamillo

**Mercy Watson** series by Kate DiCamillo

**Sassy** series by Sharon Draper

**Nikki and Deja** series by Karen English

**Babymouse** series by Jennifer L. Holm

**Bunnicula** series by James Howe

**Frog and Toad** series by Arnold Lobel

**Gooney Bird** series by Lois Lowry

**Lulu** series by Hilary McKay

**Magic Treehouse** series by Mary Pope Osborne

**Junie B. Jones** series by Barbara Park

**Clementine** series by Sara Pennypacker

**Calvin Coconut** series by Graham Salisbury

**The Time Warp Trio** series by Jon Scieszka

**EllRay Jakes** series by Sally Warner

**Commander Toad** series by Jane Yolen

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