

**Friends School Haverford**  
**2016**  
**Summer Reading for Students Entering Grade 5 or 6**

We feel it is important for your child to read regularly over the summer. This list suggests just a few good books and authors.

Please consider reading aloud to your rising fifth or sixth grader. Many children of this age are reluctant to pick up books that are not in their favorite genre or format, and a read-aloud can introduce those children to new tastes in a pleasant, social way. When reading aloud, try to choose books you like, perhaps your old favorites. Be sure to discuss the books together. Listening to recorded books, either in a family setting (such as in a car during a long trip) or alone, is another excellent (and usually painless) way for students to further their comprehension and vocabulary skills.

Encourage any reading your student enjoys; don't assume that he/she is "beyond" picture books, many of which have advanced vocabulary and plots that require mature inference skills. Many comic books and "graphic novels" have complicated plots and vocabulary, as well. Magazines, either those listed at the end of this document, or others your family may already receive, can be another new discovery for children of this age. Some students may be happy to read entire books on an ebook reader (such as a Kindle or Nook) who will resist the same books in a traditional format. Try to offer many different types of reading.

### **Picture Books, Both Fiction and Nonfiction**

Agee, Jon: **Nothing**. Jon Agee's witty picture books seem more aimed at adults, frankly, but children love them anyway.

Bodkin, Odds: **The Banshee Train**. A ghost story by a master storyteller, completely fictional but told convincingly in the style of a legend.

Bryant, Jen: **A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams**. An interesting recent biography of the famous poet.

Cole, Brock: **Buttons**. A "noodle" tale – a tale of an outrageously foolish family and their funny problems when father loses his buttons.

Hannah, Julie: **The Man Who Named the Clouds**. A biography of Luke Howard, a Quaker meteorologist who first classified clouds by type.

Lendler, Ian: **An Undone Fairy Tale**. This rather sophisticated picture book shows what happens when you read the book too quickly for the noodle-headed construction workers to get the next page ready...

Lyon, George Ella: **Mother to Tigers**. The true story of Helen Martini, a pioneering zookeeper from New York City.

O'Malley, Kevin: **Once upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude**. A brother and sister construct a fairy tale together – with hilarious results.

- Polacco, Patricia: **Mr. Lincoln's Way**. A patient teacher finds the right way to reach a hostile student.
- Polacco, Patricia: **Pink and Say**. A touching Civil War adventure about the friendship between two boys.
- Price, Leontyne: **Aida**. The plot of the famous opera, with gorgeous illustrations by the Dillons.
- Provensen, Alice: **My Fellow Americans: a Family Album**. Each page or two-page spread celebrates a different category of historical Americans – writers, financiers, architects, musicians, abolitionists, suffragists, etc.
- Say, Allen: **Music for Alice**. A Japanese American woman's life, through adversity and many changes.
- Scieszka, Jon: **The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Stories**. Clever, humorous, and memorable parodies of well-known fairy tales.
- Stanley, Diane: **Cleopatra**. An excellent picture-book style biography, by one of my favorite authors.
- Stanley, Diane: **Shaka, King of the Zulus**. Another great picture-book style biography from Diane Stanley.
- Tan, Shaun: **The Arrival**. A marvelous wordless graphic novel about an immigrant who comes to a city where everything is very strange.
- Vann Allsburg, Chris: **The Mysteries of Harris Burdick**. Each page is a cryptic statement - a picture and a sentence or two - that implies a story. This is an imaginative and surrealistic book which children and adults find delightfully thought-provoking.
- Van Allsburg, Chris: **The Sweetest Fig**. A vain and greedy man thinks he has found the magic item that will make him the richest man on earth – but he hasn't reckoned with his downtrodden little dog.
- Watt, Melanie: **Scaredy Squirrel**. Scaredy Squirrel is worried about everything, and children love reading the lists he compiles.
- Wiesner, David: **June 29, 1999**. A quirky and wonderful story, told with a minimum of text and detailed illustrations. Wiesner is a great favorite with adults and children alike.
- Wisniewski, David: **Golem**. The legend of the golem of Prague, beautifully illustrated with Wisniewski's fabulous paper illustrations.
- Zschock, Martha Day: **Journey around Philadelphia from A to Z**. A wonderful picture book celebration of things you can see in Philadelphia right now – I can think of no one book that is more likely to interest our students in touring and enjoying their own home city.

## **CHAPTER BOOKS, NONFICTION, and COLLECTIONS of POETRY or TALES**

Anderson, M.T.: **Whales on Stilts**. A ridiculous story about a girl whose father works for a mad scientist.

Balliett, Blue: **Chasing Vermeer** and sequels. Mystery thrillers with an art history twist.

Bellairs, John: **The House with a Clock in Its Walls**. This very creepy supernatural mystery has become a classic.

Berman, Len: **And Nobody Got Hurt! The World's Weirdest, Wackiest True Sports Stories**. The title says it all.

Birney, Betty: **The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs**. Can you find wonders even in the most ordinary town? What makes something wonderful? A charming book.

Broach, Elise: **Masterpiece**. A very talented beetle and a downtrodden human boy work together to foil an art theft.

Brown, Susan Taylor: **Robert Smalls Sails to Freedom**. This short chapter book tells the true story of an American slave who stole a confederate ship during the Civil War and sailed to the North with his friends and family.

Byars, Betsy: **The Not-Just-Anybody Family**. The gripping and amusing adventures of a trio of children being raised in poverty by their grandfather.

Clements, Andrew: **A Week in the Woods**. A spoiled rich boy, neglected by his parents, slowly realizes his own shortcomings and works to change - but will the teacher he has finally grown to admire ever believe in him? A truly satisfying book.

Codell, Esme: **Vive la Paris**. Paris's growing friendship with her elderly piano teacher helps her cope with the problems in her life, and to take on family responsibilities.

Colfer, Eoin: The **Artemis Fowl** series. Artemis is a bratty boy genius with ambitions to be an archcriminal at the beginning of this fine fantasy/science fiction adventure series; somehow he always ends up doing the right thing, and changes in the process.

Cooney, Doug: **The Beloved Dearly**. An ambitious boy decides to make money by providing pet funerals to his schoolmates. A funny novel that ends with the realization that grief isn't so funny, and that a funeral can be a healing time.

Dahl, Roald: **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**. This combination of rags-to-riches and over-the-top silliness is a classic that every child should enjoy.

Deriso, Christine: **Talia Talk**. Talia's mother, a media personality, just can't seem to stop herself from talking about Talia on the air - which complicates Talia's life and her relationship with her mother.

Doder, Joshua: **A Dog Called Grk** and sequels. Mystery/adventures with plenty of weirdness.

Draper, Sharon M.: Sassy: **Little Sister Is Not My Name**. A story about how resourcefulness and individuality can really count.

Erickson, John: The **Hank the Cowdog** series. Hank is quite a character, and the mysteries he solves are never quite what he thinks they are - which adds a wonderful element of humor.

- Fardell, John: **The 7 Professors of the Far North**. Crazy science adventure. One of my (physicist) husband's favorite read-alouds *ever*.
- Farmer, Penelope: **Charlotte Sometimes**. A time travel story that doesn't try to make many big statements, but focuses on the problems of the girl who has to cope with finding herself in her own time or decades in the past, seemingly at random. A classic.
- Gantos, Jack: **Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key**. Joey has ADHD and always seems to be out of control. His grandmother, with whom he lives, is just as out of control as he is. This story of how he struggles to cope is funny, sad, and hopeful.
- Going, K.L.: **The Liberation of Gabriel King**. Gabriel is afraid of nearly everything, and his best friend, Frita, helps him face and overcome his fears. But she has a fear, too, that she needs help with. Set in rural Georgia in the 1970s.
- Greene, Bette: **Philip Hall Likes Me. I Reckon Maybe**. An outstanding book about middle-grade relationships and the importance of self-respect.
- Griffin, Adele: **Witch twins**. Sisters with magical powers have adventures, some humorous and some not so humorous, as they deal with life between two households.
- Guiberson, Brenda Z.: Disasters: **Natural and Man-Made Catastrophes through the Centuries**. Ten chapters, each recounting a historic disaster, from smallpox to Hurricane Katrina.
- Gutman, Dan: **Jackie and Me**. Gutman's *Baseball Card Adventure* series combines baseball and time travel, two great topics!
- Haarsma, P.J.: **The Softwire** series. Not too long ago, it was nearly impossible to find good serious science fiction for students younger than about 7th grade. This series is helping to turn that around.
- Hiaasen, Carl: **Hoot**. Long popular for his adult thrillers, Hiaasen has published several fine books for the middle grades, all with his trademark Florida setting. This book is wonderful in too many ways for me to list here.
- Hirsch, Odo: **Bartlett and the Ice Voyage**. Bartlett the voyager takes on an unreasonable mission for his impetuous young queen, and succeeds through cleverness and perseverance. This book should appeal to young fans of fantasy novels as well as those who just like adventure.
- Honey, Elizabeth: **Remote Man**. A boy from Australia finds himself coping, not only with his mother's clinical depression, but also with a gang of international wildlife poachers. Adventurous and gripping.
- Hopkins, Lee Bennett, ed.: **Got Geography!** A collection of poems about geography.
- Herriot, James: **James Herriot's Treasury for Children**. Herriot's many years as a country vet in England yielded a trove of stories, and these illustrated tales are much enjoyed by animal-loving children.
- Ibbotson, Eva: **Which Witch?** The chief evil wizard must marry, but whom? He puts together a sort of pageant of evil witches, one of whom is secretly – gasp – *good!*
- Katz, Alan: **Take Me out of the Bathtub and Other Silly Dilly Songs**. Ridiculous parodies, set to well-known tunes, which your child will love to sing.

- Katz, Susan: **Mrs. Brown on Exhibit and Other Museum Poems.** Class trips to museums, told in poems and illustrations. Clearly the author lives around here, because you'll recognize things from various Philadelphia museums in the poems – like the giant heart from the Franklin Institute, and the Soap Lady from the Mutter Museum!
- Kinney, Jeff: **Diary of a Wimpy Kid.** This quick read is a huge favorite with children of this age, and really deals with some age-appropriate social issues – including what happens when you take a friend for granted.
- Krull, Kathleen: **Lives of the Musicians.** Kathleen Krull has a knack for making short biographies fascinating - and usually amusing! She has written several books of them - *Lives of the Artists, Lives of the Athletes*, etc., so if you like one, try the others.
- Lang, Andrew: **The Blue Fairy Book** etc. More than a century ago, Lang and his wife gathered tales from various scholarly collections and rewrote them for a younger audience. These are also available at no cost for the Kindle and other readers, or to read on a computer, as they are long out of copyright. The reading level is rather high.
- Law, Ingrid: **Savvy.** An adventure about a family where nearly everyone gets a superpower - but it isn't always useful, or easy to live with.
- Levine, Gail Carson: **The Princess Tales** series. For children who like fairy tales, these are perfect. Each short novel is a fractured version of a fairy tale – or maybe a combination of several.
- Lewis, C.S.: **The Chronicles of Narnia.** I particularly recommend *Prince Caspian, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, and *The Silver Chair* for this age.
- Lowry, Lois: **Anastasia Krupnik.** Anastasia loves her life, but things are about to change, in this fine book and its sequels.
- Mahy, Margaret: **The Haunting.** Set in New Zealand. A boy is haunted, and gradually family secrets come out.
- McDonald, Megan: **Judy Moody** series. These books are a great favorite of third, fourth and fifth grade girls.
- McKissack, Patricia: **The Dark-Thirty.** Literary ghost stories with a Southern flair.
- Merrill, Jean: **The Pushcart War.** When trucks become so large that they're taking over New York City – and making it impossible for the pushcarts to operate – the pushcart vendors organize and decide to take matters into their own hands. This venerable story of David versus Goliath is still beloved.
- Nesbit, E.: **Five Children and It.** A great classic of magic and wishes fulfilled.
- Ormondroyd, Edward: **David and the Phoenix.** This old book is still in print because of its enduring popularity. David discovers the Phoenix, a learned and rather conceited bird, living on the hill in back of his new house. The Phoenix takes David on a series of magical adventures. The ending is very bittersweet, but children of this age are well able to understand it.
- Orr, Wendy: **Nim's Island.** A girl who lives with her scientist father on a lonely island contacts a lonely author for help when her father disappears. A satisfying adventure.

- Pascoe, Elaine: **Fooled You! Fakes and Hoaxes through the Years.** A nice introduction to a topic that many children find fascinating.
- Pericoli, Matteo: **The True Story of Stellina.** The true story of a rescued bird that becomes an unusual pet, with beautiful illustrations.
- Pyle, Howard: **The Wonder Clock.** Pyle was a famous local artist over a century ago, very important in the development of American illustration. He also wrote several extremely popular books, including versions of the King Arthur stories and Robin Hood that are still standards today. **The Wonder Clock** is a collection of 24 tales in the folktale style, masterfully illustrated.
- Riddell, Chris: **Ottoline and the Yellow Cat.** Ottoline is a girl living by herself with a strange hairy guardian. In this first book of the series, she is mixed up in the criminal schemes of the mysterious yellow cat. Lots of very detailed illustrations.
- Riordan, Rick: The **Percy Jackson** series. The adventures of a modern hero in the Greek tradition - that is, a child of a god of classical mythology and a mortal woman - starting when he's middle school age. Very popular.
- Rovetch, Gerda: **There Was a Man Who Loved a Rat.** These poems are very quirky, and kids love them!
- Sanderson, Brandon: **Alcatraz vs. the Evil Librarians.** A fun adventure story, but obviously pure fantasy. There are no evil librarians.
- Schade, Susan: **Travels of Thelonus** and sequels. Thelonus is an intelligent chipmunk in a postapocalyptic future. He is swept out of his community by a flood and has many science-fictiony adventures. This series is about half-and-half comic book style picture narrative and regular prose.
- Schlitz, Laura Amy: **Splendors and Glooms.** Three children foil the evil plot of a puppeteer-magician-con man. Adventurous, satisfying, and creepy but not TOO creepy.
- Schwartz, Alvin: **Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark.** These folk tales and urban legends can be quite creepy, so be aware of your student's comfort level before recommending this collection.
- Sharp, Margery: **The Rescuers.** This fairly sophisticated mouse adventure has wonderful illustrations by Garth Williams that really enhance the reading experience. Consider reading this book aloud to your student, as the vocabulary is quite difficult for most elementary schoolers.
- Shields, Carol. **Brain Juice: Science Fresh Squeezed.** Intriguing little poems about science topics.
- Sobol, Donald: **The Encyclopedia Brown series.** These classics have become such a part of American culture that every child should read at least a few of the self-contained chapters some time in his/her school life, and some children will want to read them all.
- Stevenson, James: **Sweet Corn.** Stevenson, a famous artist, draws pictures of things in his daily life and writes poems that bring them from the ordinary into the wonderful. This poem collection and its sequels are not to be missed.

Stolz, Mary: **Stealing Home**. A boy has to adjust to sharing his home and his life with a cranky elderly relative.

Tolkien, J.R.R.: **The Hobbit**. Yes, it's very wordy, but it's a fabulous classic adventure, and many children this age just love it. If it doesn't work this year, try it again in a couple of years. Consider reading it aloud or getting the audiobook version, as the vocabulary can be daunting.

Van Draanen, Wendelin: The **Shredderman** series. This fine series of school mysteries is popular with fourth graders and up.

Waugh, Sylvia: **The Mennymys**. The Mennymys are a family of sentient, life-sized dolls, made by a lonely old woman who is now dead, and trying to get along unnoticed in human society.

Williams-Garcia, Rita: **One Crazy Summer**. One of the most decorated books of the past few years, this story of three girls sent to live with the mother who abandoned them, set in 1968, manages to be important historical fiction and a fine gripping piece of drama as well.

Winkler, Henry: **Hank Zipzer** series. Poor Hank gets in all kinds of trouble in this series.

Yolen, Jane: **The Devil's Arithmetic**. A time travel adventure in Hitler's concentration camps, gripping and ultimately affirming.

## MAGAZINES

**Ask**. Each issue focuses on one non-fiction topic, and contains non-fiction, comic strips, and activities about the topic. Very pictorial, very informative, very entertaining.

**Kids Discover**. Like **Ask** above, but concentrating on facts and photographs, rather than including comic strips and activities. Some children prefer one, some the other.

**Calliope** and **Cobblestone**. History magazines, **Calliope** of world history, **Cobblestone** of U.S. history. Each focuses on one culture or topic each month.

**Cricket**. Cricket is a literary magazine for 9-12 year olds, full of high-quality fiction and poetry.

**Muse**. Muse magazine was conceived as Smithsonian magazine junior.

**Odyssey**. Science and technology magazine for 9-14 year olds.

**Sports Illustrated for Kids**. Need I say more?

**Zoobooks**. Each issue of **Zoobooks** takes an in-depth, non-fiction look at one animal or animal family.

The report of the Commission on Reading, Becoming a Nation of Readers, states, "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.