



# HKA Primary Library Summer Reading Suggestions 2018

**A starting point to discover some great books to read and enjoy**

Just as in previous years, I have put together a few (mainly fiction) titles that I read/came across during the past year and of which I think they might appeal to our students. Consider this list a mere starting point to explore when looking for ideas on what to read over the summer. Additional resources are available on our [HKA PS Summer Reading Padlet](#) (an online bulletin board), including some recommendations by our students. You can access the Padlet through our [Primary Portal page](#) or the [Primary Library Blog](#). You could also consider visiting a public library and/or bookstore to browse the shelves for more ideas. Important for me is as always that our students have a say in what to read because real choice is the most powerful factor in motivating any reader.

The grade-level boundaries I have used are meant to be broad and mainly geared towards interest and not reading level since reading levels vary within grade-levels, as each reader develops at his/her own pace. Please keep in mind that books can be enjoyed in many different ways, depending on the reader's developmental stage and preferences, e.g. reading independently, sharing the reading, listening to a book that is read out loud (by a more experienced reader or an audio book narrator).

Have a wonderful time enjoying some very special stories and reading time together.  
Happy Summer Reading!

With warmest wishes from Ms. Tanja & Ms. Alison

*(The brief title descriptions included below originate from [Goodreads](#) unless marked otherwise.)*

# Picture Books For Everyone

## *Love (Matt de la Pena)*

“From Newbery Medal-winning author Matt de la Peña and bestselling illustrator Loren Long comes a story about the strongest bond there is and the diverse and powerful ways it connects us all.”

## *Here We Are (Oliver Jeffers)*

“Oliver Jeffers offers a personal look inside his own hopes and wishes for his child--a missive about our world and those who call it home.”

## *The Book of Gold (Bob Staake)*

“Young Isaac Gutenberg isn't a curious boy . . . that is, until he meets an old shopkeeper who tells him about *The Book of Gold*. This special book, hidden somewhere in the world, holds all the answers to every question and turns to solid gold when opened. Isaac is determined to find the book--it will make him rich! He opens many books in his search, but quickly closes them when they don't turn to gold. That changes one day when he opens a book, looks at the page, and a question pops into his mind. From then on, he reads every word.”

## *Sometimes You Fly (Katherine Applegate)*

“Illustrations and simple, rhyming text remind the reader that any achievement may be preceded by mistakes, and learning from them makes accomplishments sweeter.”

## *Drawn Together (Minh Le)*

“When a young boy visits his grandfather, their lack of a common language leads to confusion, frustration, and silence. But as they sit down to draw together, something magical happens--with a shared love of art and storytelling, the two form a bond that goes beyond words.”

## *Zen Socks (Jon M Muth)*

“Leo and Molly love their new neighborhood. Best of all is their friend Stillwater, a giant panda who lives across the way! And the three friends are quite a team! Stillwater teaches Molly about patience. Leo teaches Stillwater about sharing. And Molly shows how one act of kindness can make a world of difference. Jon J Muth's warm, compassionate stories and light-filled pictures are tinged with the wisdom of Zen. Whether young or old, we all learn from one another in the most surprising ways.”

## *They Say Blue (Jilian Tamaki)*

“Caldecott and Printz Honor-winning illustrator Jillian Tamaki brings us a poetic exploration of colour and nature from a young child's point of view. *They Say Blue* follows a young girl as she contemplates colours in the known and the unknown, in the immediate world and the world beyond what she can see. The sea looks blue, yet water cupped in her hands is as clear as glass. Is a blue whale blue? She doesn't know – she hasn't seen one.”

## *The Word Collector (Peter H. Reynolds)*

“In this extraordinary new tale from Peter H. Reynolds, Jerome discovers the magic of the words all around him -- short and sweet words, two-syllable treats, and multisyllable words that sound like little songs. Words that connect, transform, and empower.”

## *Florette (Anna Walker)*

“When Mae's family moves to a new home, she wishes she could bring her garden with her. She'll miss the apple trees, the daffodils, and chasing butterflies in the wavy grass. But there's no room for a garden in the city. Or is there?”

# A Bit of Nonfiction

The following titles are more geared towards our UP readers.

## Thank you Earth: A Love Letter to Our Planet (April Pulley Syre)

“Water, air, light. Patterns, curves, shapes, colors. Things that crawl, fly, float, run, bloom, ripen. Think of everything Earth gives us. What are you most thankful for?”

## Big Machines: The Story of Virginia Lee Burton (Sherri Duskey Rinker)

“In this loving tribute to Virginia Lee Burton, the *New York Times* best-selling creators Sherri Duskey Rinker and John Rocco pay homage to the storied life of one of the most beloved creators in children’s literature. Everyone in Folly Cove knows Virginia Lee as “Jinnee.” With her magical wands she can draw whatever she imagines, but for her sons Aris and Michael, she draws the most wonderful characters of all: BIG MACHINES with friendly names like Mary Anne, Maybelle, and Katy. Her marvelous magical wands can make anything move—even a cheerful Little House.

## Malala’s Magic Pencil (Malala Yousafzai)

“Nobel Peace Prize winner and *New York Times* bestselling author Malala Yousafzai’s first picture book, inspired by her own childhood. [...] Malala’s first picture book will inspire young readers everywhere to find the magic all around them.”

## Joan Proctor, Dragon Doctor: The Woman Who Loved Reptiles (Patricia Valdez)

“When Joan grew older, she became the Curator of Reptiles at the British Museum. She went on to design the Reptile House at the London Zoo, including a home for the rumored-to-be-vicious komodo dragons. There, just like when she was a little girl, Joan hosted children’s tea parties--with her komodo dragon as the guest of honor. With a lively text and vibrant illustrations, scientist and writer Patricia Valdez and illustrator Felicita Sala bring to life Joan Procter’s inspiring story of passion and determination.”

## Two Truths and a Lie: It’s Alive! (Ammi-Joan Paquette)

“*Two Truths and a Lie* is the first book in a new series that presents some of the most crazy-but-true stories about the living world as well as a handful of stories that are too crazy to be true—and asks readers to separate facts from fakes! Did you know that there is a fungus that can control the mind of an ant and make it do its bidding? Would you believe there is such a thing as a corpse flower—a ten-foot-tall plant with a blossom that smells like a zombie? How about a species of octopus that doesn’t live in water but rather lurks in trees in the Pacific Northwest?”

## The Girl With a Mind for Math (Julia Finley Mosca)

“After touring a German submarine in the early 1940s, young Raye set her sights on becoming an engineer. Little did she know sexism and racial inequality would challenge that dream every step of the way, even keeping her greatest career accomplishment a secret for decades. Through it all, the gifted mathematician persisted--finally gaining her well-deserved title in history: a pioneer who changed the course of ship design forever.”

## The Boo-Boos That Changed the World (Barry Wittenstein)

“The Band-Aid is one of those remarkably useful things that just about everyone has used, but has anyone wondered who invented them and how they become a staple in medicine cabinets all over? [...] Appealingly designed and illustrated, an engaging, fun story about the inspiration and inventor of that essential staple of home first aid. (timeline, websites)” (Kirkus Review)

### She Persisted Around the World (Chelsea Clinton)

“Women around the world have long dreamed big, even when they’ve been told their dreams didn’t matter. They’ve spoken out, risen up and fought for what’s right, even when they’ve been told to be quiet. Whether in science, the arts, sports or activism, women and girls throughout history have been determined to break barriers and change the status quo. They haven’t let anyone get in their way and have helped us better understand our world and what’s possible. In this book, Chelsea Clinton introduces readers to a group of thirteen incredible women who have shaped history all across the globe.”

### A Hundred Billion Trillion Stars (Seth Fishman)

“Did you know that the earth is covered in three trillion trees? And that seven billion people weigh about the same as ten quadrillion ants? Our world is full of constantly changing numbers, from a hundred billion trillion stars in space to thirty-seven billion rabbits on Earth. Can you imagine that many of anything?”

### Danza! Amalia Hernandez and El Ballet Folklórico de Mexico (Duncan Tonatiuh)

“*Danza!* is a celebration of Hernández’s life and of the rich history of dance in Mexico. As a child, Amalia always thought she would grow up to be a teacher, until she saw a performance of dancers in her town square. She was fascinated by the way the dancers twirled and swayed, and she knew that someday she would be a dancer, too. She began to study many different types of dance, including ballet and modern, under some of the best teachers in the world. Hernández traveled throughout Mexico studying and learning regional dances. Soon she founded her own dance company, El Ballet Folklórico de México, where she integrated her knowledge of ballet and modern dance with folkloric dances. The group began to perform all over the country and soon all over the world, becoming an international sensation that still tours today.”

For our younger (EC) readers, you might like to explore nonfiction picture books by Nicola Davies, such as:

*The Word Bird*

*Animal Surprises*

*Into the Blue.*

# PK1-K

## 1. *La La La: A Story of Hope* (Kate DiCamillo)

"This nearly wordless graphic story follows a little girl in search of a friend. "La la la . . . la." A little girl stands alone and sings, but hears no response. Gathering her courage and her curiosity, she skips farther out into the world, singing away to the trees and the pond and the reeds -- but no song comes back to her. Day passes into night, and the girl dares to venture into the darkness toward the light of the moon, becoming more insistent in her singing, climbing as high as she can, but still there is silence in return. Dejected, she falls asleep on the ground, only to be awakened by an amazing sound. . . . She has been heard. At last."

## 2. *Bus! Stop!* (James Yang)

"Bus! Stop!" a boy yells, as his bus pulls away one early morning. He must wait for the next bus. But the next one does NOT look like his bus at all. And neither does the next one, or the next. At first, the boy is annoyed. Then he is puzzled. Then intrigued. The other buses look much more interesting than his bus. Maybe he should try a different bus after all, and he's glad he does! Here is a book with few words and delightful illustrations that shows very young children that trying something a little different can be a lot of fun."

## 3. *Grandma's Purse* (Vanessa Brantley-Newton)

"Spend the day with Mimi and her granddaughter in this charming picture book about the magic found in Mimi's favorite accessory, perfect for readers who love *How to Babysit a Grandma!*"

## 4. *Saturday is Swimming Day* (Hyewon Yum) - or any other book by the author

"Swimming lessons are on Saturdays, and every Saturday one little girl has a stomachache. When she gets to the pool it's loud, the floor is wet and slippery, and her swim cap is too tight. Her swimming instructor, Mary, says it's OK to sit by the edge if she doesn't want to get in the water this week. The next Saturday the girl has a stomachache again, but with Mary's gentle encouragement, she eventually manages to make it into the pool to practice her kicks. Little by little, the girl's confidence grows -- until one Saturday comes around when she has no stomachache at all! In a charming and relatable story about trying something new, author-illustrator Hyewon Yum shows that sometimes a little bravery and a lot of patience are all you need to face your fear."

## 5. *Reading Makes You Feel Good* (Todd Parr) - or any other book by the author

"*Reading Makes You Feel Good* will inspire and encourage young children to delight in the joyful, rewarding experience of reading. With Todd Parr's trademark bright, bold pictures and silly scenes, kids will learn that reading isn't something that just happens at school or at home-it can happen anywhere! Todd shows us all the fun ways we can read- from in the library and in bed to in the bathtub and on the road. Targeted to those first beginning to read, this book invites children to read the main text as well as all the funny signs, labels, and messages hidden in the pictures."

## 6. *Not a Stick / Not a Box* (Antoinette Portis)

"A celebration of the power of imagination from the Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor Award-winning creator of *Not a Box*. Experience the thrill of the moment when pretend feels so real that it actually becomes real!"

## 7. *Slinky Malinki Early Bird* (Lynley Dodd)

"Rapsallion Slinky Malinki likes to get up before everyone else in the morning so he can get them out of bed. He tries every trick in the book: sitting on their faces, biting their toes, leaping on their limbs, yowling. Once he has succeeded in getting the family up ...he goes back to bed."

### 8. *What Do You Do With A Chance?* (Kobi Yamada)

“The award-winning creators of The New York Times best sellers *What Do You Do With an Idea?* and *What Do You Do With a Problem?* return with a captivating story about a child who isn't sure what to make of a chance encounter and then discovers that when you have courage, take chances, and say yes to new experiences, amazing things can happen.”

### 9. *Wordy Birdy* (Tammi Sauer)

“Wordy Birdy LOVES to talk. “Hello, sunrise. Hello, pink sky. Hello, orange sky. . . .” But does she love to listen? *NOPE*. One day, while she's walking through the forest, her gift of the gab gets her into hot water: “That's a pretty tree and that's a pretty tree and that's a pretty danger sign and that's a pretty tree. . . .” Will this inattentive bird walk right into danger? Will her faraway thoughts lead her along a path of doom? It's up to her long-suffering, heard-it-all-before pals Squirrel, Raccoon, and Rabbit to save their distracted friend.”

### 10. *Baby Goes to Market* (Atinuke)

“Join Baby and his doting mama at a bustling southwest Nigerian marketplace for a bright, bouncy read-aloud offering a gentle introduction to numbers.”

And here are some all-time favorites for Kindergarteners who are looking to get a first taste of chapter books, to read with help or independently:

*Penny And Her Song* (Kevin Henkes)

*Bink & Gollie* series (Kate DiCamillo)

*Ling & Ting* series (Grace Lin)

*Charlie & Mouse* series (Laurel Snyder)

*Frog and Toad* series (Arnold Lobel)

*Fly Guy* series - fiction and nonfiction (Tedd Arnold) - weather, sharks, castles, dinosaurs, space, etc.

# G1-2

## 1. *A Different Pond* (Bao Phi)

“As a young boy, Bao Phi awoke early, hours before his father’s long workday began, to fish on the shores of a small pond in Minneapolis. Unlike many other anglers, Bao and his father fished for food, not recreation. A successful catch meant a fed family. Between hope-filled casts, Bao’s father told him about a different pond in their homeland of Vietnam.”

## 2. *The Trouble With Chickens* (Doreen Cronin)

“J.J. Tully is a former search-and-rescue dog who is trying to enjoy his retirement after years of performing daring missions saving lives. So he’s not terribly impressed when two chicks named Dirt and Sugar (who look like popcorn on legs) and their chicken mom show up demanding his help to track down their missing siblings. Driven by the promise of a cheeseburger, J.J. begins to track down clues. Is Vince the Funnel hiding something? Are there dark forces at work - or is J.J. not smelling the evidence that’s right in front of him?”

## 3. *Peter & Ernesto: A Tale of Two Sloths* (Graham Annable)

“Two sloth friends explore the world beyond their tree in this sweet graphic novel. A solid pick for readers who have graduated from *Elephant and Piggie*, *Frog and Toad*, and *Narwhal and Jelly*. (*Graphic fantasy*. 6-9)” (Kirkus Review)

## 4. *Night Out* (Daniel Miyares)

“When a small, friendless boy goes to bed at his boarding school, an adventure is about to begin! First he finds an invitation in his turtle’s bowl. Next he makes an escape--out the window, through the woods, across a river, and onto an island. And then he joins a grand celebration, with larger-than-life animals serving tea and dancing late into the night. And finally? After the journey back, he has a fantastic story to tell--the perfect way to make a friend.”

## 5. *Rise of the Earth Dragon* (Tracey West) - and other titles in the *Dragon Masters* series

“DRAGON MASTERS has it all! Dragons, a Dragon Stone, a king, a wizard, and magic! In the first book in this fully-illustrated series, 8-year old Drake is snatched up by King Roland’s soldier and taken to the castle. He is to be trained as a Dragon Master. At the castle, he is joined by three other young Dragon Masters-in-training: Ana, Rori, and Bo. The Dragon Masters must learn how to connect with and train their dragons--and they must also uncover their dragons’ special powers. Does Drake have what it takes to be a Dragon Master? What is his dragon’s special power?”

## 6. *You’re Amazing, Anna Hibiscus* (Atinuke) - and other books in the *Anna Hibiscus* series

“Anna Hibiscus is worried: her twin brothers, Double and Trouble, have boundless energy. They won’t stop climbing and they can’t keep out of trouble! Meanwhile Grandfather is tired and can’t stay awake. In the final book of this wonderfully charming series, Anna Hibiscus proves just how amazing she is.”

## 7. *Narwhal: Unicorn of the Sea* (Ben Clanton) - and other titles in the *Narwhal & Jelly* series

“Narwhal is a happy-go-lucky narwhal. Jelly is a no-nonsense jellyfish. The two might not have a lot in common, but they do they love waffles, parties and adventures. Join Narwhal and Jelly as they discover the whole wide ocean together.”

## 8. *Bea Garcia* series (Deborah Zemke): *My Life in Pictures* & *Tale of a Scaredy Dog*

“Fans of *Amelia’s Notebook* and *Judy Moody* will love this friendship story bursting with doodles and pictures. Bea Garcia is an *artist*. She draws anywhere and everywhere—but mostly in her own notebook. When Bea’s first and only best friend Yvonne moves to Australia, not even drawing makes Bea feel better. And things only get worse when a loud, rambunctious boy moves in next door. He’s nothing at

all like Yvonne! But with a little imagination and a whole lot of doodles, Bea Garcia might just make a new friend.“

### **9. *Wolfie & Fly* (Cary Fagan)**

“A classic story of imagination, friendship, adventure and speeding through the ocean in a cardboard box. For fans of *Ivy & Bean*, *Judy Moody* or *Nate the Great*. *Wolfie and Fly* is an early chapter book at its simplest and best. Our heroine, Renata Wolfman (Wolfie) does everything by herself. Friends just get in the way, and she only has time for facts and reading. But friendship finds her in the form of Livingston Flott (Fly), the slightly weird and wordy boy from next door. Before she knows it, Wolfie is motoring through deep water with Fly as her second in command in a submarine made from a cardboard box.”

### **10. *Like Pickle Juice on a Cookie* (Julie Sternberg) - and other titles in the series**

“Written in a lyrical style with thoughtful and charming illustrations throughout, this remarkable debut novel tells a poignant story of friendship and the bittersweet feelings of growing up.”

# G3-4

## 1. *Bob* (Wendy Mass and Rebecca Stead)

“A classic middle-grade tale of magic and friendship, about a girl who helps an old friend find home, by two New York Times–bestselling authors Wendy Mass and Rebecca Stead. [...] Wendy Mass and Rebecca Stead, two masterminds of classic, middle-grade fiction come together to craft this magical story about the enduring power of friendship.”

## 2. *The Wild Robot Escapes* (Peter Brown)

“Shipwrecked on a remote, wild island, Robot Roz learned from the unwelcoming animal inhabitants and adapted to her surroundings--but can she survive the challenges of the civilized world and find her way home to Brightbill and the island?”

## 3. *A Boy Called Bat* (Elana K. Arnold)

“For Bixby Alexander Tam (nicknamed Bat), life tends to be full of surprises—some of them good, some not so good. Today, though, is a good-surprise day. Bat’s mom, a veterinarian, has brought home a baby skunk, which she needs to take care of until she can hand him over to a wild-animal shelter. But the minute Bat meets the kit, he knows they belong together. And he’s got one month to show his mom that a baby skunk might just make a pretty terrific pet.”

## 4. *Lucky Button* (Michael Morpurgo)

“From award-winning master storyteller Michael Morpurgo, author of the acclaimed *War Horse*, comes a moving historical story inspired by the Foundling Museum. A lonely boy struggles to cope with school bullies and caring for his mother, until a mysterious encounter reveals life in the Foundling Hospital in the eighteenth century and unravels a touching tale about the power of music. Beautifully illustrated by Kate Greenaway Medal-winning illustrator Michael Foreman.”

## 5. *A Dragon’s Guide to Making Your Human Smarter* (Laurence Yep) - and other titles in the series

“For fans of *How to Train Your Dragon* comes a new tale about dragon Miss Drake and her human pet Winnie, by a two-time Newbery Honor winner, featuring illustrations by Caldecott Honor winner Mary GrandPré. With equal doses of whimsy and humor, Laurence Yep and Joanne Ryder have crafted an enchanting story about true friendship.”

## 6. *The Explorer* (Katherine Rundell)

“Fred, Con, Lila, and Max are on their way back to England from Manaus when the plane they’re on crashes and the pilot dies upon landing. For days they survive alone, until Fred finds a map that leads them to a ruined city, and to a secret.”

## 7. *Whale Boy* (Nicola Davies)

“Perfect for any young reader who loves animals, the powerful and heartwarming story of a boy’s friendship with a baby whale. Michael, a young boy growing up on the tropical island of Rose Town, has been saving up for his own fishing boat for years. But when a terrible storm wrecks his home, Michael is forced to take a job working for a rich, mysterious newcomer named Spargo. Spargo asks Michael to search for one thing in the deep waters around Rose Town—whales. This is moving, adventure-packed fiction at its very best, with a strong environmental message.”

## 8. *Julius Zebra series* (Gary Northfield)

“What happens when you mix the gladiatorial combat of ancient Rome with a fast-talking creature who is DEFINITELY NOT A STRIPY HORSE? From a smelly water hole on the African savanna, Julius Zebra is captured, along with Milus the scarred lion and Cornelius the clueless warthog. Transported to the ferocious clamor of the Colosseum, Julius Zebra and his motley menagerie of friends must gear up to be . . . *gladiators*! The only way they will gain their freedom is if they win the love of the Roman crowds. But do they have what it takes to succeed in a world where only the meanest and toughest survive? Follow the madcap adventures of Julius Zebra and his pals in short chapters with funny, irreverent text and zany cartoon-style illustrations, with an illustrated guide to Roman numerals and a handy glossary at the end.”

### 9. *Survivor Diaries: Overboard* (Terry Lynn Johnson)

“A high-stakes adventure series perfect for fans of the *I Survived* series and *Hatchet*. Eleven-year-old Travis and his family are on a whale watch off the coast of Washington when disaster strikes. The boat capsizes, throwing everyone into the ice-cold chaotic waves. Separated from their families and struggling to stay afloat, Travis and twelve-year-old Marina must use all of their grit and knowledge to survive. With seventeen years of hands-on experience and training in remote areas, survival expert Terry Lynn Johnson (*Ice Dogs*; *Sled Dog School*) creates on-the-edge-of-your-seat storytelling featuring the real skills that kids need to survive a disaster. This book includes Coast Guard-approved cold-water survival tips; you may have a better chance of surviving a real-life cold-water disaster after reading this book.”

### 10. *The Sweetest Sound* (Sherri Winston)

“For ten-year-old Cadence Jolly, birthdays are a constant reminder of all that has changed since her mother skipped town with dreams of becoming a star. Cadence inherited that musical soul, she can't deny it, but otherwise she couldn't be more different - she's as shy as can be. She did make a promise last year that she would try to break out of her shell, just a little. And she prayed that she'd get the courage to do it. As her eleventh birthday draws near, she realizes time is running out. And when a secret recording of her singing leaks and catches the attention of her whole church, she needs to decide what's better: deceiving everyone by pretending it belongs to someone else, or finally stepping into the spotlight. In a story filled with whimsy and hope, Sherri Winston inspires readers to embrace the voice within.”

As an incoming fourth or fifth grader, you might also like to explore the new [Hong Kong Battle of the Books list for the Primary Category](#), no matter whether you are intending to participate or not. Here are a few special recommendations from the list for you:

#### *Adventures with Waffles* (Maria Parr)

“In this delightful Norwegian import, two friends, a boy nicknamed Trille and his best friend, Lena, get into some hair-raising, frequently hilarious, and, sometimes, injury-inducing escapades over the course of a year. Narrated by Trille in a realistically childlike, first-person voice, the novel is fresh and fast-paced. While readers will chuckle at the friends' adventures—and marvel at their chutzpah—their mouths will also water at the frequency with which waffles, clearly a popular Norwegian treat, figure into the story. Children will relate to Trille's anxiety about whether he is Lena's best pal, a worry extinguished in a final, harrowing episode that, fortunately, ends well. Silhouettes, featured on the charming cover, also highlight chapter openings and provide a cozy, friendly feel.” (School Library Journal)

#### *Roller Girl* (Raina Telgemeier)

“For fans of Raina Telgemeier's *Smile*, a heartwarming graphic novel about friendship and surviving junior high through the power of roller derby. Twelve-year-old Astrid has always done everything with her best friend Nicole. So when Astrid signs up for roller derby camp, she assumes Nicole will too. But Nicole signs up for dance camp with a new friend instead, and so begins the toughest summer of Astrid's life. There are bumps and bruises as Astrid learns who she is without Nicole...and what it takes to be a strong, tough roller girl.”

#### *Kensuke's Kingdom* (Michael Morpurgo)

“When Michael is washed up on an island in the Pacific after falling from his parent's yacht, the *Peggy Sue*, he struggles to survive on his own. [...] Morpurgo here spins a yarn which gently captures the adventurous elements one would expect from a desert-island tale, but the real strength lies in the poignant and subtle observations of friendship, trust and, ultimately, humanity.”

#### *Wishtree* (Katherine Applegate)

“*Trees can't tell jokes, but they can certainly tell stories. . . .*” Red is an oak tree who is many rings old. Red is the neighborhood “wishtree”—people write their wishes on pieces of cloth and tie them to Red's branches. Along with her crow friend Bongo and other animals who seek refuge in Red's hollows, this “wishtree” watches over the neighborhood. You might say Red has seen it all. Until a new family moves in. Not everyone is welcoming, and Red's experiences as a wishtree are more important than ever.”

*The Vanderbeekers of 141<sup>st</sup> Street (Karina Yan Glaser)*

“The Vanderbeekers have always lived in the brownstone on 141st Street. It’s practically another member of the family. So when their reclusive, curmudgeonly landlord decides not to renew their lease, the five siblings have eleven days to do whatever it takes to stay in their beloved home and convince the dreaded Beiderman just how wonderful they are. And all is fair in love and war when it comes to keeping their home.”

# G5

## 1. *Endling: The Last* (Katherine Applegate)

“First Katherine Applegate thrilled readers with the action-packed Animorphs series. Then she stole our hearts with the award-winning *The One and Only Ivan*. Now she takes us on an unforgettable journey in this first book of an epic middle grade series! [...] Building upon the success of her critically acclaimed novels such as *The One and Only Ivan*, *Crenshaw*, and *Wishtree*, while also returning to her action-packed fantasy roots of Animorphs, the Endling series is Katherine Applegate at her finest. With its enthralling characters, unique setting, and gripping adventure, this series is the perfect next read for fans of Rick Riordan, Brian Jacques, and Tui T. Sutherland.”

## 2. *Lions & Liars* (Kate Beasley)

“Frederick Frederickson has a food-chain theory about life. There are lions, like the school bully. Gazelles, like the bullied kids. There are meerkats, and the fleas that live on the butts of meerkats. Frederick’s a flea. Fifth grade is off to a terrible start when Frederick is sent to a disciplinary camp for troublesome boys. His fellow troop mates—Nosebleed, Specs, The Professor, and little-yet-lethal Ant Bite—are terrifying. But in between trust-building exercises and midnight escape attempts, a tenuous friendship grows between them. Which is lucky, because a Category 5 hurricane is coming and everyone will have to work together—lions and fleas alike—to survive!”

## 3. *Front Desk* (Kelly Tang) - The author lives in Hong Kong!

“*Front Desk* tells the story of 10 year old Mia Tang. Every day, Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel while her parents clean the rooms. She’s proud of her job. She loves the guests and treats them like family. When one of the guests gets into trouble with the police, it shakes Mia to her core. Her parents, meanwhile, hide immigrants in the empty rooms at night. If the mean motel owner Mr. Yao finds out, they’ll be doomed! Based on the author’s life, the story follows Mia—the daughter of first generation Chinese immigrants.”

## 4. *The Island of Dr. Libris* (Chris Grabenstein)

“Chris Grabenstein, author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library* and coauthor of the *I Funny* series with James Patterson, celebrates the power of imagination with this action-packed adventure that shows that sometimes the *real* story starts after you close the book! What if your favorite characters came to life? Billy’s spending the summer in a lakeside cabin that belongs to the mysterious Dr. Libris. But something strange is going on. Besides the security cameras everywhere, there’s Dr. Libris’s private bookcase. Whenever Billy opens the books inside, he can hear sounds coming from the island in the middle of the lake. The clash of swords. The twang of arrows. Sometimes he can even feel the ground shaking. It’s almost as if the stories he’s reading are coming to life! But that’s impossible . . . isn’t it?”

## 5. *Amal Unbound* (Aisha Said)

“Life is quiet and ordinary in Amal’s Pakistani village, but she had no complaints, and besides, she’s busy pursuing her dream of becoming a teacher one day. Her dreams are temporarily dashed when—as the eldest daughter—she must stay home from school to take care of her siblings. Amal is upset, but she doesn’t lose hope and finds ways to continue learning. Then the unimaginable happens—after an accidental run-in with the son of her village’s corrupt landlord, Amal must work as his family’s servant to pay off her own family’s debt. Life at the opulent Khan estate is full of heartbreak and struggle for Amal—especially when she inadvertently makes an enemy of a girl named Nabila. Most troubling, though, is Amal’s growing awareness of the Khans’ nefarious dealings. When it becomes clear just how far they will go to protect their interests, Amal realizes she will have to find a way to work with others if they are ever to exact change in a cruel status quo, and if Amal is ever to achieve her dreams.”

## 6. *Granted* (John David Anderson)

“From the author of beloved novels *Ms. Bixby’s Last Day* and *Posted* comes a hilarious, heartfelt, and unforgettable novel about a fairy-in-training. Everyone who wishes upon a star, or a candle, or a penny thrown into a fountain knows that you’re not allowed to tell anyone what you’ve wished for. But even so,

there is someone out there who hears it. In a magical land called the Haven lives a young fairy named Ophelia Delphinium Fidgets. Ophelia is no ordinary fairy—she is a Granter: one of the select fairies whose job it is to venture out into the world and grant the wishes of unsuspecting humans every day.”

### 7. *Flamingo Boy* (Michael Morpurgo)

“This is a landmark new novel from the nation's favourite storyteller, set in the unique landscape of the Camargue in the South of France during WW2. There, a young autistic boy lives on his parents' farm among the salt flats, and the flamingos that live there. There are lots of things he doesn't understand: but he does know how to heal animals. He loves routine, and music too: and every week he goes to market with his mother, to ride his special horse on the town carousel. But then the Germans come, with their guns, and take the town. A soldier shoots a flamingo from the sky, and it falls to earth terribly injured. And even worse is to come: the carousel is damaged, the horses broken. For this vulnerable boy, everything is falling apart. Only there's a kind sergeant among the Germans - a man with a young boy of his own at home, a man who trained as a carpenter. Between them, perhaps boy and man can mend what has been broken - and maybe even the whole town...”

### 8. *Molly Pim and the Millions of Stars* (Martine Murray)

“All Molly wants is to be normal like her friend Ellen Palmer. Ellen, with her neat braids and a tidy house and a mother and father who are home for dinner every night. But Molly's mom spends her mornings tramping through the woods, looking for ingredients for her potions. Their house is not neat, and their rooster, the Gentleman, runs wild in their yard. And it is the Gentleman that angers their grumpy neighbors, the Grimshaws. So Molly's mom makes a potion that will grow a tree between their houses. When Molly's mom accidentally drinks the potion and turns into the tree, Molly is determined to get her back. But with the Grimshaws planning to cut down the tree branches that reach onto their property, time is of the essence. With the help of her mysterious classmate Pim Wilder, Molly sets out to save her mother and discovers the wonder that lies in the ordinary.”

### 9. *The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle* (Leslie Connor)

“From the critically acclaimed author of *Waiting for Normal* and *All Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook*, Leslie Connor, comes a deeply poignant and beautifully crafted story about self-reliance, redemption, and hope. Mason Buttle is the biggest, sweatiest kid in his grade, and everyone knows he can barely read or write. Mason's learning disabilities are compounded by grief. Fifteen months ago, Mason's best friend, Benny Kilmartin, turned up dead in the Buttle family's orchard. An investigation drags on, and Mason, honest as the day is long, can't understand why Lieutenant Baird won't believe the story Mason has told about that day. Both Mason and his new friend, tiny Calvin Chumsky, are relentlessly bullied by the other boys in their neighborhood, so they create an underground club space for themselves. When Calvin goes missing, Mason finds himself in trouble again. He's desperate to figure out what happened to Calvin, and eventually, Benny. But will anyone believe him?”

### 10. *Samantha Spinner and the Super Secret Plans* (Russell Gins)

“For Samantha Spinner, it just isn't fair. Her uncle Paul disappeared, and here's what he left: Samantha's sister got a check for \$2,400,000,000. Samantha's brother got the New York Yankees. And Samantha...got a rusty red umbrella with a tag hanging off of its worn handle. The tag says "Watch out for the RAIN." Thanks, Uncle Paul.”

## And a special recommendation for all graphic novel fans:

### *All's Faire in Middle School* (Victoria Jamieson)

“The author of *Roller Girl* is back with a graphic novel about starting middle school, surviving your embarrassing family, and the Renaissance Faire. Eleven-year-old Imogene (Impy) has grown up with two parents working at the Renaissance Faire, and she's eager to begin her own training as a squire. First, though, she'll need to prove her bravery. Luckily Impy has just the quest in mind--she'll go to public school after a life of being homeschooled! But it's not easy to act like a noble knight-in-training in middle school. Impy falls in with a group of girls who seem really nice (until they don't) and starts to be embarrassed of her thrift shop apparel, her family's unusual lifestyle, and their small, messy apartment. Impy has always thought of herself as a heroic knight, but when she does something really mean in order to fit in, she begins to wonder whether she might be more of a dragon after all.”

As a fifth grader, heading into middle school, you might also like to explore the new [Hong Kong Battle of the Books list for the Secondary Category](#), no matter whether you are intending to participate or not. Here are a few special recommendations from the list for you:

### **Hello Universe (Erin Entrada Kelly)**

“Winner of the 2018 Newbery Medal. In one day, four lives weave together in unexpected ways. Virgil Salinas is shy and kindhearted and feels out of place in his loud and boisterous family. Valencia Somerset, who is deaf, is smart, brave, and secretly lonely, and loves everything about nature. Kaori Tanaka is a self-proclaimed psychic, whose little sister Gen is always following her around. And Chet Bullens wishes the weird kids would just act normal so that he can concentrate on basketball. They aren’t friends -- at least not until Chet pulls a prank that traps Virgil and his pet guinea pig at the bottom of a well. This disaster leads Kaori, Gen, and Valencia on an epic quest to find the missing Virgil. Through luck, smarts, bravery, and a little help from the universe, a rescue is performed, a bully is put in his place, and friendship blooms.”

### ***Home of the Brave* (Katherine Applegate)**

“Kek comes from Africa. In America he sees snow for the first time, and feels its sting. He’s never walked on ice, and he falls. He wonders if the people in this new place will be like the winter - cold and unkind. In Africa, Kek lived with his mother, father, and brother. But only he and his mother have survived, and now she’s missing. Kek is on his own. Slowly, he makes friends: a girl who is in foster care; an old woman who owns a rundown farm, and a cow whose name means “family” in Kek’s native language. As Kek awaits word of his mother’s fate, he weathers the tough Minnesota winter by finding warmth in his new friendships, strength in his memories, and belief in his new country. Bestselling author Katherine Applegate presents a beautifully wrought novel about an immigrant’s journey from hardship to hope.”

### ***When Friendship Followed Me Home* (Paul Griffin)**

“A boy’s chance encounter with a scruffy dog leads to an unforgettable friendship in this deeply moving story about life, loss, and the meaning of family. Ben Coffin has never felt like he fits in. A former foster kid, he keeps his head down at school to avoid bullies and spends his afternoons reading sci-fi books at the library. But that all changes when he finds a scruffy abandoned dog named Flip and befriends the librarian’s daughter, Halley. For the first time, Ben starts to feel like he belongs in his own life. Then, everything changes, and suddenly, Ben is more alone than ever. But with a little help from Halley’s magician father, Ben discovers his place in the world and learns to see his own magic through others’ eyes. Equal parts heartbreaking and heartwarming, this book is a must-read for dog lovers and fans of emotionally resonant middle grade novels like *One for the Murphys* and *Okay for Now*.”

### ***Ice Dogs* (Terry Lynn Johnson)**

“Victoria Secord, a 14-year-old Alaskan dogsled racer, loses her way on a routine outing with her dogs. With food gone and temperatures dropping, her survival, and that of her dogs and the mysterious boy she meets in the woods, is entirely up to her.”

### ***When You Reach Me* (Rebecca Stead)**

“Winner of the 2010 Newbery Medal. Miranda is an ordinary sixth grader, until she starts receiving mysterious messages from somebody who knows all about her, including things that have not even happened yet. Each message brings her closer to believing that only she can prevent a tragic death. Until the final note makes her think she’s too late.”

# Grown-Ups

Here are a few additional suggestions for parents and colleagues:

**1. *Kowloon Tong: A Novel of Hong Kong* (Paul Theroux)**

“Ninety-nine years of colonial rule are ending as the British prepare to hand over Hong Kong to China. For Betty Mullard and her son, Bunt, it doesn't concern them - until the mysterious Mr. Hung from the mainland offers them a large sum for their family business. They refuse, yet fail to realize Mr. Hung is unlike the Chinese they've known: he will accept no refusals. When a young female employee whom Bunt has been dating vanishes, he is forced to make important decisions for the first time in his life - but his good intentions are pitted against the will of Mr. Hung and the threat of the ultimate betrayal.”

**2. *Borne a Crime: Stories From a South African Childhood* (Trevor Noah) - I highly recommend the audiobook, which Trevor Noah narrates himself.**

“The compelling, inspiring, and comically sublime New York Times bestseller about one man's coming-of-age, set during the twilight of apartheid and the tumultuous days of freedom that followed.”

**3. *Eighty Days: Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland's History-Making Race Around the World* (Matthew Goodman)**

“1889: Two women, successful journalists and writers, set off in a desperate race in opposite directions, each determined to outdo Jules Verne's fictional hero Phileas Fogg and circle the globe in less than eighty days.”

**4. *Pachinko* (Min Jin Lee)**

“*Pachinko* follows one Korean family through the generations, beginning in early 1900s Korea with Sunja, the prized daughter of a poor yet proud family, whose unplanned pregnancy threatens to shame them all. Deserted by her lover, Sunja is saved when a young tubercular minister offers to marry and bring her to Japan.”

**5. *The Great Alone* (Kristin Hannah)**

“Alaska, 1974. Unpredictable. Unforgiving. Untamed. For a family in crisis, the ultimate test of survival. Ernt Allbright, a former POW, comes home from the Vietnam war a changed and volatile man. When he loses yet another job, he makes an impulsive decision: he will move his family north, to Alaska, where they will live off the grid in America's last true frontier.”

**6. *The Tuscan Child* (Rhys Bowen)**

“From *New York Times* bestselling author Rhys Bowen comes a haunting novel about a woman who braves her father's hidden past to discover his secrets... In 1944, British bomber pilot Hugo Langley parachuted from his stricken plane into the verdant fields of German-occupied Tuscany. Badly wounded, he found refuge in a ruined monastery and in the arms of Sofia Bartoli. But the love that kindled between them was shaken by an irreversible betrayal.”

... and something a little bit lighter:

**When Life Gives You Lululemons (Lauren Weisberger)**

“*New York Times* bestselling author Lauren Weisberger returns with a novel starring one of her favorite characters from *The Devil Wears Prada*—Emily Charlton, first assistant to Miranda Priestly, now a highly successful image consultant who's just landed the client of a lifetime.”

If you are a fan of **Young Adult literature** - just as I am - here a few suggestions:

**1. *A Beautiful Poison* (Lynda Kang)**

“Just beyond the Gilded Age, in the mist-covered streets of New York, the deadly Spanish influenza ripples through the city. But with so many victims in her close circle, young socialite Allene questions if the flu is really to blame. All appear to have been poisoned—and every death was accompanied by a mysterious note.”

**2. *The Beauty That Remains* (Ashley Woodfolk)**

“Music brought Autumn, Shay, and Logan together. Death wants to tear them apart. Autumn always knew exactly who she was—a talented artist and a loyal friend. Shay was defined by two things: her bond with her twin sister, Sasha, and her love of music. And Logan always turned to writing love songs when his love life was a little less than perfect. But when tragedy strikes each of them, somehow music is no longer enough. Now Logan can’t stop watching vlogs of his dead ex-boyfriend. Shay is a music blogger struggling to keep it together. And Autumn sends messages that she knows can never be answered. Despite the odds, one band’s music will reunite them and prove that after grief, beauty thrives in the people left behind.”

**3. *LIFEL1K3* (Jay Kristoff)**

“On a floating junkyard beneath a radiation sky, a deadly secret lies buried in the scrap. Eve isn’t looking for secrets—she’s too busy looking over her shoulder. The robot gladiator she’s just spent six months building has been reduced to a smoking wreck, and the only thing keeping her Grandpa from the grave was the fistful of credits she just lost to the bookies. To top it off, she’s discovered she can destroy electronics with the power of her mind, and the puritanical Brotherhood are building a coffin her size. If she’s ever had a worse day, Eve can’t remember it. But when Eve discovers the ruins of an android boy named Ezekiel in the scrap pile she calls home, her entire world comes crashing down. With her best friend Lemon Fresh and her robotic conscience, Cricket, in tow, she and Ezekiel will trek across deserts of irradiated glass, infiltrate towering megacities and scour the graveyard of humanity’s greatest folly to save the ones Eve loves, and learn the dark secrets of her past. Even if those secrets were better off staying buried.”

**4. *Illegal* (Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin)**

“This is a powerful and timely story about one boy’s epic journey across Africa to Europe, a graphic novel for all children with glorious colour artwork throughout. From Eoin Colfer, previously Irish Children’s Laureate, and the team behind his bestselling *Artemis Fowl* graphic novels.”

**5. *People Like Us* (Dana Mele)**

“Kay Donovan may have skeletons in her closet, but the past is past, and she’s reinvented herself entirely. Now she’s a star soccer player whose group of gorgeous friends run their private school with effortless popularity and acerbic wit. But when a girl’s body is found in the lake, Kay’s carefully constructed life begins to topple. The dead girl has left Kay a computer-coded scavenger hunt, which, as it unravels, begins to implicate suspect after suspect, until Kay herself is in the crosshairs of a murder investigation. But if Kay’s finally backed into a corner, she’ll do what it takes to survive. Because at Bates Academy, the truth is something you make...not something that happened.”

... and because the titles so far have been far too serious, one last recommendation, this one hilarious and absolutely delightful to read 😊

**6. *When Dimple Met Rishi* (Sandhya Menon)**

“Dimple Shah has it all figured out. With graduation behind her, she’s more than ready for a break from her family, from Mamma’s inexplicable obsession with her finding the “Ideal Indian Husband.” Ugh. Dimple knows they must respect her principles on some level, though. If they truly believed she needed a husband right now, they wouldn’t have paid for her to attend a summer program for aspiring web developers...right?”

**Happy  
Summer Reading!**