

Great Reads for Kindergarteners to 2nd Graders

Titles from lists by the American Library Association and the Association of Library Service to Children

All the Animals Where I Live

Stead, Philip C.

Find It: E STE

The author used to live in the busy city where there were buses and trains and lots of people. Now he jubilantly takes us on a tour of his country home, pointing out all the animals sharing his space.

Alma and How She Got Her Name

Valentine, Nicole

Find It: E MAR

When Alma Sofia Esperanza José Pura Candela asks her father why she has so many names, she hears the story of her name and learns about her grandparents.

At the Mountain's Base

Sorell, Traci

Find It: E SOR

At the mountain's base sits a cabin under an old hickory tree. In that cabin lives a family -- loving, cooking weaving, and singing. The strength in their song sustains them through trials on the ground and in the sky, as they wait for their loved one, a pilot, to return from war.

Auntie Luce's Talking Paintings

Latour, Francie

Find It: E LAT

Every winter, a young girl flies to Haiti to visit her Auntie Luce, a painter. The moment she steps off the plane, she feels a wall of heat and familiar sights soon follow: the boys selling water ice by the cathedral, the buses in the streets, the fog and steep winding road to her aunt's mountain home. The girl has always loved Auntie Luce's paintings - the houses tucked into the hillside, colorful fishing boats by the water, heroes who fought for and won the country's independence. Through Haiti's colors, the girl comes to understand this place her family calls home.

Between Us and Abuela: A Family Story from the Border

Perkins, Mitali

Find It: E HOL CHR PER

When Maria, Juan, and their mother go to the border between California and Mexico to visit their grandmother at Christmas, Maria must devise a way to get Juan's gift over the fence.

The Book Rescuer: How a Mensch From Massachusetts Saved Yiddish Literature for Generations to Come

Macy, Sue

Find It: J BIO LANSKY

Over the last 40 years, Aaron Lansky has jumped into dumpsters, rummaged in musty basements, and crawled through cramped attics in pursuit of a particular treasure: any book written in Yiddish, the language of generations of European Jews. When he started looking for Yiddish books, experts estimated about 70,000 still existed. Since then, the MacArthur Genius Grant recipient has collected nearly 1.5 million books, finding more every day.

Camp Tiger
Choi, Susan

Find It: E CHO

Every year, a boy and his family go camping at Mountain Pond. Usually, they see things like an eagle fishing for dinner, a salamander with red spots on its back, and chipmunks that steal food while the family sits by the fire. This year is different, though: the boy's going into first grade and his mother encourages him to do things on his own. The most different thing of all? This year, a tiger comes to the woods.

Carl and the Meaning of Life
Freedman, Deborah

Find It: E FRE

When a field mouse asks Carl the earthworm why he tunnels through the dirt, Carl doesn't have an answer, so he sets off to find out.

Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13

Becker, Helaine

Find It: J BIO JOHNSON

As a child, Katherine Johnson loved counting and counted everything. Boundless, curious, and excited by calculations, young Katherine longed to learn everything about math and the universe. From Katherine's early beginnings as a gifted student to her heroic accomplishments as a prominent NASA mathematician, this is the story of a groundbreaking American woman who not only calculated the course of moon landings but also saved lives and made enormous contributions to history.

Carter Reads the Newspaper
Hopkinson, Deborah

Find It: J BIO WOODSON

Carter G. Woodson was born ten years after the end of the Civil War to parents who were former slaves. Their stories weren't the ones in history books, but Carter learned them and kept them in his heart. Carter's father couldn't read or write but believed in being informed, so Carter read him the newspaper every day. From this, he learned about the world and how to find out what he didn't know. Many years later, as a student at Harvard University, one of his professors said black people had no history. Carter knew that wasn't true and set out to make sure the rest of us knew as well.

Dreamers
Morales, Yuyi

Find It: J BIO MORALES

Morales and her young son discover how they fit into their strange, new country when they find the public library in this illustrated story about their immigration experience.

Double Bass Blues
Loney, Andrea J.

Find It: E LON

After school orchestra practice, young Nic carries his double bass through rough neighborhoods to his grandfather's home, where he and Granddaddy Nic play jazz music with friends, delighting the neighbors.

Dude!
Reynolds, Aaron

Find It: E REY

A platypus and a beaver who love surfing encounter a shark -- with unexpected results.

Field Trip to the Moon
Hare, John

Find It: E HAR

In this wordless picture book, a girl is accidentally left behind on a class trip to the moon.

Fox the Tiger
Tabor, Corey R.

Find It: E BR TAB

Fox decides to become a tiger because they're fast and sneaky. Soon, his other animal friends join in.

Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story
Maillard, Kevin Noble

Find It: E MAI

Using illustrations showing the diversity in Native America and spare poetic text emphasizing fry bread in terms of provenance, this volume tells the story of a post-colonial food that is a shared tradition for Native American families all across the North American continent. Includes a recipe and an extensive author note that delves into the social ways, foodways, and politics of America's 573 recognized tribes.

Going Down Home With Daddy
Lyons, Kelly Starling

Find It: E LYO

Alan looks forward to the annual family reunion at the farm where Daddy grew up, but everyone is supposed to share something special and Alan worries about arriving with empty hands.

Hello Lighthouse
Blackall, Sophie

Find It: E BLA

Explores the life of one lighthouse as it beams its message out to sea through shifting seasons, changeable weather, and the tenure of its final keeper.

Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race
Shetterly, Margot Lee

Find It: E 510.92 SHE

Explores the previously uncelebrated but pivotal contributions of NASA's African American women mathematicians to America's space program, describing how Jim Crow laws segregated them despite their groundbreaking successes. Includes biographies on Dorothy Jackson Vaughan (1910-2008), Mary Winston Jackson (1921-2005), Katherine Colman Goble Johnson (1918-2020), and Dr. Christine Mann Darden (1942-).

How to Read a Book
Alexander, Kwame

Find It: E ALE

Suggests a method of reading that begins with planting oneself beneath a tree and leads to a book party one hopes will never end.

It Began With a Page: How Gyo Fujikawa Drew the Way
Maclear, Kyo

Find It: J BIO FUJIKAWA

Growing up quiet and lonely at the beginning of the 20th century, Gyo Fujikawa learned from her relatives the ways in which both women and Japanese people lacked opportunity. Her teachers and family believed in her and sent her to art school and later Japan, where her talent flourished. But while Gyo's career led her to work for Walt Disney Studios, World War II began, and with it, her family's internment. But Gyo never stopped fighting for herself, her vision, her family, or her readers, and later wrote and illustrated the first children's book to feature children of different races interacting together.

Just in Case You Want to Fly
Fogliano, Julie

Find It: E FOG

Offers encouragement and supplies, from a snack and a blanket to a map for finding the way home, to a loved one who may be facing a new challenge.

Just Right: Searching for the Goldilocks Planet
Manley, Curtis

Find It: J 523.2 MAN

Follow a young girl as she explores questions about the wondrous search for another Goldilocks planet: a planet outside our solar system that can support life.

Kick It, Mo!
Adler, David

Find It: E BR ADL

When soccer season starts, Mo, who has been working hard to improve his kicking skills, wonders if he will ever get a chance to show his team what he can do.

Llama Destroys the World
Stutzman, Jonathan

Find It: E STU

Eating too much pie causes Llama to rip his dancing pants, opening a black hole and threatening the entire universe.

The Many Colors of Harpreet Singh
Kelkar, Supriya

Find It: E KEL

Harpreet Singh has a different color for every mood and occasion, from pink for dancing to bhangra beats to red for courage. When Harpreet's mom finds a new job in a snowy city and they have to move, all he wants is to be invisible. Will he ever feel a happy sunny yellow again?

A Map Into the World
Cottrell Boyce, Frank

Find It: E YAN

Paj Ntaub, a young Hmong American girl, spends a busy year with her family in their new home, and seeks a way to share the beauty of the world with a grieving neighbor.

Meet Yasmin!
Oppel, Kenneth

Find It: J SER YAS

Pakistani-American second grader Yasmin learns to cope with the small problems of school and home while gaining confidence in her own skills and creative abilities.

My Footprints
Phi, Bao

Find It: E PHI

Upset after being bullied, Thuy, a Vietnamese American, pretends she is different creatures, including an especially strong, wonderful being made up of her two mothers and herself.

My Grandma and Me
Javaherbin, Mina

Find It: E JAV

In a true tale of a young girl in Iran and her grandmother, this beautiful ode to family celebrates small moments of love that become lifelong memories.

My Papi Has a Motorcycle
Quintero, Isabel

Find It: E QUI

When Daisy Ramona zooms around her neighborhood with her papi on his motorcycle, she sees the people and places she's always known. She also sees a community rapidly changing around her. As the sun sets purple-blue-gold behind them, Daisy Ramona knows the love she feels will always be there.

Nya's Long Walk: A Step at a Time
Park, Linda Sue

Find It: E PAR

When her little sister, Akeer, becomes sick when they are returning home from the water hole, Nya must carry her and the water back to their village, one step at a time.

One Fox: A Counting Book Thriller
Read, Kate

Find It: E COU REA

One famished fox finds five snug eggs but must face three plump hens to get them.

Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant and Artist
Leung, Julie

Find It: J BIO WONG

As a boy, Wong Geng Yeo assumed a fake identity to immigrate to the U.S.. eventually becoming a Disney artist.

Peter & Ernesto: A Tale of Two Sloths
Annable, Graham

Find It: J GN PET

Sloths Peter and Ernesto are friends who are nothing alike. Peter loves their tree and never wants to leave, while Ernesto loves the sky and wants to see it from every place on earth. Ernesto leaves to have an adventure while Peter stays behind and frets. Will their separation tear these friends apart?

Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré
Denise, Anika

Find It: J BIO BELPRE

A riveting picture book biography of librarian Pura Belpré that captures her professional life and legacy.

The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family
Muhammad, Ibtihaj

Find It: E MUH

Faizah relates how she feels on the first day her sister, sixth-grader Asiya, wears a hijab to school.

Saturday
Mora, Oge

Find It: E MOR

When all of their special Saturday plans go awry, Ava and her mother still find a way to appreciate one another and their time together.

Small in the City
Smith, Sydney

Find It: E SMI

A boy offers advice to his lost cat from taking shortcuts through safe alleys to finding friends in the park.

A Stone Sat Still

Wenzel, Brendan

Find It: E WEN

Told in rhyming verse, a stone is considered from a variety of environmental and emotional perspectives, as it sits where it is, surrounded by grass, dirt, and water, an unchanging certainty in the world.

Stop! Bot!

Yang, James

Find It: E YAN

When a little boy stops to show a building doorman his new "bot," it floats up out of his hands and the kind doorman runs up to each floor of the building to try and catch it, with help from the building's residents.

Stormy: A Story About Finding a Forever Home

Guojing

Find It: E GUO

A woman discovers a puppy hiding under a park bench, scruffy, scared, and alone. The woman tries to befriend the animal, but it's too scared to let her near. Day after day, the woman tries and the dog runs away. With perseverance, patience, and help from an enticing tennis ball, a tentative friendship begins. It's not until a raging storm forces the two together that a joyous and satisfying friendship takes hold.

The Stuff of Stars

Bauer, Marion Dane

Find It: E BAU

Before the universe was formed, before time and space existed, there was . . . nothing. But then BANG! Stars caught fire and burned so long they exploded, flinging stardust everywhere. The ash of those stars turned into planets, into our Earth and us. A seamless blend of science and art, this picture book reveals the composition of our world and beyond -- and how we are all the stuff of stars.

Thank You, Omu!

Mora, Oge

Find It: E MOR

When the aroma of Omu's homemade stew fills the air, her neighbors arrive, one by one, for a taste until all is gone except for her generous spirit.

Tiger vs. Nightmare

Tetri, Emily

Find It: J GN TIG

Tiger is very lucky: she has a monster living under her bed. Every night, Tiger and Monster play until it's time for lights out. Monster would never try to scare Tiger. That's not what best friends do. But Monster needs to scare something, so, while Tiger sleeps, Monster scares all her nightmares away. Thanks to her friend, Tiger has only good dreams. However, waiting in the darkness is a nightmare so big and mean that Monster can't fight it alone. Only teamwork and a lot of bravery can chase this nightmare away.

Todos Iguales: Un Corrido de Lemon Grove = All Equal: A Ballad of Lemon Grove

Hale, Christy

Find It: J 379.263 HAL

This bilingual story tells of the 1931 Lemon Grove incident, in which Mexican families in southern California won the first school desegregation case in United States history.

¡Vamos! Let's Go to the Market

Raúl the Third

Find It: E GON

Little Lobo, a Mexican American, and Bernabe, his dog, deliver supplies to vendors at the Mercado, a busy border town market.

We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga
Sorell, Traci

Find It: E SOR

Following a full Cherokee year of celebrations and experiences, this book shares the contemporary life of the Cherokee people, highlighting their tradition of gratitude.

What Do They Do With All That Poo?
Kurtz, Jane

Find It: E 591.5 KUR

An exploration of different types of animal poo and what the zoo uses it for.

What is Given from the Heart
McKissack, Pat

Find It: E MCK

Despite their own poverty since Daddy died, Mama tells nine-year-old James Otis they need to help Sarah, whose family lost everything in a fire.

Where Are You From?
Méndez, Yamile Saied

Find It: E MEN

When other children and their parents keep asking a young girl where she is from, she puts the same question to her grandfather who describes the land and people from which her family originated.

When Aidan Became a Brother
Lukoff, Kyle

Find It: E LUK

Aidan, a transgender boy, experiences complicated emotions as he and his parents prepare for the arrival of a new baby.

Why?
Seeger, Laura Vaccaro

Find It: E SEE

Illustrations and simple text reveal that, even when a pesky rabbit annoys his bear friend with too many questions, their friendship remains strong.

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