

June 2020

Dear Convent and Stuart Hall Lower Form Students and Families,

“Reading gives you someplace to go when we have to stay where we are.” - Mason Cooley

A love of reading is one of the greatest gifts we give our children. Reading can be the mirrors of our lives, reflecting family life and childhood familiar to us; and, it can be the windows into people and places we’ve never met or traveled to. Books inspire our imagination, evoke emotion, propagate ideas and start conversations.

In early elementary years, investing in children’s reading life pays off not just in their ability to read, but also their *love* of reading. Here are some suggestions to seed your child’s love of reading.

Spark your child’s interest

Your child’s taste in books will develop over time, just as their palates do. Listen to your child, and select books they naturally gravitate towards. Also, keep your reader growing with an ample supply of new titles, book series and a mix of genres. While libraries may not be open, there are many resources to access quality books for your family:

[SORA](#): Convent & Stuart Hall’s digital library ([tutorial](#) for getting started)

[SFPL](#): Free ebooks, audiobooks and other media

[EPIC](#): Online ebooks and audiobooks with a free 30-day trial

[Literati](#): Book club subscription sent by mail

Local independent bookstores: [Green Apple Books](#), [Books, Inc.](#), [Bookshop West Portal](#), [bookshop.org](#)

The San Francisco Public Library has an [Ask the Librarian chat online](#). You can ask for book recommendations in real time!

Honor your child’s reading level

The skill of reading takes exposure, practice and time. *There is no rush!* Independent reading at or just above reading level helps to set a child up for success, which builds confidence, motivation and a love of reading. Parents who want to support emergent or beginning readers can emphasize tracking text by pointing to words and reading at a slower pace. Rereading familiar texts also will help readers cue into sight words and develop opportunities for deeper comprehension.

Scholastic’s [Book Wizard](#) is a great resource for finding books that are at your child’s reading level. Under the “Reading Level System” tab, select Guided Reading Level and then check an individual or a range of reading levels. You can also specify fiction or nonfiction. Be sure to scroll past strangely formatted blank space at the bottom of each page to proceed to the next page of results.

Read and talk about books daily

Reading creates intimate family time together. Talk about pictures. Predict what will happen next. Ask open-ended questions. Consider the message in the story. Read a selection *more than once*. After all, we all gain more meaning from repeated experiences; it teaches us to look more deeply, consider and reconsider. While younger children love to be read to, older children also love talking about what they are reading, especially if parents read the same book. You also might find that revisiting some of your childhood classics is a journey you both enjoy taking. Having your child keep a reading journal in which they can record their adventures in reading is a great way to promote their love of reading. Pre-writing age students may draw a picture of a character or a scene from the book (and parents can record the title, the date it was read and a caption for the illustration).

Some Suggestions to Guide Your Reading:

In Convent & Stuart Hall's K-8 Hoffman Library, the fiction collection is separated into five categories: Picture Books, Early Readers, Transitional Fiction, General Fiction, and Teen Reads. Keeping in mind that all readers develop at their own pace, and that there is value for everyone in reading across these categories, books from the Picture Book, Early Reader and Transitional Fiction sections are ones in which students in grades K-3 generally find great enjoyment and success with independent reading. While all of these sections hold a range of reading levels, it can generally be said that the length and complexity of the text increases from one fiction category to the next (picture books are the exception, as the text, plots and themes within range from simple to quite complex).

We have curated a list of suggestions in each category, along with some thoughts on how to participate in reading each type of book with your child.

Picture Books

The artistry and emotion in children's literature is a well that never runs dry. The selections below include new and timeless stories of rich characters and meaningful themes -- the kind of stories that make you think, ask questions, and marvel at their beauty. Most authors and illustrators here are prolific. If you find a book that touches your heart, follow its rabbit hole until you fall in love.

Absolutely Positively Alexander by Judith Viorst

The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend by Dan Santat

Anansi and The Moss-Covered Rock by Eric Kimmel

A Bad Case of the Stripes by David Shannon

The Bear Ate Your Sandwich by Julia Sarcone-Roach

Because by Mo Willems

Between Us and Abuela by Mitali Perkins

Blueberries for Sal by Robert McCloskey

A Chair for my Mother by Vera B. Williams

Chicken Sunday by Patricia Pollacco

The Color Monster, A Story About Emotions by Anna Llenas

The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson

Extra Yarn by Mac Barnett

The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore by William Joyce
Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story by Kevin Noble Maillard
Going Places by Peter and Paul Reynolds
Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs by Mo Willems
How to Read a Book by Kwame Alexander
If I Built a School by Chris Van Dusen
In the Treehouse by Andrew Larsen
Julius by Kevin Henkes
The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn
Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña
Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe
The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi
One by Kathryn Otoshi
Owl Moon by Jane Yolen
Peeny-Butter Fudge by Toni Morrison
The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family by Ibtihaj Muhammad
Say Something by Peter H. Reynolds
School's First Day of School by Adam Rex
Sofia Valdez, Future Prez by Andrea Beaty
Stellaluna by Janell Cannon
Stuck by Oliver Jeffers
Suki's Kimono by Chieri Uegaki
The Undefeated by Kwame Alexander

Early Reader and Transitional Fiction Book Series

For children who are building reading fluency, series books offer familiar characters and settings, simple language and light, often funny storylines. Picture clues also often help guide the reading. When reading with your child, help them to decode new words and to self-monitor with questions such as: Does my guess *look* right, *sound* right, and *make sense*? If your child has the words down, practice reading aloud with intonation and inflection.

Early Readers Book Series:

Bink and Gollie series by Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee
 Cam Jansen / Young Cam Jansen series by David A. Adler
 Cork & Fuzz series by Dori Chaconas
 Cowgirl Kate & Cocoa series by Erica Silverman
 Duck, Duck, Porcupine series by Salina Yoon
 Frog and Toad series Collection by Arnold Lobel
 Fly Guy series by Tedd Arnold
 George and Martha series by James Marshall
 Henry and Mudge series by Cynthia Rylant

King & Kayla series by Dori Hillestad Butler
Ling and Ting by Grace Lin
The Magic Treehouse series by Mary Pope Osbourne
Minnie and Moo series by Denys Cazet
Mo series by David A. Adler
Moby Shinobi Ninja series by Luke Flowers
Mr. Putter and Tabby series by Cynthia Rylant
Narwhal and Jelly series by Ben Clanton
Penny series by Kevin Henkes
Pete the Cat series by James Dean
Piggie and Gerald series by Mo Willems
Poppleton series by Cynthia Rylant
Positive Power series by Suzy Capozzi
Yasmin series by Saadia Faruqi

Transitional Fiction Book Series:

Ada Lace Adventure series by Emily Calandrelli
The Bad Guys series by Aaron Blabey
Big Foot and Little Foot by Ellen Potter
The Chicken Squad series by Doreen Cronin
Desmond Cole Ghost Patrol series by Andres Miedoso and Victor Rivas
Dyamonde Daniel series by Nikki Grimes
Fantastic Frame by Lin Oliver
Geronimo Stilton / Thea Stilton series by Geronimo Stilton
Ivy & Bean series by Annie Barrows
Judy Moody series by Megan McDonald
Keena Ford by Melissa Thomson
Lola Levine series by Monica Brown
Lulu series by Hilary McKay
Mercy Watson series by Kate DiCamillo
Mindy Kim series by Lila Lee
Princess in Black series by Shannon Hale
Questioners series by Andrea Beaty
A Series of Unfortunate Events series by Lemony Snicket
Stink series by Megan McDonald
Wayside School series by Louis Sachar
Witches of Benevento series by John Bemelmans Marciano
Zach and Zoe Mysteries series by Mike Lupica

Classic Novels and Modern Classics

Who could forget the delight Wilbur shows as he leaps for joy beneath Charlotte's web? Couldn't you feel Peter Thatcher's exasperation with his twerp brother, Fudge? These classic children's novels will excite young readers

and make lasting memories. With rich language and more mature themes to explore, parental support may be needed. Consider reading these classics to your younger child or alongside your older one.

Classic Novels:

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

The Borrowers by Mary Norton

The Boxcar Children by Gertrude Chandler Warner

From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler by E. L. Konigsburg

Jenny and The Cat Club by Esther Averill

Mr. Popper's Penguins by Florence and Richard Atwater

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH by Robert C. O'Brien

My Father's Dragon by Ruth Stiles Gannett

National Velvet by Enid Bagnold

The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster

Stuart Little by E.B White

Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing by Judy Blume

Modern Classics:

The Birchbark House by Louise Erdrich

Dara Palmer's Major Drama by Emma Shevah

El Deafo by Cece Bell

Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Inside Out & Back Again by Thanhha Lai

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick

Merci Suarez Changes Gears by Meg Medina

The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate

The Parker Inheritance by Varian Johnson

Saving Winslow by Sharon Creech

The Tale of Despereaux by Kate DiCamillo

Tumtum and Nutmeg by Emily Bearn

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin

The Wild Robot by Peter Brown

Wonder by R.J. Palacio

Another resource for your summer reading and learning and a chapter within our ever-developing collection of *Cor Unum* resources is our [Anti-Racism Resource List](#). This is shared in support of continuing and deepening dialogue about topics that are challenging, often uncomfortable, and vital to the betterment of ourselves and our society. The [Essentials of Dialogue](#) from Generation Global have helped to guide our school community's practice of creating safe and brave spaces from which to speak, listen and learn. This list contains multimedia resources for all ages.

Writing Prompts for Summer Creativity

We would like students to keep a journal of their own. Entries in this journal could be in the form of drawings and letters, pictures that are explained in simple words or longer sentences, or sentences that convey ideas and feelings. Students can also dictate their written expression to a parent, older sibling or caregiver. Journals are most effective when kept regularly - once a week on a certain day, or once a day at a certain time works well. In these journals, spelling and grammatical construction is less important than flow and pace, so we encourage little supervision and feedback. Again, entertainment, creativity, and personal interest are of prime importance.

Students can write about whatever they would like, but here are some suggestions for prompts to get the creative juices flowing:

1. Write a book review for a book that you read this summer.
2. Write a letter to your favorite author.
3. Draw your own illustrations for a book that you read.
4. Write about a time that someone made you laugh.
5. If you could live in any book, what book would it be? Why?
6. Write a new ending for your favorite book.
7. Pretend you are a rabbit going down a hole. What does the rabbit experience, see and feel?
8. Imagine that you are invisible! What are some things that you would do?
9. Make up a game, rules and all, that you can play with a friend while you are sitting six feet apart from one another.
10. Make up the silliest recipe you can think of. Include ingredients and how to make it.

We wish you a healthy and happy summer and look forward to seeing you in the new school year.

On behalf of the Summer Reading Team,

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