

# First Grade Recommended Reading List 2025-2026 | [oppl.org/kids-lists](https://oppl.org/kids-lists)

## Picture Books

Armstrong, Mia. *I am a Masterpiece!* Actor, artist, and activist Mia Armstrong offers a glimpse into the life of a child with Down syndrome.

Asim, Jabari. *Me and Muhammad Ali.* A little boy's joyous encounter with his hero, Muhammad Ali, is everything he's dreamed of—and more!

Behar, Ruth. *Tia Fortuna's New Home.* Estrella learns about her Cuban and Jewish heritage as she helps her aunt move from her Miami apartment to an assisted living community.

Brown, Keah. *Sam's Super Seats.* Sam, who has cerebral palsy, goes back-to-school shopping with her best friends. When she feels tired, she needs to find a super seat to make things better!

Castillo, Lauren. *Just Like Millie.* A young girl would rather be on her own than make friends in her new city. Her little rescue dog, Millie, is brave though... can she do the same?

Chen, Eva. *I Am Golden.* This moving ode to the immigrant experience, as well as a manifesto of self-love for Chinese American children, is a jubilant celebration of accepting who you are.

Cordell, Matthew. *To See an Owl.* Janie has long been fascinated by owls. Inspired by her teacher, who says, "To see an owl is magic," Janie goes on a quest to search for these birds of the night.

Fan Brothers. *Lizzy and the Cloud.* It's a little out of fashion to buy a pet cloud, but Lizzy doesn't mind.

Fleming, Candace. *Penny & Pip.* Penny goes on a class field trip to the museum and befriends a baby dinosaur.

Harrison, Vashti. *Big.* Praised for acting like a big girl when she is small, as a young girl grows, "big" becomes a word of criticism, until the girl realizes that she is fine just the way she is.

Hassani, Mojdeh. *Mama Shamsi at the Bazaar.* Mama Shamsi is off to the market, and today, Samira gets to go with her! As the pair gets closer to the market, Samira is worried about getting lost in the crowded streets of Tehran.

LaRocca, Rajani. *Summer is for Cousins.* Ravi spends summer vacation with his cousins sharing in all their favorite activities, including eating ice cream.

Lebeuf, Darren. *My City Speaks.* A young blind girl explores the city with her father, taking in all its sensory details. In the end, we discover that the city doesn't just speak to her—it also listens.

Maclear, Kyo. *Noodles on a Bicycle.* Children watch in amazement as the bicycle food deliverers of Tokyo stack their noodle bowls like architects, and zip through the city like acrobats, delivering delicious noodles.

Newman, Jeff. *The Greedy Worm.* The greedy worm has his eye on a big apple and does NOT want to share. But when a bird starts eyeing the plump worm, he'll need those bugs he snubbed to keep the feaster from becoming the feast.

Ramos, NoNieqa. *Beauty Woke.* Beauty—who is of Taino Indian, African, and Boricua heritage—was taught to be strong and proud, but hatred toward people who look like her bruises her heart until her community opens her eyes.

Slater, Dashka. *Wild Blue: Taming a Big-Kid Bike.* Kayla loves riding her tricycle, but then Daddy announces that it's time for a big-kid bike. Can she tame this intimidating set of wheels?

Smalls, Alexander. *When Alexander Graced the Table.* Alexander loves Sundays, especially Sunday dinners, so when his mom asks him to make a special dish, he sets out to make something that will show his family, especially his Dad, just how sweet it is to be together.

Sorell, Traci. *Powwow Day.* Because she has been very ill, River cannot join in the dancing at this year's tribal powwow, only watch from the sidelines as her family dance the celebration. But as the drum beats, she finds the faith to believe that she will recover and dance again.

Trejo, Jesús. *Papá's Magical Water-Jug Clock.* Today, little Jesús is helping Papá at work, and he's in charge of the water jug—which is also a magical clock! When it's empty, Papá explains, the workday is done. But what about all these thirsty animals?

Wild, Charlotte Sullivan. *Love, Violet.* Shy Violet attempts to show another girl how she feels on Valentine's Day.

## Easy Readers

David, Arihloni. *Who Will Win?* (Level 1). When a quick-footed bear and a quick-witted turtle race across a frozen lake, Turtle has a secret plan to win!

Fang, Vicky. *Best Buddies: A Pie for Us* (Level 1, series). Dog Sniff and cat Scratch live together in a house where sometimes they quarrel and sometimes they cooperate.

Heim, Alastair. *Big Bub, Small Tub* (Level 1). Big Bub the monster needs a bath, but his bathtub is too small. What will he do? He will try everything!

Iwai, Melissa. *Gigi and Ojiji* (Level 2, series). Gigi can't wait for her Ojiji—Japanese grandpa—to move in. Gigi plans lots of things to do with him, like playing tag, reading books, and teaching Roscoe, the family dog, new tricks. But her plans don't work out quite the way she'd hoped.

LaRochelle, David. *Three Stories About Things You Cannot See.* (Level 1, series). In this trio of stories for beginning readers, Max the dog and Baby Cakes the cat encounter a scare-happy ghost, the wind at its blustery best, and a tiny fairy.

Litwin, Megan. *Dirt and Bugsy: Bug Catchers* (Level 1, series). Dirt and Bugsy are neighbors, best friends, and bug catchers. They love bugs, but when it begins to rain one day, their brains buzz with a plan.

Lyons, Kelly Starling. *Ty's Travels: All Aboard!* (Level 1, series). Ty wishes his family would play with him, but everyone is too busy before dinnertime.

Otheguy, Emma. *Reina Ramos Works it Out.* (Level 2, series). Reina is excited about dressing up as Frida Kahlo for the class wax museum. But when her best friend Nora picks Frida first, Reina doesn't know what to do.

Raul the Third. *El Toro and Friends: Tacos Today!* (Level 1, series). The luchadores head into town to eat. When they count their money and discover they don't have enough for tacos, they work together on a creative solution to earn dinero!

Tabor, Corey. *Fox Plays Ball.* (Level 1, Series). Mischievous and fun-loving Fox is ready to play football, along with Snail, Elephant, Rabbit and Bear, which makes for a fun day of friends playing together.

*continued on back*



Learn more: [oppl.org/kids-lists](https://oppl.org/kids-lists)

# First Grade Recommended Reading List 2025-2026 | [oppl.org/kids-lists](https://oppl.org/kids-lists)

## Nonfiction

Ben-Barak, Idan. *We Go Way Back* (576.8 BEN). Peer back in time—way back in time—to the story of how life began...

Faruqi, Reem. *Miloo's Mind* (B FARUQI). Miloo lives in a time when school is considered unnecessary for girls, but to Miloo, education is essential. When she reads, her thoughts dance. When she's married, Miloo's husband tells her to stay home, but she does not let that stop her.

Fox, Kate Allen. *A Few Beautiful Minutes: Experiencing a Solar Eclipse* (523.78 FOX). Sky gazers experience a total solar eclipse in this descriptive picture book about the wonders of this phenomenon.

Hevron, Amy. *Poo Pile on the Prairie*. (577.4 HEV). This amusing addition to the Tiny Habitats series is a treasure, turning a seemingly silly subject into a thoughtful study of a vital ecosystem. Charming illustrations and frequent funny asides will have readers laughing out loud.

Kim, Diana. *The Yawn Book* (612.2 KIM). Why do we yawn? Do animals yawn? And why are yawns so CONTAGIOUS?

Lavelle, Kari. *Ode to Grapefruit: How James Earl Jones Found His Voice* (B JONES). Before legendary actor James Earl Jones was recognized for his memorable, smooth voice, he was just James—a stutterer who stopped speaking for eight years as a child...and ultimately found his voice through poetry.

Lee, Chiquita Mullins. *You Gotta Meet Mr. Pierce!* (B PIERCE). "Creeeeak!" goes the screen door to self-taught artist Elijah Pierce's barbershop art studio. A young boy walks in for an haircut and walks out having discovered a lifetime of art.

Mack, Jeff. *Marcel's Masterpiece: How a Toilet Shaped the History of Art* (709.04 MAC). This is the story of Marcel Duchamp and how the Dada art movement changed the way people thought about what art could be... and what could be art. People were amused and confused, and that was just the way Marcel Duchamp liked it.

Neruda, Pablo. *Book of Questions* (821 NER). Where is the center of the sea? Why do the waves never break there? An English/Spanish bilingual book containing unanswerable, fantastical questions, inviting us to be curious, while embracing what we cannot know.

Parsons, Karyn. *Saving the Day: Garrett Morgan's Life-Changing Invention of the Traffic Signal* (B MORGAN). Before he became a successful inventor and saved countless lives with his creations, Garrett was a little boy with a head full of ideas on how to make life better for everyone. At a tumultuous time filled with racism and discrimination, he became a prominent business man and skilled inventor who produced the traffic signal, a gas mask, and others objects still used today.

Pizzoli, Greg. *PIZZA!: A Slice of History* (641.824 PIZ). Did you know that in the United States we eat 350 slices of pizza every second? Or that in Sweden they serve pizza with bananas and peanuts? All over the world, people love pizza, but where did it come from?

Romer, Jennie. *Can I Recycle This? A Kid's Guide to Better Recycling and How to Reduce Single-Use Plastics* (363.728 ROM). Every step of the recycling process, from the moment an item goes in the bin to its journey through the recycling machinery and on its way to its new life.

Salas, Laura Purdie. *Finding Family: A Duckling Raised by Loons* (598.442 SAL). On a lake in northern Wisconsin in 2019, loon researchers were surprised to discover a mother and father loon caring for a mallard duckling. Normally loons and mallards live very different lives and do not get along. Follow along as the duckling grows and displays a mix of both loon behaviors and mallard behaviors.

Tabai, Junko. *Up, Up, Ever Up! A Life in the Mountains* (B TABEI). In this inspiring picture-book biography, meet renowned Japanese mountain climber, educator, and environmentalist Junko Tabai (1939-2016), the first woman to successfully summit Mount Everest.

Westergaard, Azadeh. *The One & Only GooGoosh: Iran's Beloved Superstar* (B GOOGOOSH). The legendary Iranian singer and actress Googoosh (born Faegheh Atashin) made her stage debut at age two while performing alongside her acrobat father. By the time she reached adulthood, she was widely considered to be Iran's first superstar. The Revolution of 1979 silenced her voice, and she disappeared from public life for over twenty years. As they sought refuge around the globe, her fans found ways to keep her music alive.

Winkler, Rita. *My Art, My World* (759.11 WIN). Rita Winkler is a young woman living with Down syndrome. *My Art, My World* shows us the world as she sees it: a place full of joy, color, and the delight of life with her family and friends.

## Monarch Award Titles

The Monarch Award is Illinois' K-3 Readers' Choice Award. The name Monarch was chosen because of its familiarity to children and to symbolize the growth, change and freedom that becoming a reader brings. The Monarch is designed to encourage children to read critically and become familiar with children's books, authors and illustrators.

\*All titles are picture books unless otherwise noted.

Arnaldo, Monica. *Mr. S.*

Blackall, Sophie. *Negative Cat.*

Cox, Lynne. *Yoshi, Sea Turtle Genius: A True Story About an Amazing Swimmer.* (597.928 COX)

Davies, Jacqueline. *Sydney and Taylor Explore the Whole Wide World.* (Early Chapters)

Denise, Christopher. *Knight Owl.*

Doerrfeld, Cori. *Beneath.*

Esbaum, Jill. *Thunder and Cluck: Friends Do Not Eat Friends.* (Easy Readers, Level 1)

Fang, X. *We Are Definitely Human.*

Holt, Bob. *The Red Jacket.*

Klein, Cheryl. *Hamsters Make Terrible Roommates.*

Kurilla, Renée. *The Flower Garden.* (Graphic Novels)

Lavelle, Kari. *Butt or Face?: Can You Tell Which End You're Looking At?* (590 LAV)

Mack, Jeff. *Time To Make Art.*

McGinty, Alice B. *Bathe the Cat.*

McGregor, Anna. *Who's Afraid of the Light?*

McWilliam, Howard. *Just SNOW Already!*

Pryor, Katherine. *Home is Calling: The Journey of the Monarch Butterfly.* (595.789 PRY)

Scanlon, Liz Garton. *The World's Best Class Plant.*

Smith, Emma Bland. *Claude: The True Story of a White Alligator.* (597.984 SMI)

Wiley, DeAnn. *Homegrown.*