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Second Grade Recommended Reading List 2025-2026 | oppl.org/kids-lists

Readers / Early Chapters

Auxier, Jonathan. *The Fabled Stables: Willa the Wisp* (Early Chapters, series). Auggie Pound, caretaker of the rare animals in the Fabled Stables, ventures into the swamp to save a new rare creature, the wisp.

Brallier, Max. *Beneath the Bed and Other Scary Stories* (Readers Level 2, series). Five scary stories with unexpected twists!

Curran-Bauer, Christee. *The Case of the Poached Painting* (Early Chapters, series). When a thief steals the prized painting from the Museum of Food Art, Pigeon Private Detectives take the case.

Gutman, Dan. *My Weird School: Class Pet Mess!* (Readers Level 2, series). Alexia is delighted when Mr. Cooper brings in Bob, a hognose snake, as a class pet, but when Bob keels over, who is to blame?

Heuer, Lourdes. *Esme's Birthday Conga Line* (Early Chapters, series). Esme is planning her own birthday party with the help of the eclectic neighbors in her apartment building.

Hopkins, Deborah. *Trim Saves the Day* (Readers, Level 2, series). Trim loves being a ship's cat and looking for ways to help his crew. All hands on deck!

John, Jory. *The Bad Seed Goes to the Library* (Readers Level 2, series). The Bad Seed is in a good mood because there's a great book to checkout! But what happens when it has to go back?

Klassen, Jon. *The Skull* (Early Chapters). In this Tyrolean folktale, young Otilia, lost in a snowy forest after running away, stumbles on a mansion and talking skull.

Lambert, Megan Dowd. *April & Mae and the Tea Party* (Readers Level 2, series). April and Mae exchange angry words and must find a way to apologize and save their friendship.

Lubner, Susan. *Forever Friends* (Readers Level 2). Best friends Drag (a dragon) and Rex (a T-Rex) are different, but find joy and adventure in the simplest places.

Mensah, Bernard. *Rise of the Green Flame* (Early Chapters, series). Kwame is eager to start Nkonyaa School and learn calabash magic, but his specialty isn't revealed until a new friend is possessed by an evil magic.

Miedoso, Andres. *Desmond Cole Ghost Patrol* (Paperback Series). Desmond is a fearless 8-year-old who runs his own ghost patrol, looking for ghosts, monsters and mischief-makers!

Quigley, Dawn. *Jojo Makoons: The Used-to-Be Best Friend* (Early Chapters, series). Will Jojo's cat Mimi deflate when she gets her vaccinations? And why is her school best friend, Fern, not eating lunch with her anymore?

Romito, Dee. *Fort Builders Inc.: The Birthday Castle* (Early Chapters, series). Caleb and Jax are excited to start their own fort-building business. Can they finish in time for Analise's birthday bash?

Rose, Susan. *José and Feliz Play Fútbol* (Readers Level 2, series). When José is selected for the school soccer team, his dog Feliz eagerly helps him practice.

Thomas, Jan. *Even Robots Aren't Perfect!* (Readers Level 2, series). Three stories about Red Robot and Blue Robot, who learn about that they can make mistakes, yet still be friends with each other.

Trinh, Linda. *The Secret of the Jade Bangle* (Early Chapters, series). Anne Nguyen misses her Grandma Nôi a lot, but soon realizes that her last gift has a secret power and might give her the strength to stand up to her ballet teacher, who treats her differently than her white classmates.

Valenti, Karla. *Wrath of the Rain God* (Early Chapters, series). Nine-year-old twins Emma and Martín travel into a book of legends and where they must try to stop the rain god's flood.

Juarez, Estela. *Until Someone Listens* (325.73 JUA). The true story of a young American girl who writes letters to her local newspaper, Congress, and even the president, pleading for someone to listen and reunite her family after her mother's deportation.

Messner, Kate. *The Next Scientist* (509.22 MES). This fascinating exploration of what scientists did before they were scientists, whether they were starting small as tinkerers or gazing up at the night sky, powerfully brings across that the scientists of the future could be practically anyone...including you.

Montgomery, Heather L. *What's In Your Pocket? Collecting Nature's Treasures* (508 MON). This book honors children's curiosity and pockets full of "stuff" by introducing nine scientists who collected natural treasures when they were young.

Pinkney Barlow, Charnelle. *Little Rosetta and the Talking Guitar* (B THARPE). A small girl gets a big guitar... and the rest is history. This picture book biography tells the musical story of Sister Rosetta Tharpe, the woman who invented Rock and Roll.

Rubin, Sean. *The Iguanodon's Horn* (567.9 RUB). In lavish visual detail, this book chronicles our changing perceptions of what dinosaurs were like. It looks at fossil spikes that were thought by early discoverers to go on Iguanodon's nose, until later studies proved differently.

Soontornvat, Christina. *A Life of Service: The Story of Senator Tammy Duckworth* (B DUCKWORTH). Senator Tammy Duckworth, the first Thai American woman elected to Congress and the first woman with a disability to serve in the House and Senate, dreamed of serving her country from a young age.

Stewart, Melissa. *Whale Fall: Exploring an Ocean-Floor Ecosystem* (577.79 STE). When a whale dies, its body sinks to the ocean floor, and for the next 50 years continues to provide nourishment to a series of deep-sea creatures.

Thermes, Jennifer. *The Indestructible Tom Crean: Heroic Explorer of the Antarctic* (B CREAN). The tale of a courageous sailor who upon agreeing to join a voyage destined for Antarctica, survived challenge after challenge.

Nonfiction

Chin, Jason. *The Universe in You: A Microscopic Journey* (571.6 CHI). Explore the world of the very small, deep into the microscopic spaces just beneath our skin!

Greenwood, Alison. *A Little Dose of Nature* (508 GRE). An interactive guide to the benefits that being outdoors can have on our mental health, featuring fun and simple, science-based activities.

Heck, Ellen. *A is For Bee: An Alphabet Book in Translation* (411 HEC). What letter does the word bee start with? It's "B" in English, but is Anū in Igbo, Aamoo in Ojibwe, Abelha in Portuguese, and Arı in Turkish!

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Picture Books

Anatol, Giselle. *Small-Girl Toni and the Quest for Gold*. In this tale inspired by author Toni Morrison, young Toni sets out on a quest for gold with her siblings. When things do not go as planned, she realizes that finding the perfect ending is all about how you tell the story.

Cordell, Matthew. *Evergreen*. To deliver her mother's delicious soup to her sick Granny Oak, Evergreen the squirrel must face her fears on the journey, where she meets other animals, including some who want to get their hands on her soup!

David-Sax, Pauline. *Everything in Its Place: A Story of Books and Belonging*. A shy girl gains the courage to extend herself to others when she encounters a group of unique, diverse, inspiring female motorcyclists at her mother's diner.

Diaz, Lucky. *Paletero Man*. A book celebrating the strength of community and the tastes of summer. Lime for me, please!

Emenanjo, Bunmi. *I'll See You in Ijebu*. A young girl growing up in the busy city of Lagos, Nigeria takes a trip to the countryside to celebrate Eid with family.

Higuera, Donna Barba. *The Yellow Handkerchief*. A young girl wishes her family could be more like her friends' families, blaming her abuela and her yellow handkerchief, but she slowly grows to appreciate and love the language and culture the handkerchief represents.

Kenney, Karen Latchana. *Snow Steps*. Struggling to adapt to a new, colder environment, Guyanese immigrant Lakshmi finds comfort in a familiar face and learns to brave the snow.

LaRochelle, David. *100 Mighty Dragons All Named Broccoli*. Our story begins high on a mountain, with 100 mighty dragons all named Broccoli...

Luby, Brittany. *When the Stars Came Home*. An Anishinaabe boy named Ojiig struggles to adapt to his new home in the city, saddened by all that he has left behind, until his family helps him find his North Star.

Seales, Stephanie. *My Daddy is a Cowboy*. While a young Panamanian American girl and her father share "just-us" time on an early morning horseback ride around their town, he tells her cowboy stories and she realizes she is a cowboy too.

Snyder, Laurel. *Endlessly Ever After*. Follow Rosie down many possible paths to save herself and her fellow fairy tale characters.

Sterling, Michelle. *Maribel's Year*. New country, new school, new friends. A lot can happen in a single year. But one thing's for certain: Maribel won't forget her Papa, even when he's 8,000 miles away in the Philippines.

Vo, Young. *Gibberish*. When Dat starts school in a country where he does not speak the language, everything around him sounds like gibberish until a new friend helps him make sense of his new world.

Zoboli, Giovanna. *Mr. Lepron's Mystery Soup*. A sweet cautionary tale about a rabbit whose fabled soup-making gets away from him.

Graphic Novels

Deas, Mike. *Sueño Bay Adventures: Shadow Island* (series). Four unlikely friends come together in a mystery involving supernatural creatures, a ticking clock, and one angry gym teacher.

Guojing. *The Flamingo*. A little girl arrives excited for a beachy vacation with her Lao Lao. When the girl finds an exquisite flamingo feather in her grandmother's living room, her vacation turns into something fantastical.

Kołomycka, Berenika. *Tiny Fox and Great Boar: There* (series). One beautiful fall day, as Tiny Fox relaxes under his favorite tree, he meets a new friend: Great Boar!

Kurilla, Renée. *The Flower Garden*. After planting a seed packet in the backyard, things don't go as expected for best friends Anna and Tess.

Liniers. *Wildflowers*. Three sisters embark on an adventure of the imagination through the jungles of a mysterious island after a plane crash, which reveals the unbreakable bond they share.

Roselló, Jarod. *I am a Dinosaur* (series). Hugo, a young boy who changes the world around him, climbs, smashes and goes on adventures with his best friend, Dino.

Stohler, Lauren. *Gnome and Rat Time to Party* (series). Best friends Gnome and Rat come up with an entirely new holiday, make an unexpected birthday wish, and try to jazz up their exercise routine.

Watt, Melanie. *Scaredy Squirrel Gets a Surprise* (series). Scaredy Squirrel opens a mysterious crate containing a pool and as his friends try to help him enjoy the pool, Scaredy Squirrel learns that not all surprises are bad.

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*.