

Keep your kids occupied with a great book — or a few! Our suggestions should keep them busy all year long. These titles will encourage your kids to love reading, while improving their language arts skills.

Books for Ages 11 to Younger Teens

Bridge to Terabithia, by Katherine Paterson The life of a ten-year-old boy in rural Virginia expands when he becomes friends with a newcomer who subsequently meets an untimely death trying to reach their hideaway, Terabithia, during a storm.

Tuck Everlasting, by Natalie Babbitt The Tuck family is confronted with an agonizing situation when they discover that a ten-year-old girl and a malicious stranger now share their secret about a spring whose water prevents one from ever growing older.

A Wrinkle in Time, by Madeleine L'Engle Meg Murry and her friends become involved with unearthly strangers and a search for Meg's father, who disappeared while engaged in secret work for the government.

Little House on the Prairie, by Laura Ingalls Wilder The adventures continue for Laura Ingalls and her family as they leave their little house in the Big Woods of Wisconsin and set out for Kansas. They travel for many days in their covered wagon until they find the best spot to build their little house on the prairie. Sometimes pioneer life is hard, but Laura and her folks are always busy and happy in their new little house.

The Secret Garden, by Frances Hodgson Burnett Ten-year-old Mary comes to live in a lonely house on the Yorkshire moors and discovers an invalid cousin and the mysteries of a locked garden.

Shiloh, by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor Eleven-year-old Marty Preston "finds a stray dog that seems to be abused and is determined to keep it at all costs. Because his family is very poor, without money to feed another mouth, his parents don't want any pets. Subsequently, there is a lot of conflict over the animal within the family and between Marty and Judd Travers, the dog's owner

Sarah, Plain and Tall, by Patricia MacLachlan When their father invites a mail-order bride to come live with them in their prairie home, Caleb and Anna are captivated by their new mother and hope that she will stay.

Island of the Blue Dolphins, by Scott O'Dell This story records the courage and self-reliance of an Indian girl who lived alone for eighteen years on an isolated island off the California coast.

Maniac Magee, by Jerry Spinelli After his parents die, Jeffrey Lionel Magee's life becomes legendary, as he accomplishes athletic and other feats which awe his contemporaries.

The BFG, by Roald Dahl Kidsnatched from her orphanage by a BFG (Big Friendly Giant), who spends his life blowing happy dreams to children, Sophie concocts with him a plan to save the world from nine other man-gobbling cannybull giants.

Where the Sidewalk Ends, by Shel Silverstein Irreverent, hilarious and wildly popular, this collection of Silverstein's verse is hard to put down.

Walk Two Moons, by Sharon Creech After her mother leaves home suddenly, thirteen-year-old Sal and her grandparents take a car trip retracing her mother's route. Along the way, Sal recounts the story of her friend Phoebe, whose mother also left.

Out of the Dust, by Karen Hesse In a series of poems, fifteen-year-old Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the dust bowl years of the Depression.

Hatchet, by Gary Paulsen After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends fifty-four days in the wilderness, learning to survive with only the aid of a hatchet given him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, by C. S. Lewis What begins as a simple game of hide-and-seek quickly turns into the adventure of a lifetime when Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy walk through the wardrobe and into the land of Narnia.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, by Mildred D. Taylor A black family living in the South during the 1930s is faced with prejudice and discrimination which its children do not understand.

Stone Fox, by John Reynolds Gardiner Little Willie hopes to pay the back taxes on his grandfather's farm with the purse from a dog sled race he enters.

Number the Stars, by Lois Lowry In 1943, during the German occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie learns how to be brave and courageous when she helps shelter her Jewish friend from the Nazis.

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh, by Robert C. O'Brien Having no one to help her with her problems, a widowed mouse visits the rats whose former imprisonment in a laboratory made them wise and long lived.

Harriet the Spy, by Louise Fitzhugh Harriet M. Welsch is determined to grow up and be a famous author. In the meantime, she practices by following a regular spy route each day and writing down everything she sees in her secret notebook. Then one morning, her classmates find her spy notebook and read it out loud! Harriet's in big trouble. The other sixth-graders are stealing her tomato sandwiches, forming a spy-catcher club, and writing notes of their own -- all about Harriet!

Mr. Popper's Penguins, by Richard Atwater and Florence Atwater The unexpected delivery of a large crate containing an Antarctic penguin changes the life and fortunes of Mr. Popper, a house painter obsessed by dreams of the Polar regions.

The Great Gilly Hopkins, by Katherine Paterson An eleven-year-old foster child tries to cope with her longings and fears as she schemes against everyone who tries to be friendly.

Stuart Little, by E. B. White The adventures of the debonair mouse Stuart Little as he sets out in the world to seek out his dearest friend, a little bird who stayed a few days in his family's garden.

Matilda, by Roald Dahl Matilda applies her untapped mental powers to rid the school of the evil, child-hating headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, and restore her nice teacher, Miss Honey, to financial security.

Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret, by Judy Blume Faced with the difficulties of growing up and choosing a religion, a twelve-year-old girl talks over her problems with her own private God.

Jacob Have I Loved, by Katherine Paterson Feeling deprived all her life of schooling, friends, mother, and even her name by her twin sister, Louise finally begins to find her identity.

My Side of the Mountain, by Jean Craighead Deorge A young boy relates his adventures during the year he spends living alone in the Catskill Mountains including his struggle for survival, his dependence on nature, his animal friends, and his ultimate realization that he needs human companionship.

Tangerine, by Edward Bloor. Twelve-year-old Paul is a star soccer player, despite needing very thick glasses to see. No one really notices him behind his football hero brother until they move to Tangerine. Paul begins to remember how he lost his vision and everything changes. Issues of bullying, stealing, ethnicity, and class are subtly explored.

Challenge at Second Base, by Matt Christopher. Stan wants to quit the team when his rival for second base looks too good to beat, but an anonymous note changes his mind.

I Am the Cheese, by Robert Cormier. A young man searches for his identity but is afraid that if he finds out who he is, he will be killed.

Johnny Tremain, by Ester Forbes. (winner of the 1944 Newbery Medal) A young apprentice silversmith plays a major role in the American Revolution in this novel of historical fiction.

Lord of the Flies, by William Golding. The war has just ended. A group of boys is marooned on an island -- no adults have survived. There are some horrific scenes of violence. Parents may want to read this book before sharing it with their children.

The Outsiders, by S.E. Hinton. This book takes a realistic look at the lives of two brothers caught up in gangs and violence.

Mariel of Redwall, by Brian Jacques. Mariel the mousemaid leads a band of animals against the evil sea-rat King Gabool. An adventure fantasy for young adults.

The Giver, by Lois Lowry. Given his lifetime assignment at the Ceremony of Twelve, Jonas becomes the receiver of memories shared by only one other in the community and discovers the horrible truth about the society in which he lives.

Complete Anne of Green Gables (Box Set), by L.M. Montgomery. Red-headed Anne Shirley will delight intermediate readers. An eleven-year-old orphan, Anne is sent by mistake to live with a lonely, middle-aged brother and sister on a Prince Edward Island farm and proceeds to make an indelible impression.

Me, Mop & the Moondance Kid, by Walter Dean Myers. Three orphans work together to have a winning baseball team -- and to be adopted.

Westing Game, by Ellen Raskin. The mysterious death of eccentric millionaire Samuel W. Westing brings together an unlikely assortment of heirs who must uncover the circumstances of his death before they can claim their inheritance. Raskin weaves a twister-like plot and cleverly unravels for a satisfying and surprising ending.

Witch of Blackbird Pond, by Elizabeth George Speare. Kit Tyler feels out of place in her new home in Connecticut. She befriends an outcast woman and finds herself on trial for witchcraft.

Last Summer with Maizon, by Jacqueline Woodson. Maizon and Margaret are best friends -- together forever. It feels like their world is falling apart when Margaret's father dies and Maizon gets a scholarship to a boarding school. Maizon is afraid she will be the only African American at the school.

Online Books

[Callahan Cousins: Summer Begins](#) This exciting, new book introduces four engaging Callahan cousins. The girls find plenty of lessons and adventures while spending the summer with their grandmother on Gull Island.

[Camp Confidential Natalie's Secret](#) Natalie Goode goes from life in the city to Camp Lakeview, where the secret she's been keeping might get in the way of new friendships.

[Camp Confidential Jenna's Dilemma](#) Jenna is determined to make camp fun this year, in spite of her parents' separation and the company of her twin brother and older sister.