

4th Grade Summer Reading List

Please read at least two titles from this list and come to school in the fall prepared to complete reflections of the books.

(The) Beastly Arms – Patrick Jennings

Eleven-year-old Nickel, a boy with a great affinity for both animals and photography, moves into an apartment building run by the strange and mysterious Mr. Beastly and discovers a secret about the other tenants.

Becoming Naomi Leon - Pam Munoz Ryan

When Naomi's absent mother resurfaces to claim her, Naomi runs away to Mexico with her great-grandmother and younger brother in search of her father. If you liked this one, you'll want to read Ryan's earlier novel, *Esperanza Rising*.

Blister – Susan Shreve

When a family tragedy occurs, ten-year-old Alyssa "Blister" Reed changes schools, moves to an apartment with her depressed mother while her father gets his own place, and tries to believe her grandmother, who tells her she is "elastic" and can handle it all.

Bud, Not Buddy - Christopher Paul Curtis

Ten-year-old Bud, a motherless boy living in Flint, Michigan, during the Great Depression, escapes a bad foster home and sets out in search of the man (a renowned bandleader) he believes is his father.

Eragon - Christopher Paolini

A fifteen-year-old boy of unknown lineage finds a mysterious stone that weaves his life into an intricate tapestry of destiny, magic, and power, peopled with dragons, elves, and monsters.

Esperanza Rising – Pam Muñoz Ryan

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

Faith and the Electric Dog – Patrick Jennings

Narrated by a Mexican street dog who befriends an unhappy girl and flies with her in a home-made rocket to an uncharted island, this first novel is "a soaring flight into magic realism," said PW in a starred review.

Faith and the Rocket Cat – Patrick Jennings

In this sequel to the rollicking *Faith and the Electric Dog* (1996), Faith and her dog, Eddie, pack up their rocket, the Peahen, and move with the family from Mexico City to San Francisco. Jennings does a fine job of recapping the first book without boring readers and reintroducing Eddie, the electric dog (a Mexican expression meaning mutt), with his talent for reading and writing in several languages.

Guts: The True Story Behind Hatchet – Gary Paulsen

What do you do when you're being charged by a red-eyed furious wall of brown fur that is an insane moose? How do you make a weapon with your bare hands? How do you sneak up on a grouse or a rabbit, kill it with a well-aimed arrow, and cook it over a fire--without a pot? All this and lots more is essential learning for Brian Robeson, the young wilderness survivor in Gary Paulsen's classic novel *Hatchet*. In writing that book, Paulsen was determined that everything that happened to Brian--the survival techniques and the physical and emotional traumas--would be drawn closely from reality and his own experiences. In *Guts* he reveals the stories behind *Hatchet*, as he lived them. Linked to specific incidents from Brian's ordeal are the skills and insights Paulsen learned as a teenager passionately in love with hunting in the north woods of Minnesota, the extremes of exhaustion and cold he knew in running the Iditarod dog races in Alaska, the chilling close-up knowledge of heart attacks from his experiences as a volunteer ambulance driver, the silence and majesty of the wilderness. Some great stories are told here: the child killed by two kicks from the razor-sharp hooves of a small deer, the difficulties of sharing a rescue helicopter ride with a terrified dog team, and some spectacular gross-outs about the nutritional need to eat every part of an animal.

Hatchet – Gary Paulsen

When the pilot dies of a heart attack, Brian crash-lands the small plane in the Canadian wilderness. Left with only a hatchet and the clothes he is wearing, he begins a 54 day ordeal that challenges him to his limits. (Newbery Honor 1988).

Heartbeat – Sharon Creech

Twelve-year-old Annie ponders the many rhythms of life the year that her mother becomes pregnant, her grandfather begins faltering, and her best friend (and running partner) becomes distant.

How Tia Lola Came to Stay – Julia Alvarez

Although ten-year-old Miguel is at first embarrassed by his colorful aunt, Tia Lola, when she comes to Vermont from the Dominican Republic to stay with his mother, his sister, and him after his parents' divorce, he learns to love her.

(The) Higher Power of Lucky – Susan Patron

Fearing that her legal guardian plans to abandon her to return to France, ten-year-old aspiring scientist Lucky Trimble determines to run away while also continuing to seek the Higher Power that will bring stability to her life. Newbery Honor 2007.

Inkheart – Cornelia Funke

Twelve-year-old Meggie learns that her father Mo, a bookbinder, can "read" fictional characters to life when an evil ruler named Capricorn, freed from the novel "Inkheart" years earlier, tries to force Mo to release an immortal monster from the story.

Listening for Leroy – Betsy Hearne

Growing up in rural Alabama in the 1950s, ten-year-old Alice has no one to talk to but Leroy, the black farm hand, but when Alice's doctor father moves the family to Tennessee, she has trouble fitting in and she sorely misses Leroy.

Love That Dog – Sharon Creech

A young student, who comes to love poetry through a personal understanding of what different famous poems mean to him, surprises himself by writing his own inspired poem.

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane - Kate di Camillo.

This achingly beautiful story shows a true master of writing at her very best. Edward Tulane is an exceedingly vain, cold-hearted china rabbit owned by 10-year-old Abilene Tulane, who dearly loves him. Her grandmother relates a fairy tale about a princess who never felt love; she then whispers to Edward that he disappoints her. His path to redemption begins when he falls overboard during the family's ocean journey. This superb book is beautifully written in spare yet stirring language.

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH – 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. Newbery Award Winner 1972 – a classic.

(The) Music of Dolphins – Karen Hesse

After rescuing an adolescent girl from the sea, researchers learn she has been raised by dolphins and attempt to rehabilitate her to the human world.

The Penderwicks - Jeanne Birdsall

While vacationing with their widowed father in the Berkshire Mountains, four lovable sisters, ages four through twelve, share adventures with a local boy, much to the dismay of his snobbish mother.

Regarding the Fountain (series) – Kate Klise

This epistolary novel documents--with letters, memos, telegrams, newspaper clippings, and more--the Dry Creek Middle School's efforts to replace its old water fountain with a new one.

Replay – Sharon Creech

While preparing for a role in the school play, twelve-year-old Leo finds an autobiography that his father wrote as a teenager and ponders the ways people change as they grow up. Includes the text for the play, "Rumpopo's Porch."

Sammy Keyes Mysteries - Wendelin Van Draanen

Seventh-grade sleuth Sammy Keyes investigates mysterious happenings around town. Titles in the series include Sammy Keyes and the Psycho Kitty Queen, Sammy Keyes and the Hollywood Mummy, Sammy Keyes and the Hotel Thief, etc. A good Nancy Drew alternative.

Skellig - David Almond

Michael finds Skellig in the corner of his decrepit old garage. Is Skellig a homeless man, an owl, or an angel, and why is he there?

Souder – William H. Armstrong

Angry and humiliated when his sharecropper father is jailed for stealing food for his family, a young black boy grows in courage and understanding by learning to read and with the help of the devoted dog Souder. Newbery Award Winner 1970.

The Tale of Despereaux - Kate DiCamillo

This is a delightful, heroic tale of a mouse whose love for a human princess leads him on intriguing adventures.

Thief Lord - Cornelia Funke

Orphaned brothers Prosper and Bo, having run away from their cruel aunt and uncle, decide to hide out in Venice where they fall in with the Thief Lord, a thirteen-year-old boy who leads a crime ring of street children. Funke is the author of the popular book, Inkspell.

Time Stops for No Mouse – Michael Hoeye

Enter the exciting world of mouse watchmaker Hermux Tantamoq. When he takes in a watch for repair from the enchanting aviatrix Linka Perflinger, Hermux becomes smitten with her. He never suspects, however, that his crush will lead him into an intriguing and dangerous mystery involving mad scientist Dr. Mennus and cosmetics magnate Tucka Mertslin. From the happy-go-lucky, somewhat persnickety Hermux to the imperious, slightly raspy sounding Tucka Mertslin, Hoeye creates a distinct cast of rodent characters.

Toys Go Out – Emily Jenkins

In the backpack, where it is very dark -- The serious problem of Plastic-ness -- The terrifying bigness of the washing machine - - The possible shark -- How Lumphy got on the big high bed, and lost something rather good looking -- It is difficult to find the right birthday present.

Trouble Don't Last – Shelley Pearsall

Strong characters and an inventive, suspenseful plot distinguish Pearsall's first novel, a story of the Underground Railroad in 1859. Samuel, the 11-year-old slave who narrates the story, is awakened by 70-year-old Harrison, who has decided to flee their tyrannical Kentucky master. The questions that immediately flood the boy's mind provide the tension that propels the novel: What has precipitated the old man's sudden desire for freedom? Why would he risk taking Samuel along? Harrison is mindful of the dangers and wary of trusting even the strangers who might offer help. Samuel, an impulsive boy who seems prone to trouble, is grudgingly accustomed to his life of servitude and reluctant to leave it. As days of hiding and nights of stealthy movement take them farther away from their former lives, Harrison and Samuel forge a bond that strengthens their resolve.

(The) View From Saturday – E.L. Konigsburg

Four students, with their own individual stories, develop a special bond and attract the attention of their teacher, a paraplegic, who chooses them to represent their sixth-grade class in the Academic Bowl competition.

Walk Two Moons – 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.

(The) Wolves of Willoughby Chase (series) – Joan Aiken

Young Bonnie Green lives in the grand Willoughby Chase with her loving parents and an assortment of kind servants in Aiken's own altered version of Victorian-era England. Bonnie's mother has fallen ill and her father is taking her on an extended journey at sea. Bonnie's father has sent for a distant relative, Miss Slighcarp, to look after Bonnie and her cousin Sylvia who is arriving from London on the same day. Things quickly take a turn for the worse under Miss Slighcarp's care. The Wolves of Willoughby Chase is a story full of hungry wolves, orphan schools, a boy and his geese, a trip by foot to London, parents that are presumed dead, kind doctors, and lying amnesiacs.

- All summaries excerpted from the San Francisco Public Library or Amazon.com