

A *GrowMama* Chapter Book Reading List for Elementary Readers

By: Maha Ezzeddine

These recommendations are not perfect or one-size-fits-all. It is a good habit to preview the book cover to determine suitability according to reading level and interests. I've sorted books into three rough categories: 2nd-5th fiction, 4th-6th fiction, and non-fiction.

Some recommendations include small doses of fantasy (Roald-Dahl style), holidays and situations that I have judged my kids likely to encounter at their age in society, and fleeting romantic references or mild distasteful humor when it was inconsequential to the plot. I avoid overt romances, mature themes, books with crude language and behaviors, books that antagonize parents and siblings, heavy fantasy/mythology, and what I deemed to have shallow literary or moral value.

Although I am aware of Islamic-themed titles, I have purposely excluded them from this list since they are a separate market and mostly target a younger audience.

(*I have starred titles that will openly appeal to boys, since our selection is a little heavy on girl-appeal)

2nd-5th Readers
A Lion to Guard Us
All-of-a-kind family
Along Came a Dog
American Girl series (several birthday- and holiday-themed stories)
Bears on Hemlock Mountain*
Because of Winn Dixie*
Ben and Me*
Best-Loved Doll
Bobbsey Twins Series
Boxcar Children Series* (early reader chapter books)
Bunnicula
Can You Survive Series*
Catwings
Chalkbox Kid*
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*
Charlotte's Web*
Chocolate Touch*
Courage of Sarah Noble
Cricket in Times Square*
David Adler Illustrated Biographies*
Dexter*
Dolphin Adventure*
Each Kindness (Jacqueline Woodson)
Emily's Runaway Imagination
Encyclopaedia Brown Series*

Enormous Egg*
Freedom on the Menu*
Frindle*
Gail Gibbons Illustrated Science Books*
George Washington's Socks
Geronimo Stilton Series*
Help! I'm a Prisoner in the Library
Hurry Home Candy
James Herriot Illustrated books*
Leah's Pony
Little House in the Big Woods
Little Riders*
Magic Tree House series* (early reader chapter book)
Mandy
Misty of Chincoteague
Misunderstood Betsy
Mouse and The Motorcycle series* (good early chapter book)
Mr. Popper's Penguins*
Mr. Revere and I*
Mrs. Piggle-wiggle
My Father's Dragon* (good early chapter book)
Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes (stepping stones)
National Geographic Kids Chapter Books*
Orphan Train series (good for older kids too-supplement with reading about history of the the Orphan trains in the late 19th)
Phoebe the Spy
Pippi Longstocking
Riding Freedom
Sarah Plain and Tall
Secret Soldier: Story of Deborah Sampson
Serafina's Promise
Shiloh*
Shoeshine Girl
Sideways Stories from Wayside School*
Snow Treasure*
Sophie Webb science journals*
Spy Cat series*
Stone Fox*

Stuart Little*
The Borrowers
The Hundred Dresses
The Littles
The Matchlock Gun*
The Other Side
The Stories Julian Tells*
The Whipping Boy*
Toliver's Secret
Who was/What was series*
World According to Humphrey*

4th-6th Readers
A Family Apart (read along with a history of the 19th century orphan trains-Orphan Train Rider)
A Long Walk to Water*
Banner in the Sky*
Boy who Harnessed the Wind*
Caddie Woodlawn
Diary of Clotee, A Slave Girl
Doll People series
Esperanza Rising
Flora and Ulysses
Great Gilly Hopkins
I am Malala: Youth edition*
In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson (some superstition)
Indian in the Cupboard series*
Inside Out and Back Again
Interactive History Series; You Choose*
Island of the Blue Dolphins
Johnny Tremain*
Listening to Lions
Maniac Magee*
Ralph Moody's Little Britches Series*
Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler
Mrs. Frisby and Rats of Nimh*
My Side of the Mountain*
Mysterious Benedict Society*

Number the Stars
One and Only Ivan*
One Crazy Summer
Breaking Stalin's Nose (talk about communism, history, brainwashing-historic note on last page is good context)
Out of the Dust (read along with Ken Burn's documentary on the Dust Bowl)
Peppermints in the Parlor
Railway Children
Rascal*
Real Kids, Real Stories, Real Change*
Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry
Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes
Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs
Sign of the Beaver*
Sounder*
Small as an Elephant*
I Thought my Soul Would Rise and Fly
Summer of the Swans*
Swallows and Amazons
Tale of Despereux*
The Cay*
The Little Princess
The Penderwicks
The Secret Garden
The Secret School
The Trouble with Tuck
The Wheel on the School
Toothpaste Millionaire*
Trumpet of the Swan
Where the Red Fern Grows*
Wolves of Willoughby Chase
Nancy Drew Series (be careful to only get the 1930s edition. There were several rewrites, all under Carolyn Keene pseudonym)
Hardy Boys Series (see Nancy Drew comment)
Bobbsey Twins Series
One Crazy Summer
Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library
One for the Murphys

Nonfiction		
2nd-5th	4th-6th	7th up
A Nest is Noisy	Gifted Hands: Kids Edition	Winterdance by Gary Paulsen
A Rock is Lively	Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery	Bomb: The Race to Build and Steal the World's Most Dangerous Weapon by Steve Sheinkin
A Seed is Sleepy	Factory Girl	Port Chicago 50 by Steve Sheinkin
A Street Through Time	Moonbird	All Creatures Great and Small by James Herriot
A Voice of her Own: Phyllis Wheatley	Ida B. Wells: Let the Truth be Told	The Notorious Benedict Arnold by Steve Sheinkin
Annie Shapiro and the Clothing Workers' Strike	A Long Walk to Water*	Courage Has No Color, The True Story of the Triple Nickles (black WWII paratroopers)
Ben and Me	Girls Think of Everything	A Different Mirror for Young People by Ronald Takaki
Biblioburro	Something Out of Nothing: Marie Curie	Chasing Lincoln's Killer
Brave Girl: Clara and Shirt Waist Maker's Strike	I am Malala: Youth edition	The Greatest Stories Never Told
DK Biographies	The First Woman Doctor	The President has been Shot by James Swanson
Dolores Huerta: A Hero to Migrant Workers	Unbroken: Youth edition	No Summit out of Sight
Dolphin Adventure	Through My Eyes by Ruby Bridges	Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two
Escape North! The Story of Harriet Tubman	Orphan Train Rider	An American Plague by Jim Murphy
Freedom on the Menu	Blizzard! By Jim Murphy	Brown Girl Dreaming
Freedom Summer	Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes	Story of Science by Joy Hakim
Gail Gibbons Illustrated Science Books	The Great Fire by Jim Murphy	
George Washington's Socks	Real Kids, Real Stories, Real Change*	
Harvesting Hope: Cesar Chavez	Story of My Life by Helen Keller	
Ida B. Wells: Mother of the Civil Rights Movement	Geronimo: Wolf of the Warpath by Ralph Moody	

Interactive History Series; You Choose*	Irena Sendler and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto (complement with movie)	
James Herriot Illustrated books*	We were There Too! Young People in U.S. History	
James Herriot's Treasury for Children	Counting on Grace	
Let's Read and Find Out Series	Wheels of Change: How Women Rode the Bicycle to Freedom	
Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and Trees of Kenya	Almost Astronauts: 13 Women who dared to dream	
Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11	Girls who Looked Under Rocks	
My Librarian is a Camel: How Books are Brought to Children around the World	Rooftop Astronomer: A Story about Maria Mitchell	
National Geographic Kids Chapter Books	A Young People's History of the U.S. by Howard Zinn & Rebecca Stefoff	
Noah Webster and His Words	Three cups of Tea: Young Readers Edition	
Planting the Trees of Kenya	Out of the Dust (complement with The Dust Bowl documentary by Ken Burns)	
Rachel Carson and Book that Changed the World	Bylines: A photobiography of Nellie Bly	
Rain School	Boy who Harnessed the Wind*	
Secret Soldier: Story of Deborah Sampson	Scientists in the Field Series (Eruption, Chasing Cheetahs, Tracking Trash, etc.)	
Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and her Family's Fight	The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus	
Snow Treasure*	Woodsong by Gary Paulsen	
Snowflake Bentley	A Really Short History of Nearly Everything	
Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge	Claudette Colvin: Twice	

Grows in the Bronx	Towards Justice	
Sophie Webb science journals*	Team Moon: How 400,000 people landed Apollo 11 on the moon	
Story of Ruby Bridges	Remember: The Story to School Integration	
Sybil Ludington's Midnight Ride	Come on Seabiscuit by Ralph Moody	
The Elephant Scientist	Indian Captive, True Story of Mary Jemison	
The Fossil Girl: Mary Anning		
The Great Serum Race: Blazing the Iditarod Trail		
The Librarian of Basra		
The Watcher: Jane Goodall's life with Chimps		
The Wright Brothers: How they Invented the Airplane		
Time for Kids Biographies Series		
Togo by Robert Blake		
Who is/What was series		
Christian the Lion		
The Eye of the Whale		
Malala a Brave Girl from Pakistan/Iqbal A Brave Boy from Pakistan		
Four feet, two sandals		
Star Stuff: Carl Sagan and the Mysteries of the Cosmos		
Weird but True: 300 Outrageous Facts		