

## Suggested Titles for Independent and Summer Reading

Grade Range	Title	Author	Description
K-2	A Really Bird Story	Harriet Ziefert	Meet Really Bird, a small bird who lives in a large city park with his friends Cat, Pup, Mouse, and Rabbit. (series)
K-2	A River of Dust: The Life-Giving Link Between North Africa and the Amazon	Jilanne Hoffmann	A narrative nonfiction story detailing the long distance that dust from the Sahel in Africa travels across the Atlantic Ocean to replenish life in the Amazon Rainforest.
K-2	Beneath	Cori Doerrfeld	Finn is in a bad mood, so his grandfather takes him on a walk in the forest, and tells him about all the things that are beneath the surface of plants and animals--and even people.
K-2	Best Day Ever	Marilyn Singer	This playful puppy thinks she's having the best day ever! She's so happy to be out with her friend, she doesn't even realize that she's being a little naughty. But then he scolds her, and suddenly--Worst. Day. Ever. Will puppy be able to make amends and turn their day back around?
K-2	Biscuit	Alyssa Satin Capucilli	Biscuit the dog gets into all sorts of situations! (series)
K-2	Blake the Snake Bakes a Cake	Amy Young	A long green snake tries to bake a cake, but things keep going wrong!
K-2	Cranky Crabby Crow (saves the world)	Corey R. Tabor	All the animals think Crow is just cranky, but there's more to his actions than meets the eye.
K-2	Everybelly	Thao Lam	Picture book featuring a diverse group of people at a swimming pool. Great body positivity and representation.
K-2	Eye to Eye: Comparing How Animals See	Sara Levine	Learn how different animals see the world (non fiction)
K-2	Fish of Small Wishes	Elana K. Arnold	A magic fish can only grant small wishes, and a shy girl learns that she can grant her own big wishes.
K-2	Flowers Are Pretty...Weird	Rosemary Mosco	introduces readers to the weird side of flowers! (non fiction)
K-2	Press Start!	Flintham, Thomas	Sunny Zaki loves to play video games. As Sunny plays, the story unfolds. What will be Super Rabbit Boy's next

			adventure? Sunny just needs to press start to find out! (series)
K-2	Hair Love	Matthew A. Cherry	A father helps his daughter do her hair.
K-2	Henry & Mudge	Cynthia Rylant	The adventures of Henry and his dog Mudge (series)
K-2	I'm New Here	Anne Sibley O'Brien	Three children adjust to living in the United States
K-2	In Between	April Pulley Sayre with Jeff Sayre	Animals, just like people, can find themselves stuck in some awkward in-between stages. How do we get out of the in-betweens?
K-2	Interrupting Cow	Jane Yolen	humorous stories and jokes
K-2	Joan Procter, Dragon Doctor, the woman who loved reptiles	Patricia Valdez	A picture biography of Joan Procter, whose enthusiasm for reptiles led her to keep a komodo dragon as a pet and led to her career as a curator at London's Natural History Museum.
K-2	Julián Is A Mermaid	Jessica Love	Julian dresses like women he saw on the subway
K-2	Katie Fry Private Eye	Katherine Cox	simple, fun mysteries for beginning readers
K-2	Little Rosetta and the Talking Guitar	Charnelle Pinkney Barlow.	Decades before Elvis Presley was dubbed the King of Rock and Roll, before Billy Haley played 'Rock Around the Clock,' and before the Beatles revolutionized popular music, there was Sister Rosetta Tharpe, a Black guitar player from Cotton Plant, Arkansas
K-2	Mia the Masterpiece	Mia Armstrong	A warm, accessible picture book written by a child actor with Down syndrome. Mia shares how she sees the world and celebrates the qualities that make her unique. T
K-2	Meg & Greg	Elsbeth Rae	Decodable book featuring four stories specially designed to help children with dyslexia or other language-based learning difficulties find reading success.
K-2	Mercy Watson	Kate DeCamillo	stories about a pig who lives in a house and eats hot buttered toast!



81 Highland Avenue • Somerville, MA 02143  
 T 617-629-5250 • F 617-629-4763  
[www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs)

K-2	Nat the Cat Takes a Nap	Jarrett Lerner	Nat the Cat is trying to take a nap. Will he be able to rest?
K-2	Poppleton	Cynthia Rylant	Poppleton lives in a town with a wide ranging cast of characters that have lots of adventures!
K-2	Riley Reynolds	Jay Albee	Riley is nonbinary, and these books set early readers up for success.
K-2	Seoul Food	Erin Russell	Hannah decides to cook a meal that represents both her Korean and Southern heritage.
K-2	Spider in the Well	Hannigan, Jess	The town's wishing well is broken! The newsboy is sent to investigate. What will he find? Read on to discover a tale of good intentions, bad actions and trickery!
K-2	Thank You, Omu!	Oge Mora	Omu shares her delicious stew with so many people that she may not have any left for herself!
K-2	The Artist	Nikkolas Smith.	Motivated by the realization of global inequities, a young boy embraces his dual identities as an artist and activist, becoming an "Artist" to make a difference by using his viral mural as a catalyst for positive change.
K-2	The Boy who Said Wow	Boss, Todd	The story of a nonverbal boy who so enjoys the music at a concert that he says "Wow!"
K-2	The Cow Who Climbed a Tree	Gemma Merino	you can do amazing things, even if people don't believe you right away.
K-2	The Fish of Small Wishes	Arnold, Elana	Kiki meets a fish who can grant wishes, but only small wishes - and Kiki's wishes are too big! Can her wishes come true anyway?
K-2	The Great Stink: How Joseph Bazalgate solved London's poop pollution problem	Colleen Paef	Funny, illustrated account of the first engineer to design London's sewage system and its role in preventing disease.
K-2	The Interpreter	Olivia Abtahi	A picture book that highlights the experience of children who help bridge languages and cultures within their families.
K-2	The Mitten String	Jennifer Rosner	the author imagines how a Deaf mother cared for a baby generations ago.



81 Highland Avenue • Somerville, MA 02143

T 617-629-5250 • F 617-629-4763

[www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs)

K-2	The Tree Lady: The True Story of how one tree-loving woman changed a city forever	Joseph H. Hopkins	Learn about Katherine Olivia Sessions, who brought trees to San Diego and created what eventually became Balboa Park.
K-2	The Truth About Dragons	Julie Leung	In a mix of Eastern and Western mythologies, a mother tells her child about two forests inhabited by different, but equally enchanting dragons that coexist within the child's heart.
K-2	Two New Years	Richard Ho	A multicultural family celebrates the traditions of two New Years--the Jewish Rosh Hashanah in the autumn, and the Asian Lunar New Year several months later.
K-2	Vamos! books	Raul the Third	Bilingual in a new way, these colorful adventures teach readers simple words in Spanish as they experience the bustling life of a border town.
K-2	various titles	Chris Houghton	brightly illustrated picture books about everyday emotions, through the eyes of friendly animals
K-2	various titles	Ryan T. Higgins	Penelope Rex handles all sorts of near mishaps at school!
K-2	When You Can Swim	Jack Wong	A reverent celebration of learning to swim among a diverse cast of children and families who each experience the mysterious joys of water in nature
K-2	Yasmin	Saadia Faruqi	stories of daily life and adventures
K-2, 3-5	Dragon Girls		If your child loves fantasy and magical creatures, discover Dragon Girls — an imaginative series that helps kids get in touch with their inner fire. Touching on themes of friendship, empathy, and confidence, this series is sure to become a new favorite.
K-2, 3-5	Gorilla Gardener	John Seven	Gorilla Gardener secretly drops seeds throughout the city in an effort to create a green, natural environment that everyone can enjoy.
K-2, 3-5	King of the Birds	Elise Gravel	What do you know about the crow? Join Arlo and Pips in this funny , fact-filled early graphic to discover amazing facts about nature's handsomest (?) bird!
K-2, 3-5	Questioneers	Andrea Beatty	STEM-themed books with relatable characters, in a variety of formats



81 Highland Avenue • Somerville, MA 02143  
 T 617-629-5250 • F 617-629-4763  
[www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs)

K-2, 3-5	Seashells: More than a Home	Melissa Stewart	Explore the many shapes and functions of seashells from around the world in this illustrated book by local author Melissa Stewart and illustrator Sarah Brannen.
K-2, 3-5	Who Would Win?	Jerry Pallotta	What happens when 2 of nature's most dangerous animals face-off? Find out by reading these short nonfiction books.
K-2, 3-5	Wild Robot	Peter Brown	When robot Roz opens her eyes for the first time, she discovers that she is all alone on a remote, wild island. She has no idea how she got there or what her purpose is--but she knows she needs to survive. First in a series.
K-2, 3-5	Zoey & Sassafras		With magical animals, science, mystery, and adventure -- the series Zoey and Sassafras has something for everyone! Easy-to-read language and illustrations on nearly every page make this series perfect for a wide range of ages.
K-2, 3-5, 6-8	various titles	Kate DiCamillo	
3-5	Bea Wolf	Zach Weinersmith	A modern middle-grade graphic novel retelling of Beowulf, featuring a gang of troublemaking kids who must defend their tree house from a fun-hating adult who can instantly turn children into grown-ups.
3-5	Beneath the Streets of Boston: Building America's first subway	Mc Kendry, Joe	History of the building of the Boston subway.
3-5	Chinese Menu: The History Myths, and Legends Behind Your Favorite Foods	Grace Lin	A delectable collection of tales that detail the history and origins of foods found on an American Chinese restaurant menu.
3-5	Dragons in a Bag	Zetta Elliott	fantasy with a Black protagonist
3-5	El Deafo	Cece Bell	Authors account of being deaf in elementary and middle school
3-5	Four Eyes	Rex Ogle and Dave Veleza	When Rex finds out he needs glasses, he's beyond miserable. Dealing with the bullies at school, his family being broke, and an embarrassing lack of friends, he has way too much on his plate already
3-5	Girls Survive	various	historical fiction with young protagonists who always survive

3-5	Good Different	Meg Eden Kuyatt	Seventh-grader Selah Godfrey knows that to be "normal" she has to keep her feelings tightly controlled when people are around, but after hitting a fellow student, she needs to figure out just what makes her different--and why that is ok.
3-5	Gregor the Overlander	Suzanne Collins	When Gregor follows his little sister through a grate in the laundry room of their New York apartment building, he hurtles into the dark Underland beneath the city. There, humans live uneasily beside giant spiders, bats, cockroaches, and rats--but the fragile peace is about to fall apart
3-5	Holding Her Own: The Exceptional Life of Jackie Ormes.	Traci N. Todd	An evocative picture book biography about the prolific life of Jackie Ormes, whose groundbreaking cartoons became some of the first empowering depictions of Black women in America!
3-5	How Do You Spell Unfair?	MacNolia Cox	A true story of determination and groundbreaking achievement follows eighth grade African American spelling champion MacNolia Cox, who left Akron, Ohio, in 1936 to compete in the prestigious National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., only to be met with prejudice and discrimination.
3-5	How Old is a Whale? Animal Life Spans From the Mayfly to the Immortal Jellyfish	Lily Murray	From the delicate mayfly, which lives for just a few precious hours, to the death-defying immortal jellyfish, this book about animal life cycles is a celebration of creatures big and small.
3-5	I Survived	Lauren Tarshis	historical fiction with young protagonists who always survive
3-5	Jovita Wore Pants: The Story of a Mexican Freedom Fighter	Aida Salazar	The remarkable true story of Jovita Valdovinos, a Mexican revolutionary who disguised herself as a man to fight for her rights!
3-5	Lasagna Means I Love You	Kate O'Shaughnessy	When eleven-year-old foster kid Mo finds a handmade cookbook filled with someone else's family recipes, she collects the stories behind them and builds a website to share them, secretly hoping a long-lost relative will find her and give her a family recipe all her own.

3-5	Love is Loud: How Diane Nash Led the Civil Rights Movement	Sandra Neil Wallace	A picture book biography of Diane Nash, a Civil Rights Movement leader at the side of Martin Luther King and John Lewis.
3-5	Low Riders	Cathy Camper, Raul the Third	
3-5	Mexikid: A Graphic Memoir. By Pedro Martín.	Pedro Martin	An unforgettable graphic memoir about a Mexican American boy's family and their adventure-filled road trip to bring their abuelito back from Mexico
3-5	Odder	Katherine Applegate	Odder is a fearless daredevil, curious to a fault. But when she comes face-to-face with a hungry great white shark, her life takes a dramatic turn, one that will challenge everything she believes about herself--and about the humans who hope to save her. Inspired by the true story of a Monterey Bay Aquarium program that pairs orphaned otter pups with surrogate mothers!
3-5	On the Block: Stories of Immigrant Families	Ellen Oh	An interconnected anthology featuring twelve immigrant families from different cultural backgrounds living in the same apartment building
3-5	Rainbow Fair	Diana Ma	Set around a school cultural fair, this novel follows a Chinese Muslim (Hui) American girl as she explores friendship, identity, and family expectations.
3-5	Saving Sunshine	Saadia Faruqi	Muslim American siblings can't stop bickering, but must come together to help a struggling turtle
3-5	Search for a Giant Squid: Pick Your Path	Amy Seto Forrester	A choose your own path style story that guides the reader through the very real job of being a teuthologist
3-5	Starfish	Lisa Phipps	Told in verse, Ellie lives by Fat Girl Rules to avoid being bullied, but with the support of her dad, her therapist and her neighbor Catalina, can Ellie set aside these rules and just be herself?

3-5	Stars of the Night: The Courageous Children of the Czech Kindertransport	Karen Stelsen	The powerful and sensitively told true story of the Czech Kindertransport, which rescued 669 children from Nazi persecution on the eve of World War II
3-5	The Fire of Stars: The Life and Brilliance of the Woman Who Discovered What Stars Are Made of	Kirsten W. Larson.	Astronomer and astrophysicist Cecilia Payne was the first person to discover what burns at the heart of stars.
3-5	The Penderwicks	Jeanne Birdsall	4 sisters and their adventures. Great readaloud. 5-book series.
3-5	Things in the Basement	Ben Hatke	It was supposed to just be a normal basement--some storage boxes, dust, you know, the usual basement stuff. But when Milo is sent by his mother to fetch a sock from the basement of the historic home they've moved into, Milo finds a door in the back that he's never seen before. Turns out that the basement of his house is enormous. In fact, there is a whole world down there.
3-5	Two Tribes	Emily Bowen Cohen	Mia balances the Jewish side (mom) and the Native side (dad) of her family
3-5	Who Was/Who HQ	various	biographies and historical events told in an engaging style
3-5	Wings of Fire	Tui Sutherland	Fantasy Dragons in both chapter book and graphic novel format
3-5, 6-8	Front Desk series	Kelly Yang	This award-winning series from Kelly Yang features Mia Tang, who helps run the front desk her family's Calivista Motel. Through the ups and downs of school, events in their community, and the lives of the motel's guests, Mia charts her own course and helps many friends along the way.
3-5, 6-8	Mad Wolf's Daughter	Diane Magras	A Scottish medieval adventure about the youngest in a war-band who must free her family from a castle prison after knights attack her home.



81 Highland Avenue • Somerville, MA 02143  
 T 617-629-5250 • F 617-629-4763  
[www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs)

3-5, 6-8	Mysterious Benedict Society	Trenton Lee Stewart	After passing a series of mind-bending tests, four children are selected for a secret mission that requires them to go undercover at the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened, where the only rule is that there are no rules. (series)
3-5, 6-8	Percy Jackson and other series	Rick Riordan	The classic first book about Percy Jackson, the troubled boy who discovers he is the son of Poseidon, and his adventures with demigods, monsters, and Greek gods.
3-5, 6-8	Rebel in the Library of Ever	Zeno Alexander	Adventure featuring a library-loving, problem-solving girl and a wacky group of friends and librarians. (Also has sequel)
3-5, 6-8	Rick Riordan Presents (various series)	various authors	myth-based adventures from around the world, published by Rick Riordan
3-5, 6-8	Safe Harbor	Venkatraman, Padma	Moving from India to the US is difficult for Geetha, but things start to get better when she and a new friend help rescue a stranded seal. Set nearby in Rhode Island!
3-5, 6-8	various titles	Alex Gino	
3-5, 6-8	The Endling	Katherine Applegate	Byx is the youngest member of her dairne pack. Believed to possess remarkable abilities, her mythical doglike species has been hunted to near extinction in the war-torn kingdom of Nedarra. After her pack is hunted down and killed, Byx fears she may be the last of her species. The Endling. So Byx sets out to find safe haven, and meets new allies who each have their own motivations for joining her quest. And although they begin as strangers, they become their own kind of family—one that will ultimately uncover a secret that may threaten every creature in their world. (3 books in series)
3-5, 6-8	various titles	Katie Slivensky	science based thriller/mysteries - local author who used to work at the Museum of Science!

3-5, 6-8	Out of my Mind	Sharon Draper	Eleven-year-old Melody is not like most people. She can't walk. She can't talk. She can't write. All because she has cerebral palsy. But she also has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She's the smartest kid in her whole school, but NO ONE knows it. Most people—her teachers, her doctors, her classmates—dismiss her as mentally challenged because she can't tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by her disability. And she's determined to let everyone know it...somehow. (followed by Out of my Heart and Out of my Dreams)
3-5, 6-8	various titles	Lauren Wolk	
6-8	A Kind of Spark	Elle McNicoll	A girl with autism campaigns for a memorial honoring the women who lost their lives during witch trials in her small Scottish town
6-8	Alebrijes	Donna Barba Higuera	For 400 years, Earth has been a barren wasteland. The few humans that survive scrape together an existence in the cruel city of Pocatel - or go it alone in the wilderness beyond, filled with wandering spirits and wyrms. They don't last long.
6-8	All Mixed Up	Raj Tawney	A coming-of-age novel centered on a multiracial middle school student navigating family, identity, and belonging.
6-8	Aniana Del Mar Jumps In	Jasminne Mendez	A powerful and expertly told novel in verse about a twelve-year-old Dominican American swimmer who is diagnosed with Juvenile Arthritis
6-8	Buzzing	Samuel Sattin	Isaac is a shy boy with OCD, but one day at school he meets new friends who introduce him to role-playing games, which lead him on a journey of self-discovery and growth
6-8	Code Red	Joy McCulloch	this character-driven, thought-provoking, often funny, and, above all, timely middle grade novel celebrates finding yourself, making new friends, and standing up for what's right as a girl becomes involved in menstrual activism

6-8	Deer Run Home	LeZotte, Ann Claire	Effie is Deaf, and no one in her family speaks sign language, her language. This moving story of survival and found family, inspired by a true court case, is perfect for fans of Wonder and Out of My Mind.
6-8	Hands	Torrey Maldonado.	Twelve-year-old Trevor has an adult problem to deal with: how to protect himself, his sisters, and his mother from his abusive stepfather (currently in prison) and he thinks the way to do that is to take up boxing--although he would really rather draw.
6-8	Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow	Jessica Townsend	Morrigan Crow thinks she's cursed, and so does everyone else in her family and city, who blame her every time something goes wrong. The rules of the curse say she is to die at midnight on her 11th birthday, but right then she is whisked away to a magical world.
6-8	Pardalita	Joana Estrela.	16-year-old Raquel lives in a small town in Portugal, the kind of place where everyone knows everyone else's business. Her parents are divorced and she's just been suspended for cursing out a school aide asking about her father's new marriage. She has two best friends, Luisa and Fred, but wants something more. Then, from afar, she sees Pardalita, a senior and a gifted artist who's moving to Lisbon to study in the fall. The two girls get to know each other while working on a play. And Raquel falls in love. Using a gorgeous blend of prose poems, illustrations, and graphic novel format, author and artist Joana Estrela captures the feeling of being a teenager in a way that feels gentle, joyful, and real.
6-8	Show Me a Sign	Ann Clare LeZotte	Deaf author Ann Clare LeZotte weaves a riveting Own Voices story inspired by the true history of a thriving deaf community on Martha's Vineyard in the early 19th century.
6-8	Simon Sort of Says	Erin Bow	Simon O'Keeffe's biggest claim to fame should be the time his dad accidentally gave a squirrel a holy sacrament. Or maybe the alpaca disaster that went viral on YouTube. But the story the whole world wants to tell about Simon is the one he'd do anything to forget- the one starring Simon as a famous survivor of gun violence at school.



81 Highland Avenue • Somerville, MA 02143

T 617-629-5250 • F 617-629-4763

[www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs)

6-8	The Giver	Lois Lowry	The haunting story centers on twelve-year-old Jonas, who lives in a seemingly ideal, if colorless, world of conformity and contentment. Not until he is given his life assignment as the Receiver of Memory does he begin to understand the dark, complex secrets behind his fragile community.
6-8	The Lost Year	Katherine Marsh	In the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, thirteen-year-old Matthew discovers a shocking secret about his great-grandmother's past as he learns about her life during the Holodomor famine in Soviet Ukraine.
6-8	The Mona Lisa Vanishes: A Legendary Painter, a Shocking Heist, and the Birth of a Global Celebrity	Nicholas Day	On a hot August day in Paris, just over a century ago, a desperate guard burst into the office of the director of the Louvre and shouted, La Joconde, c'est partie! The Mona Lisa, she's gone! No one knew who was behind the heist.
6-8	The Strangers	Margaret Peterson Haddix	Told from separate viewpoints, Chess, Emma, and Finn Greystone, ages twelve, ten, and eight, investigate why their mother went missing and uncover their ties to an alternate world.
6-8	The Trouble with Heroes	Kate Messner	A middle-grade novel in verse about grief, identity, family, and finding one's own definition of heroism.
6-8	various titles	Alan Gratz	Excellent historical fiction covering many time periods
6-8	various titles	Julia Alvarez	
6-8	When Stars Are Scattered	Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed	Omar and his younger brother Hassan live in a refugee camp, and when an opportunity for Omar to get an education comes along, he must decide between going to school every day or caring for his nonverbal brother in this intimate and touching portrayal of family and daily life in a refugee camp
6-8	The Track Series: Ghost; Patina; Sunny; Lu	Jason Reynolds	Each book features a different member of a local track team, all competing against others and themselves.



---

81 Highland Avenue • Somerville, MA 02143

T 617-629-5250 • F 617-629-4763

[www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs)