

Hello incoming 2nd graders,

In the article "It's Summer, Let's Read" in *Instructor Magazine*, it states "by reading four or more books over the summer, kids can avoid the "summer slide," or gap in academic skills, when they return to school in the fall."

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3756152>

Your homework assignment for this summer is to read 4 books! You can choose if they are picture books or chapter books. Please record which books you read, so that I can be proud of you when you join my class in the fall. I will record all the books I read this summer also, so we can talk about what we read together. Here are some of my favorites (I love to read), in case you would like some ideas!

Happy Reading and Happy Summer,
Mrs. Higgins

Picture Books

Sam and the Lucky Money by Karen Chinn

For Chinese New Year, Sam receives the traditional token of a red envelope with money. While out with his family, with the money burning a hole in his pocket, he sees a homeless man with no socks on his feet and no food to eat. Sam realizes that the right, lucky thing to do is to use his money to buy the man some socks. 32 pages

Diary of a Worm (or Diary of a Wombat) by Doreen Cronin

Doreen Cronin has done it again with this first person narrative told from the point of view of a boy worm. This book introduces the concept of a diary in a fun way. Young readers will identify with all the escapades of a worm, as he interacts with family members, goes to school and vacations at Compost Island. Children will laugh and learn facts in a fun way while learning to appreciate living creatures. 40 pages

Tacky in Trouble (or any book in the Tacky series) by Helen Lester

Tacky is back, getting himself into predicaments that can only result in delighted, yet understanding, young readers. This time, Tacky is surfing while his more subdued penguin pals are napping on their iceberg. Tacky's flowered shirt catches a mighty gust of wind and he is transported to a tropical island. An elephant (Tacky thinks she's a large grey rock) mistakes Tacky's shirt for a perfect bouquet of flowers to grace her kitchen table. What can Tacky do to escape? He does "penguinish" things to prove he is not a table dressing: He marches, dives, slides and hops until the tablecloth is covered with food. As usual, Munsinger's watercolor illustrations are hilarious, and the story is told in Lester's dry, witty tone. Tacky will certainly find new fans with this book, while old fans will be reminded to reread the other Tacky books! 32 pages

Stellaluna by Janell Cannon

Stellaluna is a baby fruit bat happily flying along with her mother when an owl attacks. The poor little bat is knocked out of her mother's grasp and lands in a birds' nest. The mother bird accepts Stellaluna as long as she acts like a bird, not a bat. Soon enough, Stellaluna learns to eat bugs and stop hanging by her feet. When she finally has a chance to show her bird siblings, Pip, Flutter and Flap, what life as a bat is like, they are left all in a muddle: "How can we be so different and feel so much alike?" one asks. Anyone who has ever been in a position where they can't be who they really are will relate to Stellaluna's predicament. Cannon's award-winning illustrations convey the nocturnal world beautifully. Readers will be enchanted by this book with its messages of acceptance, friendship and a mothers' love. 46 pages

George and Martha (George and Martha Series) by James Marshall

George and Martha are two hilarious hippo friends who invariably get themselves into sticky situations. Your child will love finding out what happens when George does not like the split pea soup that Martha has made for him in "Split Pea Soup," just one of the five humorous stories in this collection. 48 pages

Toot and Puddle by Holly Hobbie

Meet Toot and Puddle--two small, endearing pigs who are friends and as different as different can be. While Toot likes to travel to places unknown, Puddle prefers to stay home and revel in the joys of everyday life. Whimsical postcards capture the excitement of Toot's travels, while scenes of Puddle celebrate mundane moments spent in familiar confines. 32 pages

Strega Nona by Tomie dePaola

In his Caldecott Honor book, dePaola tells the story of Strega Nona, who is the source for potions, cures, magic, and comfort in her Calabrian town. When Strega Nona leaves him alone with her magic pasta pot, Big Anthony is determined to show the townspeople how it works. 32 pages

Chapter Books

Bunnica: A Rabbit-Tale of Mystery (*Bunnica Series*) by James Howe, Alan Daniel, Deborah Howe

In this humorous animal fantasy book, the Monroe family finds a bunny in a movie theater and names the animal Bunnica. Chester the cat suspects Bunnica is a vampire rabbit, is he? 98 pages

Fox and His Friends (Fox series) by Edward Marshall

How can Fox have fun with his friends when his little sister tags along everywhere he goes? Your child will love finding out if Louise really does spoil all the fun. 32 pages

The Chocolate Touch by Patrick Skene Catling

Ah, my fantasy... Everything our hero John Midas touches turns into chocolate!

However, he soon finds out you can certainly have too much of anything, even chocolate. A cross between *Bread and Jam for Frances* and *King Midas and the Golden Touch*. For a strong reader or a bedtime "read to me." 128 pages

The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe (series) by C.S. Lewis

Classic fantasy story for kids. Parents need to know that the plot and writing, although superior, are somewhat dated, and the art is small and simplistic. The language is simple but precise, and the main characters act valiantly to help save Narnia from the White Queen's enchantment (though one is initially caught under her sway). 208 pages

Dinosaurs Before Dark, (Magic Tree House Series) by Mary Pope Osborne

Children cannot get enough of the adventures of Jack and Annie, as they travel back in time in their tree house. The tree house is magical and filled with books on subjects such as dinosaurs, knights, Egypt, China, and volcanoes. In this first adventure, Jack and Annie happen upon a book about dinosaurs. Before they know it, they are whisked back in time to 65 million years ago. Children get a lesson in history and experience an unforgettable adventure. 80 pages

My Father's Dragon (3 part series) by Ruth Stiles Gannett

This book is the first of a trilogy featuring Elmer Elevator and his adventures. In *My Father's Dragon*, Elmer rescues a baby dragon from the cruel animals on Wild Island and in the process takes you on a fantastic journey. 112 pages

Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Babe Ruth Baseball (Cam Jansen Series) by David Adler

Jennifer "Camera" Jansen uses her photographic memory to save the day once again! At a hobby show a man's prized Babe Ruth baseball goes missing. Cam clearly remembers a boy in a green jacket standing very close to that same baseball, but can she prove it? 64 pages

Poppleton in Winter (Poppleton series) by Cynthia Rylant

This collection features three short stories for early readers. In *Icicles*, the downfall of Poppleton's beloved icicles leads to a new friendship. In *The Bust*, Poppleton's creative juices get flowing, inspiring him to take up sculpting. And in *The Sleigh Ride*, he's disappointed that all of his friends stay inside to bake when he wants to go for a sleigh ride ... until he finds out that they were baking in honor of his birthday! 48 pages

Ready Freddy: Don't Sit on My Lunch (Ready Freddy Series) by Abby Klein

Both boys and girls can relate to Freddy and his best friend Jessie, who happens to be a girl. In fact, she is the star hockey player on the peewee hockey team. Readers will delight in the antics of Freddy and Jessie, as Jessie tries to help Freddy get a spot on her team. Of course, no school story would be complete without a class bully! Find out if Freddy can outplay "Max the Bully" in this entertaining read. 95 pages

Judy Moody by Megan McDonald

Yes, Judy is a third-grade girl but she is very much the tomboy and boys love this series as much as girls. The series is great for readers making the transition into chapter books. Judy has constant dilemmas and comes up with the most intriguing solutions to problems such as having to sit next to a kid who eats paste and a toad that pees on her! 160 pages

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (series) by Roald Dahl

Charlie gets a chance to visit Willy Wonka's fabulous, top-secret chocolate factory. A classic, imaginative read, where people, both good and bad, get exactly what they deserve. 176 pages

Little House in the Big Woods (series) by Laura Wilder

New readers and those familiar with Laura Ingalls and her family will love following along as Laura takes them through a year in the life of the little family of pioneers. This story is a straightforward, fun read with a child's look into the life of a pioneer. It's great to see Laura and her sisters take simple pleasure in playing with their dolls, making homemade goodies and listening to their father's stories. Laura Ingalls is a kid who loves to help her family, is afraid of wolves and hates her "boring" brown hair. She lives in a little house in the big woods where she and her siblings work hard at their many chores, mind their Ma and Pa, go to school all in one room and have lots of frontier adventures. 256 pages

The Tail of Emily Windsnap (a 3 part series) by Liz Kessler

Although Emily lives on a boat, her parents are very wary of her being in the water. Emily discovers that she is half-mermaid and she begins to pursue the mystery of her father's disappearance. 208 pages

Freddy the Detective by Walter Brooks

Freddy is a pig who finds his true calling when he finds a copy of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in the barn one day. The witty and still very fresh vocabulary (written in the 30's) in which Freddy expresses himself is just delightful! 272 pages

Wayside School Gets a Little Stranger (series) by Louis Sachar

Surely, Wayside School was already strange enough. The builders built a 30-story school sideways with the rooms piled one on top of another - except for the 19th floor where Miss Zarves teaches class. There is no 19th floor, and there is no Miss Zarves. Nevertheless, there is a 13th floor, where nice Mrs. Jewls presides over her eccentric pupils. Mrs. Jewls, however, takes a maternity leave. Before she returns with her little stranger, Wayside School gets a little stranger. While reading this ridiculously funny book, children will not only be laughing, they will be learning. 169 pages

