The PBS KIDS GO! Read Aloud Book Club provides a great forum for kids ages 8 to 11 to discuss books and ideas, do hands-on activities, and explore Web-based activities. Whether you are an after-school provider, a classroom teacher, or a librarian, the PBS KIDS GO! Read Aloud Book Club will be a valuable addition to your program. Parents may also enjoy using these materials with their children.

Although many kids this age are reading independently, they still enjoy being read to. A book club is a great way to enhance kids’ reading skills and promote a love of books. The PBS KIDS GO! Read Aloud Book Club features beautifully illustrated, advanced picture books, as well as chapter books. Advanced picture books are well suited to kids in this age range—even the older kids. They offer fairly complex themes and plots that engage readers of all ages, their eye-catching illustrations capture the imagination, and they are perfect for reading aloud in a single meeting. The chapter books can be read and discussed over the course of multiple sessions.

At the heart of the PBS KIDS GO! Read Aloud Book Club are nine culturally diverse children’s books (readily available at your local public library or bookstore) and accompanying online book club “cards” (available here). These materials will help you run nine hour-long book club meetings. The book club cards include discussion questions that build kids’ comprehension, critical-thinking, and social skills; hands-on activities that promote creativity and self-expression; and interactive Web-based explorations that help kids further explore the themes in the books. Each card also includes a “Get Involved” activity to help kids make a difference in their community or the world.

The Book Club also includes a booklist you can send home to encourage parents and caregivers to read with their children. On the booklist are all nine featured books, as well as a selection of theme-related recommended books. The nine books featured in the PBS KIDS GO! Read Aloud Book Club are:

- George Washington’s Teeth by Deborah Chandra and Madeleine Comora
- Monsoon by Uma Krishnaswami
- Grandma’s Records by Eric Velasquez
- Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World’s Fastest Woman by Kathleen Krull
- Beast Feast by Douglas Florian
- Yesterday I Had the Blues by Jeron Ashford Frame
- Akiko and the Journey to Toog by Mark Crilley
- Come Back, Salmon by Molly Cone
- Aesop’s Fables by Jerry Pinkney
Get Ready
The most important thing is to have fun and enjoy the book club experience. Here are some tips to help things run smoothly:

- Determine meeting logistics ahead of time. Where will the book club meet? How often? For how long? How many sessions?
- Review the book club cards and choose one of the featured books. Get a copy of the book and read it before the book club meets. This will help you become familiar with the story and may provide ideas about interesting ways to read the story aloud.
- Familiarize yourself with the discussion questions and choose one activity and Web exploration (or more if you have time). You can also create your own activity.
- Identify the author and the illustrator when presenting the book to kids. Since many of the books are advanced picture books, the art and illustrations are often as important to the story as the text.
- If you are reading poetry, read the poems in advance and choose ones that are appropriate for your group. Point out and define any unfamiliar words with kids.
- Gather beforehand the materials needed to do the hands-on activity.
- Make copies of the PBS KIDS GO! Read Aloud Booklist to send home with kids after the first club meeting (or after each meeting, if you don’t host the same kids each time).
- If you are at or have access to a library, at the end of the meeting help kids pick out a book to take home.

Make Home Connections
Parents and other caregivers play an important role in a kid’s transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” They can encourage kids to read, provide books that reflect their interests, talk about books at home, and model the joy of reading. Here’s how you can help nurture this important home connection with the PBS KIDS GO! Read Aloud Book Club.

- Encourage kids to talk with their families about what they read or did at the book club.
- Have kids take home their art or project work to spark conversations with their families, caregivers, and friends. Also send home the booklist to let families know what books kids are reading at the book club and what theme-related books they may want to borrow from the library.
- Have a celebration and invite families to your book club’s last session. Put kids’ work on display and serve refreshments. If possible, invite a local children’s author or illustrator to talk to kids and their families. The author can read a short excerpt from his or her book and talk about the creative process. Local bookstores and librarians can suggest authors who live in the area.

Resources for Younger Kids
If you are looking for book club resources for younger kids, try the BETWEEN THE LIONS™ Read Aloud Book Club I for kids ages 3 to 5 and the BETWEEN THE LIONS Read Aloud Book Club II for kids ages 5 to 7.

To receive an electronic copy of the materials, contact Gay Mohrbacher at gay_mohrbacher@wgbh.org
Introduce George Washington’s Teeth
All his life, George Washington had problems with his teeth. This story is about what really happened to our first president and his teeth.

Get kids curious about George Washington’s Teeth. Bring in various dental hygiene items, such as a toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss. Talk about how each helps maintain dental health. Explain that in George Washington’s time, people brushed their teeth with crushed brick. Ask How well do you think that worked?

Discuss George Washington’s Teeth
After reading George Washington’s Teeth aloud, ask kids whether they liked the book and why. Help them understand the plot and connect with the characters by asking:

1. Before hearing this story, did you know that George Washington worried about his teeth? What else do you know about our first president?
2. Why was George Washington afraid to smile when he was elected president? At the end of the story, did he like his new set of false teeth? Why?
3. Did you think the book was funny? Why or why not? Did you see any funny pictures? Which ones?
4. Do you remember losing your first baby tooth? How many other teeth have you lost? If you were missing all your teeth, what might you have difficulty doing?
5. If you were writing a history book for kids, who or what would you choose to write about? Why?

Optional: Ask Who is our current president? Where does the president live? Who elects American presidents? Can you?

Activities
Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. Do a tooth survey. Kids at this age are usually missing teeth. Have kids count how many teeth they have lost. How many teeth have the kids in your book club lost? Have kids try to smile, talk, or pretend to eat without showing any teeth. Brainstorm foods you can still eat with many teeth missing (mashed potatoes, gelatin dessert, soup). Have kids create and illustrate their own “Toothless Menu” for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

2. Learn about dental health. Invite a local dentist or dental hygienist to talk to kids about dental hygiene, the names of teeth, and how each type of tooth helps us eat (e.g., molars crush food). Have kids look in a mirror and count their teeth, then draw pictures of them. Have older kids label their teeth (incisors, canines, and molars). Use the art on this page as a guide.

Optional: Visit Mouth Power on the American Dental Association’s Web site at www.mouthpower.org for interactive games that help kids learn about cleaning teeth, healthy foods, baby and adult teeth, dental visits, and more. There are also dental health public service announcements (some are available in Spanish) kids can watch.
3. **Design a set of false teeth.** Ask kids What would your own set of false teeth look like? Have them draw and decorate them.

4. **Create a timeline.** Ask kids to make a timeline about their life, similar to the one at the back of *George Washington’s Teeth*. It can include tooth-related events (e.g., when they lost their first tooth or first went to the dentist) and other important events in their lives (birthdays, family outings, etc.). If they remember the year, date, or their age or grade, have them write it on the timeline.

   **Optional:** You can also have kids try the online timeline on the American Dental Association’s Web site under **Your Tooth Story** at www.mouthpower.org

### Web Explorations

Visit one or more of these sites to further explore the themes and topics from the book.

- [pbskidsgo.org/zoom/activities/sci/toothdecay.html](http://pbskidsgo.org/zoom/activities/sci/toothdecay.html)
  - Take part in the *Tooth Decay* survey. Find out who has the most cavities in your group—boys or girls? Submit your survey results to ZOOM®.

- [pbskidsgo.org/wayback](http://pbskidsgo.org/wayback)
  - George Washington had tooth problems. But what about our other presidents? Learn little-known tidbits about past presidents at **Secrets about the Presidents.**

  Also see bowties, banners, mugs, walking sticks, and other interesting items presidential candidates used to get people to vote for them at **Hit the Trail.**

- [pbskidsgo.org/democracy](http://pbskidsgo.org/democracy)
  - **Be President for a Day.** Kids make interactive online choices to create a schedule for their first day as president while learning how actual presidents plan their days. Discuss what daily activities seemed most interesting or important.

### More Suggested Books

Read about presidents, including little-known nuggets of information:

- *A Big Cheese for the White House: The True Tale of a Tremendous Cheddar* by Candace Fleming
- *So You Want to Be President?* by Judith St. George

Read about colonial history:

- *And Then What Happened, Paul Revere?* by Jean Fritz

Read about teeth:

- *Arthur’s Tooth* by Marc Brown
Monsoon
by Uma Krishnaswami

Introduce Monsoon
The young girl in this story lives in India and is eager for the monsoon rains to start. “What if they never come, those monsoon rains?” she wonders. Her Mummy, Papa, Nani, and brother work and play, watch, and wait for the rains.

Get kids curious about Monsoon. Show them India on a world map or globe. Ask What do you know about India?

Discuss Monsoon
After reading Monsoon aloud, ask kids whether they liked the book and why. Help them understand the plot and connect with the characters by asking:

1. Why were the girl and her family happy when it finally rained? When, if ever, do you wish for rain? When it rains, what do you do? Have you ever danced in the rain like the girl and her brother?
2. Have you ever had to wait a long time for something you really wanted? What was it? How long did you have to wait for it?
3. Point to specific pictures. Does the girl live in the city or the country? Do the streets look the same or different where you live? Compare your street and the one in the book. You may want to record kids’ responses on a Venn diagram.
4. How did the clouds in the story look before it rained? Did they look the same as clouds you have seen before it rains? Have you heard thunder or seen lightning before? Was it scary or exciting?
5. What is the weather like where we live? What seasons do we have? Which season is your favorite?
6. Do you have relatives or friends who live far away? Where? What kind of weather do they have?

Activities
Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. Have kids draw or paint different kinds of clouds. (For descriptions and pictures of cloud types [cumulus, cirrus, nimbus, stratus], go to eo.ucar.edu/webweather/cloud3.html). Discuss the characteristics of each type of cloud. Distribute cotton balls and glue so kids can add texture to their artwork. Have them label their clouds. You may want to create a cloud display.
2. **Forecast the weather.** Bring in newspapers that have weather forecasts and maps. Review any new terms, such as forecast, predict, and degrees. Show kids the different types of symbols used to represent the weather, such as a sun and clouds with or without rain, different colors to represent temperature, and the symbol for degrees (°). Have them prepare a mock weather forecast for each day of the coming week (see sample chart). Invite them to present their forecast like a TV weatherperson. Have them take their forecasts home to see if their predictions come true!

3. **Compare weather.** On a world map or a globe, help kids locate where they live. Use the World Meteorological Organization’s Web site at www.worldweather.org/ to find the temperature in your state. Then have each kid pick a city in another state or country (including India), locate it on the map, and use the Web site to find the weather forecast. Make a chart listing the various temperatures. Compare the forecasts. Ask kids, *What is the temperature in the location you chose? How does it compare to where we live? How does it compare to (choose another location)?*

4. **Go on a walk on a cloudy day** and have kids pay attention to what they see and hear. During the walk, ask them to describe the sky and the clouds. When they are back inside, have them draw what they noticed.

**Web Explorations**

Visit one or more of these sites to further explore the themes and topics from the book.

- **pbskidsgo.org/dragonflytv/show/forecasting.html**
  Before satellites, computers, and radar, people used folklore, such as “Cows lie down when it’s going to rain,” to forecast the weather. Have the children watch the video *Forecasting by Mari and Lindsey.*
  In this short video, the girls devise ways to test if the folklore is true. Do your kids know any similar folktales? Have them make up their own funny folklore about predicting the weather. Ask *How would you test it?*

- **pbskidsgo.org/africa/myworld/cannon.html**
  Read the *My World* photo album of kids from the Cannon Kituri School in Wundayi, Kenya. Learn about the kids’ lives as well as the weather in Kenya.

- **pbskidsgo.org/arthur/games/connectworld/connectworld.html**
  **Connect the World.** Play bingo with Buster™. Match the cards that contain information on cultures around the world.

**More Suggested Books**

- *Big Rain Coming* by Katrina Germein
- *Come on, Rain!* by Karen Hesse
- *The Rainstick: A Fable* by Sandra Chisholm Robinson

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**Get Involved**

A great way for kids to learn about other people and countries is to be a pen pal. Weather is a good way to start the conversations. It affects how people live, what they wear, what they eat, and what they do. Use a trusted site you know or visit the Kids’ Space Connection Web site at ks-connection.org/home.cfm to sign up for pen pals from around the world. Your kids can sign up as individuals or as a group. 

(Note: This award-winning site is fully monitored and messages do not post automatically.)
Grandma’s Records
by Eric Velasquez

Introduce Grandma’s Records
Eric recalls music-filled summers with his Grandma in El Barrio (a neighborhood in Spanish Harlem, New York), playing records, dancing, sharing stories of her home in Puerto Rico, and having fun together.

Get kids curious about Grandma’s Records. Bring in old records and show kids how people listened to music before there were cassette tapes or CDs. If possible, play a record for the kids. Or ask kids what they like to do with their grandparents or aunts and uncles.

Discuss Grandma’s Records
After reading Grandma’s Records aloud, ask kids whether they liked the book and why. Help them understand the plot and connect with the characters by asking:

1. Did Eric like the visits with his Grandma? What parts of the story make you think so? Have you ever visited a family member who lives somewhere else? Where? What do you remember about the visit?
2. Where did Grandma and her nephew Sammy, the musician, come from? Is it part of the United States? What languages are spoken there?
3. Why would Grandma put her hand over her heart when her favorite record was playing? Have you ever felt a song was “just for you?” Do you have a favorite song? What is it?
4. Did Eric like Sammy’s concert in New York? Have you ever gone to a music concert? Where? Who was playing? What did you enjoy about the music?

Activities
Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. Make a record cover. Have kids design, draw, and decorate their own record cover. Bring in album or CD covers for ideas. Ask What kind of music will be on your record? Is it a band or individual singer? What will you name the album? Have them write the name on the album cover.
2. Learn Latin dances. Ask a parent, dance teacher, or other volunteer to show kids how to dance salsa, merengue, or other Latin dances. Or invite local dancers to perform for the group and teach a few Latin dance steps.
3. Listen to different types of music. Bring in a variety of music, such as jazz, Brazilian, and Puerto Rican (like bomba and plena) and play them for kids. Discuss which music kids liked best and why. Have them use percussion instruments (their desks, hands, or musical instruments) to create their own beats and rhythms.
4. Explore the sounds. Ask the children in your group who play musical instruments (or music students from a local school) to play for your group. After the performance, have the group describe what each musical instrument sounds like. For instance, they might say an elephant’s roar, a humming sound, or thunder.
5. **Make a music calendar.** Have the kids search local newspapers and entertainment Web sites for free music-related events. Then, have them make a calendar of events to share with their families and friends. They can do a weekly or monthly calendar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of June 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUNDAY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance across the City! at City Hall, 11:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Get Involved**

Have the kids learn a song(s) to **sing at a local senior program or senior center**. They might also want to do a series of “concerts” over a period of time.

### Web Explorations

Listen to or make all kinds of music on the following sites:

- [pbskids.org/arthur/games/crankitup/index.html](http://pbskids.org/arthur/games/crankitup/index.html)
  Add everyday items to the **Crank It Up** wheel and play different music. The keyboard also adds animal sounds, horns, bells, and more.

- [pbskids.org/jazz/bandleader.html](http://pbskids.org/jazz/bandleader.html)
  Kids choose the instruments they want in their band, then listen to them play at **Bandleader!** Change the instruments and listen to the new music.

- [pbskidsgo.org/mayaandmiguel](http://pbskidsgo.org/mayaandmiguel)
  Listen to instruments, beats, and sounds from around the world. Go to “Games,” then **Global Groovin** (Spanish and English Web site).

- [pbskidsgo.org/buster](http://pbskidsgo.org/buster)
  Listen to **Songs** from all the Postcards from Buster™ shows. These songs take kids around the country to learn about different cultures.

### More Suggested Books

- *The Orphan Singer* by Emily Arnold McCully
- *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin* by Lloyd Moss
- *Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra* by Andrea Davis Pinkney
Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World’s Fastest Woman
by Kathleen Krull

Introduce Wilma Unlimited
Wilma Rudolph went from being unable to walk to being the fastest woman runner in the world. Paralyzed with polio when she was a child, Wilma proved that you can overcome obstacles and succeed if you work hard and keep trying.

Get kids curious about Wilma Unlimited. For example, explain that even though people thought Wilma would never be able to walk, she proved them wrong. Ask Have you ever tried something difficult and succeeded? What was it?

Discuss Wilma Unlimited
After reading Wilma Unlimited aloud, ask kids whether or not they liked the book and why. Help them understand the plot and connect with the characters by asking:

1. What made Wilma keep trying to walk even when it was painful? Are there things you can do now that were hard for you at first?
2. Why did kids at school make fun of Wilma’s leg brace? How do you think Wilma felt? How would you feel if someone made fun of you?
3. How do you think Wilma felt when she walked in church for the first time without a brace? What makes you think that?
4. Why did Wilma and her mother mail the brace back to the hospital? How did Wilma’s mother help her daughter succeed?
5. Have you heard of the Olympic Games? What are they? Wilma won the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash, and the 400-meter relay at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. Do you know any other Olympic events?

Optional: Lead a discussion exploring the prejudice Wilma and her family faced. Ask Why do you think that only one doctor in Clarksville would treat Black people? Why did Wilma and her mother have to sit in the back of the bus? Was it fair? How do you think it made them feel?

Activities
Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. Do a track and field activity. Pick one you can do in your space. For instance, teach teams of four kids how to pass a baton in a relay (kids don’t need to run for this), or use masking tape to make a starting line on the floor and measure who can jump the farthest from the line.
2. Learn about competitive running. Invite local high school runners to introduce their sport and answer questions.
3. **Make medals.** Ask the kids to think of something they are proud of and make a medal for themselves or for someone who helped them. Using cardboard, pens, markers, glue, and ribbons, have them design, color, and cut out their medals, then glue ribbons on them. They can take or wear their medals home to show their family.

4. **Do some warm-up exercises.** Invite a school gym teacher or a local physical therapist to teach kids some warm-up exercises for stretching their muscles. Play some music while stretching.

5. **Write a biography.** Have kids pick someone they admire to write a short biography about. They can summarize the person’s life or a particular experience. They can also write about themselves.

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### Get Involved

There are lots of ways kids can help people with disabilities. They can **raise money to support the Special Olympics** (and similar organizations) or **volunteer their time** to help people with a range of disabilities. Check out the ZOOM into Action Web site at `pbskids.org/zoom/activities/action/way07.html` for ideas about volunteering.

### Web Explorations

Visit one or more of these sites to further explore the themes and topics from the book.

- [pbskids.org/readingrainbow/heroes_and_hope/draw_your_hero.html](pbskids.org/readingrainbow/heroes_and_hope/draw_your_hero.html)
  **Heroes and Hope.** Who is your hero? Have kids draw pictures of their heroes, color them, and send them to *Reading Rainbow* to be posted on the site.

- [pbskidsgo.org/buster](pbskidsgo.org/buster)
  Visit Buster’s blog of his trip to Park City, Utah. Watch the video and learn about Ricky, a boy born with a disability who is a mono-skier training for the Paralympics. Go to My Blog, then “Read More about: Places I Have Been.”

- [pbskidsgo.org/itsmylife/emotions/volunteering/print_crossword.html](pbskidsgo.org/itsmylife/emotions/volunteering/print_crossword.html)
  Try the Volunteering Crossword puzzle on the *It’s My Life* Web site.

### More Suggested Books

Read about people who have disabilities:

- *Seeing Things My Way* by Alden R. Carter
- *How It Feels to Live with a Physical Disability* by Jill Kermentz
- *Imagine Me on a Sit-Ski!* by George Moran
- *Our Teacher’s in a Wheelchair* by Mary Ellen Powers

Read other biographies:

- *Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man* by David A. Adler
- *The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins: An Illuminating History of Mr. Waterhouse Hawkins, Artist and Lecturer* by Barbara Kerley
- *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* by William Miller
Introduce Beast Feast
This is a collection of funny poems about real animals, including a whale, a firefly, and a boa constrictor. Each poem is paired with an amusing illustration.

Get kids curious about Beast Feast. Ask if anyone has heard of one of the less common animals, such as the rhea. Have kids guess what a rhea looks like before showing them the picture of the rhea and reading the poem about it.

Discuss Beast Feast
After reading a few poems aloud, ask kids whether they liked the poems you read and why. Help guide a discussion about poetry by asking:

1. Who or what is the poem about? Was it silly or serious? Did the poem rhyme? Why do some poems rhyme while others don’t?
2. Do you remember any words from the poem? Were any of the words made up or were they all real? Why do you think the poet used made-up words?
3. What images did you picture while hearing the poem? What sounds came to mind as you listened (for example, a whisper, a moving train)?
4. Which poem did you like best? Why?
5. Read aloud two different poems more than once. Then compare them. What is similar about these poems? What makes them different? Which do you like better and why?

Optional: To extend your poetry discussion, choose a few poems from another poetry book (see More Suggested Books) and compare them to the animal poems.

Activities
Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. Write a group animal poem. Explain to kids that some poems (called concrete poems) are shaped like the object they describe. You can show kids the Anteater poem from Beast Feast. Choose an animal with a shape that is easy to recognize (such as a snake). Create a group poem by having each child contribute a line (verse) about the animal you’re describing. Write the lines in the shape or outline of the animal.
2. Write an “I am . . .”, “I remember . . .”, or “I like . . .” poem. Have kids write a poem, with each line or verse starting with the words “I am.” Tell kids their poems can rhyme or not rhyme, be short or long, funny or serious. Remind your young poets to sign their poems. Have them illustrate their poems. (If you have an instant camera, display each poem with a photo of the child.)
3. **Make the link between music and poetry.** Bring in a popular song and play it. Then read the lyrics aloud like a poem. Is there repetition, rhyme, a beat, or colorful imagery? Play some music and have the kids write a poem inspired by it. Or, read a rhythmic poem and have kids tap out the beat.

4. **Do a poetry reading or poetry slam.** Invite volunteers to read poems (from books or their own). Use a microphone if you have one. This might be a great time to invite family members to attend the book club. Note: Select poems appropriate to your kids’ reading level. Review any challenging words beforehand.

**Web Explorations**

Visit one or more of these sites to further explore the themes and topics from the book.

- [pbskids.org/cyberchase/games/patterns/patterns.html](http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/games/patterns/patterns.html)
  Introduce kids to the Cyber-Pattern Maker. They can create complex beats and music, including repeating, reversed, and percussion sounds. Can kids write a line of poetry with the same beats or pattern as the music they created on the Cyber-Pattern Maker?

- [pbskids.org/itsmylife/family/pets/](http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/family/pets/)
  This It’s My Life Web site provides many ways for kids to explore the topic of pets, including articles on why we have pets and pet responsibilities, a place to share information about your pet and read about other kids’ pets, a survey on pets, and more.

- [pbskids.org/arthur/games/poetry/](http://pbskids.org/arthur/games/poetry/)
  Explore Fern’s Poetry Club on the Arthur™ Web site and have kids write a poem online, read other kids’ poems, or learn and read different poetry styles, such as narrative, limericks, Haiku, and cinquains.

- [pbskids.org/zoom/sendit/poems-tales](http://pbskids.org/zoom/sendit/poems-tales)
  Kids can write their poems online send them to ZOOM®.

**More Suggested Books**

- *Spin a Soft Black Song* by Nikki Giovanni
- *It’s Raining Laughter* by Nikki Grimes
- *Meet Danitra Brown* by Nikki Grimes
- *Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers: A Collection of Family Poems* by Mary Ann Hoberman
- *My Chinatown: One Year in Poems* by Kam Mak
- *Lunch Money and Other Poems about School* by Carol Diggory Shields
- *Sweet Corn: Poems* by James Stevenson

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**Get Involved**

Many animals in your local community need a good home. Have the kids launch an adopt-a-pet campaign. Invite staff or a volunteer from the local animal shelter to talk with the kids about the shelter and about animals that need homes. Create flyers (with kids’ art) to encourage people to adopt pets. Kids can post the flyers at the library, in their schools and school newsletters, and at other locations throughout the community.
Yesterday I Had the Blues
by Jeron Ashford Frame

Introduce Yesterday I Had the Blues
The young boy in this book describes how yesterday he had the blues, then got the greens, and perhaps tomorrow will have the silvers! His family's moods go from grays and pinks to indigos and yellows—all told in rhythmic prose.

Get kids curious about Yesterday I Had the Blues. Ask a couple of lead-in questions, such as What's your favorite color? How does that color make you feel?

Discuss Yesterday I Had the Blues
After reading Yesterday I Had the Blues aloud, ask kids whether they liked the book and why. Help them connect with the characters by asking:

1. Was the boy happy or sad when he had the blues? When Talia had the indigos (a shade of blue) was she happy or sad?
2. What gave Daddy the grays or Mama the reds? Point to specific illustrations and help kids pick up on useful clues to the story (e.g., What's on Daddy's car? Who's jumping on the bed?).
3. How would you describe your mood today as a color?
4. Do the people in the boy's family remind you of anyone you know? Who and why?

Activities
Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. Bring out the colors. Show kids how to separate different colors from a magic marker. You will need paper towels, water, washable color markers, and eyedroppers. Give each kid a marker, eyedropper, and a paper towel. Have each kid make a spot of color with the marker on the paper towel. Then have the kids use the eyedropper to add water to the center of the color spots, one drop at a time. The ink will begin to separate into different colors
2. Be a cartoonist. Offer kids paper, pencils, and markers, paints, or crayons. Have them draw a comic strip scene(s) from their week. What happened that was funny? Sad? Upsetting? Have them add captions inside speech bubbles. They can also include other family members in their story, just like the boy does in Yesterday I Had the Blues.
3. **Introduce kids to the blues.** Ask kids *Have you heard of music called the blues?* Play some blues music. Ask the kids how the blues makes them feel. Have them creatively express their feelings about the music. They can move or dance to it, paint or draw, or write a poem or song lyrics.

4. **Color the expression.** Play a matching game with faces and colors. Bring in different color swatches (from a paint catalog, for example). Have kids draw different facial expressions (happy, sad, angry, surprised). Give each kid a range of color chips. Have the kids exchange drawings a pre-determined number of times. Each kid should choose and tape on a color chip that he or she feels goes with the expression. After the activity, discuss why certain colors were chosen. What do they represent?

![Emotional faces](image)

**Web Explorations**
Visit one or more of these sites to further explore the themes and topics from the book.

- [pbskidsgo.org/itsmylife/emotions/](http://pbskidsgo.org/itsmylife/emotions/)
  Dedicated to helping kids explore a range of emotional topics, including anger, death, and depression, this site has articles, interactive games, surveys, video clips, interviews with celebrities, and cards kids can send.

- [pbskidsgo.org/arthur/games/artstudio/](http://pbskidsgo.org/arthur/games/artstudio/)
  Kids can paint online at D.W.’s **Art Studio**. Mix colors, change colors, and make wild art.

- [pbskidsgo.org/arthur/games/aboutface/aboutface.html](http://pbskidsgo.org/arthur/games/aboutface/aboutface.html)
  Kids can choose one of Arthur’s friends, hear the friend’s story, then decide how they feel at **About Face**.

- [pbskids.org/jazz/join_the_jazz_band.html](http://pbskids.org/jazz/join_the_jazz_band.html)
  How much do the kids know about jazz? They can find out by matching musical terms (such as melody and rhythm) to their definitions at **Join the Jazz Band**.

**Get Involved**
Pictures and other art can add a colorful, uplifting touch to many settings. Have your kids create a mural to share with the community. It can be drawn on a wall, if you can get permission, or on a large cloth or piece of paper. This traveling mural can be loaned to hospitals, senior homes, schools, community center, and so on.

**More Suggested Books**
Read books about feelings:
- *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry…* by Molly Bang
- *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst

Or books about blues and jazz:
- *Ben’s Trumpet* by Rachel Isadora
- *Blues Journey* by Walter Dean Myers
**Introduce Akiko and the Journey to Toog**

Most of the time, Akiko’s just an ordinary fifth grader—until she takes off to other galaxies, pilots rocket ships, and battles aliens with her gang of extraterrestrials. Their mission this time—save the planet Toog.

Get kids curious about *Akiko and the Journey to Toog*. Ask *Do you know what science fiction is? Have you ever seen Star Trek, Star Wars, or Time Warp Trio? What did you like about the show? Who was your favorite character? Why?*

**Discuss Akiko and the Journey to Toog**

This chapter book is one in a series of Akiko books. There are several ways you can read the book: (1) as the featured book for an entire 7- to 9-week club or (2) as an exciting introduction to the science fiction (sci-fi) genre. See tips for each option below.

**Option 1:** Read 2 or 3 chapters during each book club meeting. (Chapters take an average of 8 minutes to read.) Begin each club meeting by quickly reviewing (or having the kids recount) the story so far. After reading new chapters, use the discussion questions below to talk about what you read. Add your own discussion questions as desired.

**Option 2:** Tell the kids you will read an excerpt from a science fiction story. Read the first few chapters to get kids interested in the genre. Then discuss the chapters, using the questions below. Have kids pick this or another sci-fi book from the list below to read at home. You may want to use some of the more general discussion questions below to explore the books kids read at home during future club meetings.

After reading *Akiko and the Journey to Toog* aloud, help kids understand the plot and connect with the characters by asking:

**Chapters 1–3**

1. Does anyone know what sci-fi is? *(short for science fiction)*
2. Akiko calls herself an average fifth grader. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
3. According to Akiko, people always think she is exaggerating. Do you know someone who makes up incredible stories? What do they say? What do you think is the difference between exaggerating and lying?
4. Akiko’s replacement robot looks like her and must act like her. What would your robot replacement have to do to convince people it is you?

**Chapters 4–6**

1. Akiko and her friends have been attacked by drone mines, crashed on the planet Toog, and taken prisoner. Would you like to go on a space adventure? Where would you go? What would you do? What real-life, exciting adventures have you had?
2. How are the space crew’s adventures similar or different from other sci-fi stories you know?
3. What would you do if you saw an alien? Would you try to run and hide? Would you try to communicate with the alien? What would you say?
Chapters 7–9

1. Aliens in stories often have special powers. Toogolians can do brainmelts. What other powers do aliens have in books, on TV, and in movies?
2. What do you think the DOO-KAAK sound is that Akiko and Gax hear while they are in the open-air prison?
3. The thramblewood tree has tentacles. What other plants or animals do you know that have tentacles? (octopus, squid, jellyfish)

Chapters 10–12

1. Poog came back to help the space adventurers. He is still their friend. What do you think makes a good friend?
2. Sometimes science fiction is based on real science. For instance, there really are robots. What do you know about them? Are there robot replacements? What real-life inventions do drone mines and core eaters remind you of? (guided missiles and oil rigs)
3. There are lots of interesting names in this book. Spuckler has a friend named Fluggly Ragstubble; then there are Mr. Bebba, Poog, and Akiko. Can you make up an unusual name?

Chapters 13–15

1. Why do you think Spuckler and Fluggly Ragstubble are such good friends? How are they alike? How are they different?
2. Ragstubble eats slimy, green, live things. What’s the most unusual thing you ever ate, or saw someone eat? What did it taste like?
3. Poog doesn’t trust Ragstubble because he is a Tri-Yarm. Do you think he is justified in not trusting him? Why? Why not? Would you trust him?

Chapters 16–18

1. After reading chapter 17 ask, Now you know that the Tri-Yarms are the “bad guys,” do you still think the space crew should trust Ragstubble? Why or why not?
2. What does Ragstubble do to prove his loyalty? Do you think it was a difficult decision for him? Why? What would you do in similar circumstances?
3. Everyone is shocked to find out that Poog’s uncle Zeem is not dead. Why do you think Zeem betrayed his own people?

Chapters 19–22

1. What does uncle Zeem’s tongue-leech remind you of from the TV show Star Trek? (Star Trek’s universal language translator—a device that provides instantaneous translation of alien languages.)
2. Now that Akiko has saved the day, she has to go back to her normal life. What do you think it will be like for her to be an ordinary fifth grader again? Why?
3. What do you think will happen next to Akiko?
Activities

Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. **Create a sci-fi story.** Sci-fi often involves space travel, the future, people with special powers (like the ability to read minds or change shapes), and new technology or inventions. Tell kids they have been asked to come up with the plot of a new book, movie, or TV show. Ask them to create a story “pitch.” They should answer the following questions: Where and in what time period does the story take place? What is the setting? Who are the major characters? What is the story about?

2. **Draw a scene for a graphic novel.** Graphic novels are another great way to introduce sci-fi to kids (see More Suggested Books below.) Tell kids they are a graphic novelist (someone who tells stories through pictures). Have them draw a scene to illustrate the storylines they created above, or use these storylines:
   - A squadron of alien spaceships from Triton attacks Earth
   - The alien monster Monchuk changes from alien to human or alien to (what?) to escape detection
   - Superheroes battle the dark forces of Mavern
   - In the year 4527 the planet Earth looks like . . . (kids decide)

   Optional: Have kids check out the alien art gallery at [www.sciencenewsforkids.org/pages/scifizone/artgallery.asp](http://www.sciencenewsforkids.org/pages/scifizone/artgallery.asp) and submit their drawings to scifizone@snkids.com. Or they can mail their drawings to Julie E. Czerneda, Science News for Kids, 1719 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036.

3. **Make a supernatural substance . . . naturally.** Mix well 1 pound of cornstarch with 1 1/2 cups of water in a bowl. (The final mixture may look and feel like a liquid on top and a solid on the bottom.) Spoon the mixture into small plastic bags, enough for each pair of kids, press out the air, and close the bags. Have kids take turns gently poking or touching the material in the bag. Then have them poke it hard. What do they notice? 
   - When touched gently poking or touching the material in the bag. Then have them poke it hard. What do they notice? 
   - When poked hard, it acts like a solid. This is because it is an amorphous substance. Under pressure the particles in the cornstarch come together and act like a solid. When you release the pressure, the particles move apart, which causes the material to lose its structure and flow like a liquid.

   Note: Although much messier, the results are even more dramatic if kids squeeze the substance (without the bag) in their hands, then open their hands. Ask 'Did the different ways the substance reacted surprise you? Does it seem possible that a substance can be soft and hard?' Ask them to name their “supernatural” substance. Tell the kids what the substance is made of. Dispose of the cornstarch mixture in the trash.

4. **Create an alien language.** In pairs, ask kids to create the rudiments of an alien language. They might create a new alphabet, specific words, or an adaptation of English (for example, Pig Latin). Have them make up a phrase or sentence, then share the code and their message with another group. Did the groups figure out each other’s messages? What did they say?

5. **Meet the aliens.** Have kids role play the first encounter between humans and aliens.

6. **Program your robot.** Have kids draw a robot and write a description of what it would do. If you want to extend the activity, kids can program a robot online to pick up hazardous waste at [tryscience.com/experiments/experiments_robot_online.html](http://tryscience.com/experiments/experiments_robot_online.html)
Get Involved

Many kids love to hear stories about aliens, spaceships, and space adventures. **Take your role play of the first encounter between humans and aliens on the road.** Kids can write a short skit, practice it, create sets and costumes, and perform it for local schools and afterschool programs. Or, have them **read an age-appropriate sci-fi story** to younger kids.

Web Explorations

Visit one or more of these sites to further explore the themes and topics from the book.

- [pbskidsgo.org/cyberchase/games/functions/functions.html](http://pbskidsgo.org/cyberchase/games/functions/functions.html)
  
  *Stop that Creature!* Kids use math to stop the machine that is making clones to destroy Poddleville.

- [pbskidsgo.org/arthur/games/alien/](http://pbskidsgo.org/arthur/games/alien/)
  
  What do aliens look like? Kids can decide by using parts to build one at **Alien: Assembly Required.**

- [pbskidsgo.org/cgi-registry/zoom/ubbidubbi.cgi](http://pbskidsgo.org/cgi-registry/zoom/ubbidubbi.cgi)
  
  Kids decode **Ubbi Dubbi,** the secret language of ZOOM®.

- [pbskidsgo.org/dragonflytv/knowhow/knowhow_alien_clue.html](http://pbskidsgo.org/dragonflytv/knowhow/knowhow_alien_clue.html)
  
  **How can you tell if aliens are trying to contact Earth?** Solve this science mystery by answering a riddle, then hear more from an expert.

More Suggested Books

Read science fiction:

- *Akiko* (series) by Mark Crilley
- *Moondogs* by Daniel Kirk
- *Captain Underpants* (series) by Dav Pilkey
- *Ned Feldman, Space Pirate* by Daniel Pinkwater
- *Time Warp Trio* (series) by Jon Scieszka
- *Stinker from Space* by Pamela F. Service
- *Aliens for Dinner* (series includes *Aliens for Breakfast* and *Aliens for Lunch*)
  
  by Stephanie Spinner
- *Moog-Moog, Space Barber* by Mark Teague

Read graphic novels:

- *Akiko* (series) by Mark Crilley
- *Rose* by Jeff Smith and Charles Vess

Read whether it’s science or sci-fi:

- *Megapowers: Can Science Fact Defeat Science Fiction?* by Jack Weyland
- *Muse* (magazine) published by Carus Publishing Co., Cricket Magazine Group
Introduce *Come Back, Salmon*

A group of dedicated students from the Jackson Elementary School in Everett, Washington, clean and restock a local stream to bring back the salmon that once spawned there.

Get kids curious about *Come Back, Salmon*. If you have an aquarium, use it to explore what fish need to survive (*clean water, air [oxygen], food*). Or, bring in a fish bowl with small fish, like goldfish. Teach the children to care for the fish.

Discuss *Come Back, Salmon*

*Come Back, Salmon* is a fascinating and remarkable story that will captivate kids. It takes approximately 10 minutes to read two chapters, so the book can be read in three book club meetings. However, you may find that your kids are eager to hear more. If so, read the book in two club meetings with about 15–20 minutes of reading each. During the course of reading *Come Back, Salmon*, kids will have time to learn and practice taking care of fish (see above) and to learn about nature in their community. Ask *Are there areas near us that need cleaning or some other type of care? Were those areas once different? What happened?*

After reading *Come Back, Salmon* aloud, help kids understand the plot and connect with the characters by asking:

1. Why did the kids have a hard time believing Mr. King when he told them Pigeon Creek was once a clear, clean stream? Look at the picture of the rubbish that was in the stream. What do you see?
2. Why did some local people think the kids would not be able to bring back the salmon? Have you ever done something that people did not think you could do? What was it?
3. Pigeon Creek changed dramatically in the time it took Mr. King to grow from boyhood to adulthood. Can you think of some things that have changed from when your parents were young? For instance, how did your parents, grandparents, or older friends listen to music, write papers, or visit far away places? How were their clothes different from those worn today? Do they remember stores, parks, or streets that are no longer there?
4. Explore some of the vocabulary from the story, such as *spawn*, *silt*, *watershed*, *environment*, *pollution*. (*spawn*—fish producing young by laying eggs; *silt*—deposits of sand, tiny rocks, and other sediments; *watershed*—areas that drain into a body of water, such as a river)

Chapters 3 & 4

1. Look at the pictures of the salmon (Coho) eggs as they develop. Can you see the eyes? What changes in each of the pictures? When do the developing salmon start to look like fish?
2. How do you think the kids felt when they released the fish? (Elicit a range of responses—sad, hopeful, happy). Why do you think they felt that way?
3. Now that the kids have put the small fry in Pigeon Creek, do you think the fry will grow, swim to the ocean, and come back to Pigeon Creek? Why?
Chapters 5 & 6

1. Salmon’s sense of smell is so good they can recognize the stream where they were spawned. How good is your sense of smell? What smells can you recognize with your eyes closed?

2. For two years, the students at Jackson Elementary raised salmon from eggs to fry without knowing if Operation Pigeon Creek would be successful. The kids had to work hard to take care of the fish and keep the creek clean. What projects have you worked on for a long time? What kept you interested?

3. Have you ever learned something new, worked with a group on a project, or overcome a challenge? How did you feel about it?

Activities

Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. Make fish art. Have kids make fish art similar to the one the kids from Jackson Elementary made in the book. Assemble the fish art into a mobile.

2. Learn about animals in your area. When people clear land to build malls, parking lots, houses, apartment buildings, and roads, animal habitats are destroyed. Have kids find out (at their local library or online) what animals are native to your area. Ask if the kids still see these animals. Are any of them on the endangered species list? Choose one or more animals for each kid to draw a picture of and gather some basic facts about. The facts could include what type of terrain the animal lives in (mountains, forest, plains), where it lives (a cave, hole in the ground, nest in trees), what it eats, and so on.

3. Create a conservation flyer. Have kids create a flyer or poster (with catchy slogans) to inform the community about conservation topics in their neighborhood.

Get Involved

Build a Habitat. The kids at Jackson Elementary cleaned the creek and restocked it with salmon. They restored a habitat. Your kids can also turn a space in your community into a habitat for wildlife. Contact local wildlife organizations for information and support. You can also use the following Web sites to start your project:

- nwf.org/schoolyardhabitats
  National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitats
  Provides information and resources to help you set up a habitat.

- wildflower.org?nd=grd_articles
  Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
  Provides articles to help you create a butterfly garden, plant wildflower seed, and select plants for your habitat.

- www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard/WildHab.html
  Natural Resources Conservation Service
  Provides tips for creating a backyard habitat.
Web Explorations
Visit one or more of these sites to further explore the themes and topics from the book.

pbskids.org/ekoworld/  
**EekoWorld** helps kids learn how to make a difference with the environment. Kids can create their own unique land-, air- or water-dwelling EekoCreature and help the creature overcome environmental issues. They can also explore their own EekoHouse, a simulation of their real home life that shows how decisions they make affect the environment. The site includes videos on a range of environmental topics, such as water, plants and animals, garbage and recycling, desert, grasslands, and tundra.

pbskids.org/backyardjungle/  
“What’s out there?” **Backyard Jungle** challenges kids to investigate nature in their communities. Kids create their own Backyard homepages to load photos, drawings, and descriptions of their “discoveries.” They take on challenges, such as finding 10 animals in their community, drawing or taking pictures of them, and posting their discoveries in their Backyard. Kids can also submit challenges, vote on other kids’ discoveries, view other kids’ home pages, and send messages to each other.

pbskids.org/dragonflytv/show/salmonrun.html  
Watch the video **Salmon Run by Andy, Mason, and Marshall.** The boys devise a way to test the health of salmon in two rivers, looking at the number of salmon, salmon size, and river health.

pbskids.org/dragonflytv/games/game_balance.html  
Feed the Weebies, small creatures that live on plants, and help them multiply at **Weebit World.**

More Suggested Books

*Aani and the Tree Huggers* by Jeannine Atkins  
*City Green* by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan  
*The Streets Are Free/La calle es libre* by Kurusa  
*She’s Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head!* by Kathryn Lasky
Aesop’s Fables
by Jerry Pinkney

Introduce Aesop’s Fables
Each fable in this classic collection, from the boy who cried wolf to the tortoise and the hare, ends with a moral that teaches a universal value. Pinkney’s spectacular and amusing illustrations bring the witty, fast-paced tales to life.

Get kids curious about Aesop’s Fables. Show them the art of the Lion and Mouse, a tale some children may be familiar with. Ask them, What do you think is going on?

Discuss Aesop’s Fables
After reading a few of the Aesop’s Fables aloud, ask kids which ones they liked and why. Help them understand the moral at the end of each tale by asking:

1. What happens in the story? Who or what is the story about? What does the moral mean? Do you think you could live by the moral? In what situations in your life would it apply?
2. Before I finish reading the story, can you guess what the moral will be? Why do you think that?
3. What lessons do you think the morals teach? Why do you think Aesop wrote stories with morals at the end? Why do you think he used animals in many of his tales?
4. The animals in the story often have human characteristics. Look at the pictures. Why do you think the animals are dressed in human clothing? What other human characteristics do you see? Why do you think the author and illustrator did this?
5. Read aloud two stories more than once, then compare them. What is similar about them? What is different? Which story did you like best? Why?

Optional: To extend your fables discussion, choose a myth or folktale to read aloud (see More Suggested Books below). Compare them to fables. How are they the same? How are they different?

Activities
Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. Make up a fable. Pass around a talking stick (any simple item, such as a ball or ruler, that makes it the turn of the person holding it to talk). When kids get the stick, they add a line (or two) to the fable that is being created. The last kid can tell the moral, or the group can create one together.
2. Make a story cloth. Give kids small pieces of cloth, paints, and markers. Have them create a story cloth with symbols and pictures to tell a story. (Kids’ stories can be about their lives or a fable, myth, or folktale.)
3. Create a “Porquoi” tale. Have kids write a story about how something came to be. For instance, how the moon got in the sky, how freckles came to be, why dogs have tails.
4. Explore myths, legends, and folktales. Have groups of kids read myths, legends, and folktales from different cultures. (There are many wonderful collections of these tales. See More Suggested Books below or select your own favorites.) Have them tell their story to the group through a role play.
Get Involved

Have kids interview an older family member, friend, or neighbor about their favorite stories to **create a library of oral stories**. (Kids can write or record the story.) They should include some background on the story: what culture it comes from, who told the story (name and/or relationship to the child), the storyteller’s age, how they heard the story and when, and so on. Share the stories with the group and with children at a local school or childcare program. (If the kids are ambitious, they can make the story into a dramatic reading by adding simple costumes and different voices, or they may choose a story to make into a skit or play.) Then, create a book of the stories or add them to your listening library so others in the community can enjoy them.

Optional: Kids can create a kind of “time capsule” to go with their stories. Have them collect items to go with one or more stories. These items can be displayed with the book.

Web Explorations

Visit one or more of these sites to further explore the themes and topics from the book.

- [pbskids.org/africa/tale/](http://pbskids.org/africa/tale/)
  Listen to a Swahili folktale and help Prince Sadaka pass the tests in **The Three Tests: A Swahili Tale of Choices**.

- [pbs.org/wonders/Kids/kids.htm](http://pbs.org/wonders/Kids/kids.htm)
  Learn about the legend of Anasi, an African spider whose story has been told for many centuries. Follow him on the **Quest for the Magic Calabash** and **Create Your Own Andinkra Cloth**, a piece of fabric decorated to tell a story.

- [pbskidsgo.org/historydetectives/games/capsule_index.html](http://pbskidsgo.org/historydetectives/games/capsule_index.html)
  Dig up a time capsule and explore its contents, then use your knowledge and some clues to **Guess the Year**.

More Suggested Books

- *Misoso: Once Upon a Time Tales from Africa* by Verna Aardema
- *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales* by Virginia Hamilton
- *Uncle Remus: The Complete Tales* by Julius Lester
- *The Illustrated Book of Myths: Tales, and Legends of the World* retold by Neil Philip
- *American Tall Tales* by Mary Pope Osborne
- *Can You Guess My Name? Traditional Tales Around the World* by Judy Sierra
- *Silly & Sillier: Read-Aloud Tales from Around the World* by Judy Sierra
Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Your child is participating in the PBS KIDS GO! Read Aloud Book Club. At each meeting, a high-quality children’s book will be read aloud and discussed, followed by hands-on activities or Web-based explorations.

Below is a list of the featured books your child will read over the next few months. Additional theme-related books are suggested. We hope you will get these books from your local library or bookstore and read with your child at home.

**Featured Book**  
**George Washington’s Teeth**  
by Deborah Chandra & Madeleine Comora  
**Themes: Teeth, Presidents**  
All his life, George Washington had problems with his teeth. This funny story is about what really happened to our first president and his teeth.

**Recommended Books**  
* A Big Cheese for the White House: The True Tale of a Tremendous Cheddar* by Candace Fleming  
* So You Want to Be President?* by Judith St. George  
* Arthur’s Tooth* by Marc Brown

**Featured Book**  
**Monsoon**  
by Uma Krishnaswami  
**Themes: Rain, Clouds, India, the World**  
The young girl in this story lives in India and is eager for the monsoon rains to start. “What if they never come, those monsoon rains?” she wonders. Her Mummy, Papa, Nani, and brother work and play, watch, and wait for the rains.

**Recommended Books**  
* Big Rain Coming* by Katrina Germein  
* Come on, Rain!* by Karen Hesse  
* The Rainstick: A Fable* by Sandra Chisholm Robinson

**Featured Book**  
**Grandma’s Records**  
by Eric Velasquez  
**Themes: Latin Culture, Other Music**  
Eric recalls music-filled summers with his Grandma in Spanish Harlem, New York, playing records, dancing, sharing stories of her home in Puerto Rico, and having fun together.

**Recommended Books**  
* The Orphan Singer* by Emily Arnold McCully  
* Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin* by Lloyd Moss  
* Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra* by Andrea Davis Pinkney

**Featured Book**  
**Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World’s Fastest Woman**  
by Kathleen Krull  
**Themes: Disabilities, Personal Achievement**  
Wilma Rudolph went from being unable to walk to being the fastest woman runner in the world. Paralyzed with polio when she was a child, Wilma proves that you can succeed if you work hard and keep trying.

**Recommended Books**  
* Seeing Things My Way* by Alden R. Carter  
* Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* by William Miller  
* Imagine Me on a Sit-Ski* by George Moran
**Featured Book**

**Beast Feast**

by Douglas Florian

**Themes: Poems/Poetry**

This is a collection of animal poems about real animals, including a whale, a firefly, and a boa constrictor. Each poem is paired with an amusing illustration.

**Recommended Books**

It's Raining Laughter by Nikki Grimes

Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers: A Collection of Family Poems by Mary Ann Hoberman

My Chinatown: One Year in Poems by Kam Mak

Sweet Corn: Poems by James Stevenson

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**Featured Book**

**Yesterday I Had the Blues**

by Jeron Ashford Frame

**Themes: Feelings, Colors, Blues Music**

The young boy in this book describes how yesterday he had the blues, then got the greens, and perhaps tomorrow will have the silvers! His family's moods go from grays and pinks, to indigos and yellows—all told in rhythmic prose.

**Recommended Books**

When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry... by Molly Bang

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst

Ben’s Trumpet by Rachel Isadora

Blues Journey by Walter Dean Myers

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**Featured Book**

**Akiko and the Journey to Toog**

by Mark Crilley

**Theme: Science Fiction (sci-fi)**

Most of the time, Akiko is an ordinary fifth grader—until she takes off to other galaxies, pilots rocket ships, and battles aliens with her gang of extraterrestrials. Their mission this time is to save the planet Toog.

**Recommended Books**

Read science fiction:

Akiko (series) by Mark Crilley

Ned Feldman, Space Pirate by Daniel Pinkwater

Time Warp Trio (series) by Jon Scieszka

Aliens for Dinner (series) by Stephanie Spinner

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**Featured Book**

**Come Back, Salmon**

by Molly Cone

**Themes: Volunteerism, the environment, fish, aquatic science**

A group of dedicated students from the Jackson Elementary School in Everett, Washington, clean and restock a local stream to bring back the salmon that once spawned there.

**Recommended Books**

Aani and the Tree Huggers by Jeannine Atkins

City Green by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan

The Streets Are Free/La calle es libre by Kurusa

She’s Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head! by Kathryn Lasky

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**Featured Book**

**Aesop’s Fables**

by Jerry Pinkney

**Themes: Fables, morals, myths, tales, folklore, stories, cultures**

Each fable in this classic collection, from the boy who cried wolf to the tortoise and the hare, ends with a moral that teaches a universal value. Pinkney's spectacular and amusing illustrations bring the witty, fast-pace tales to life.

**Recommended Books**

Misoso: Once Upon a Time Tales from Africa by Verna Aardema

The Illustrated Book of Myths: Tales and Legends of the World retold by Neil Philip

American Tall Tales by Mary Pope Osborne

Silly & Sillier: Read-Aloud Tales from Around the World by Judy Sierra
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