

Suggested Books for Book Clubs

Grades 4-6

When selecting books for youth to read, there is a lot to consider. For example:

- Is the story engaging – a page turner that will make youth want to know what happens next?
- Is the reading level appropriate? (See Selecting Appropriate Books under Book Clubs During Power Hour in the Resources tab.)
- Do you love it? Does it spark your curiosity? Your enthusiasm will help inspire youth to enjoy it too.

The book should be a window into a new world or a mirror into youths' own. Does the story expose youth to new ideas, places, people or history that they've never seen before? That window into a new world is an important way to help youth learn, expand their horizons and develop empathy. Will youth see themselves and their community in the book? Books should allow us to see ourselves more clearly, as a mirror where we can examine ourselves and grow through the experiences of another person.

Use curated online lists to help you pick books around a theme or type. Start with the list below or search online for a list of books by topic. There is probably something already created!

Diversity and Equity

- resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/diverse-childrens-books
- ala.org/alsc/publications-resources/book-lists/2020Dia
- ala.org/alsc/publications-resources/book-lists/socialjustice

Inclusion

- readingmiddlegrade.com/middle-grade-books-about-disability-physical-diabilities
- imaginationsoup.net/learning-differences-childrens-books

Girl Empowerment

amightygirl.com/book-club-reading-list

Reluctant Readers/Boys

readingmiddlegrade.com/middle-grade-books-for-boys

Graphic Novels

ala.org/aboutala/offices/resources/its_elementary_graphic_novels

Always keep youth voice in mind. Find the readers in your Club and ask for suggestions on books they loved. Get to know your local librarian and ask what's popular with youth in your community. Ask teachers for books that might compliment, but not duplicate, what they are reading in class.

The list below includes books that have been suggested by Club staff to be useful with their members. Asterisks (*) indicate books from Summer Brain Gain Read units, and guidance is available at BGCA.net/SummerBrainGain.

Transitional Readers	Author	Summary and Links
Dragons in a Bag	Zetta Elliott	Series focused on a primarily African American family who are struggling to keep things together after the father passes away. Humor, fantasy and an exciting adventure keep youth engaged.
Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School and Other Scary Things	Lenore Look	
Established Readers		
The Crossover	Kwame Alexander	
Stanley Will Probably Be Fine	Sally J. Pla	Stanley invents his own Superhero to help him cope with being the younger brother and other anxiety-producing situations.
The Wild Robot*	Peter Brown	The novel details one year of Roz’s life as a robot on an island inhabited by a set of curious and very social animals. Roz adopts Brightbill, an abandoned duck who needs love and care.
Front Desk*	Kelly Yang	A young girl supports her family hotel business while getting to know the long-term residents and learning to advocate for them.

Advancing, Engaged Readers	Author	Summary and Links
The Westing Game*	Ellen Raskin	A mystery in which 16 heirs to Sam Westing’s fortune compete to win a \$200 million inheritance. They must work in pairs and use the clues provided in his will to solve the mystery of his murder. The pair that solves the mystery will inherit his fortune and control of his company.
The Parker Inheritance*	Varian Johnson	Candice, a 12-year-old girl, finds a mysterious letter in her grandmother’s attic. With her new friend Brandon, she finds clues and solves puzzles to unlock stories from the town’s past and access an enormous fortune.
New Kid	Jerry Craft	Graphic novel that explores how race and class issues impact friendships at school.
Surviving the Applewhites*	Stephanie S. Tolan	Jake Semple’s parents are incarcerated, and he has gotten into so much trouble at school that he is sent to live with the Applewhites, a family of creative artists. They have an unusual approach to education that allows their children to explore their own interests and design their own education. Jake is skeptical but joins in and gradually finds out who he really is and which talents, passions and interests drive him.