

Summer Reading Program 2026



"Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did."

Copyright ©2026 Kolbe Academy Press

Image Credits: iStock images used with standard license; Canva.com images used under Canva Professional License; CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons.

All rights reserved. This publication, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced in any form, or by any means, including electronic, photographic, or mechanical, or by any sound recording system, or by any device for storage and retrieval of information, without the written permission of the publisher. Requests for permission to make copies of any part of the work should be addressed to:

1600 F Street, Napa, CA 94559-1034
Tel: (707) 255-6499 Fax: (707) 255-1581
www.kolbe.org

Kolbe Academy Press and the Kolbe Academy Press logo are trademarks of Kolbe Academy, registered in the United States of America and/or other jurisdictions.

Printed in the United States of America



CLASSICAL LITERATURE

A classical education forms children to think for themselves, to be truly free. Classically educated children know the truth, delight in the truth, and love the truth. Kolbe chooses the books we carry carefully. In our literature offerings, there are important themes that are overarching, such as a particular virtue that is emphasized in the story. When your children read in the summer, they can rest in reading classic tales, which immerse them in great stories that provide them with a vicarious experience. The goal is to lead the student to wisdom, ever so gently, through an experience, lived in a real way.

The stories we recommend are good and many have withstood the test of time. As children read more, they will help the student connect the past to the present and understand that they are not alone in this world. The struggles of the past are the same as today; the solutions are fundamentally the same as well.

Literature has many styles and students benefit from exposure to a wide variety of styles. Biography, fiction, fantasy, epics, and poetry are all important for the student to become a well-rounded thinker with a vast vocabulary.

It's never too late to start reading great books and making new friends. Encourage your children to give it a try!



Maggie Hayden

Curriculum Director



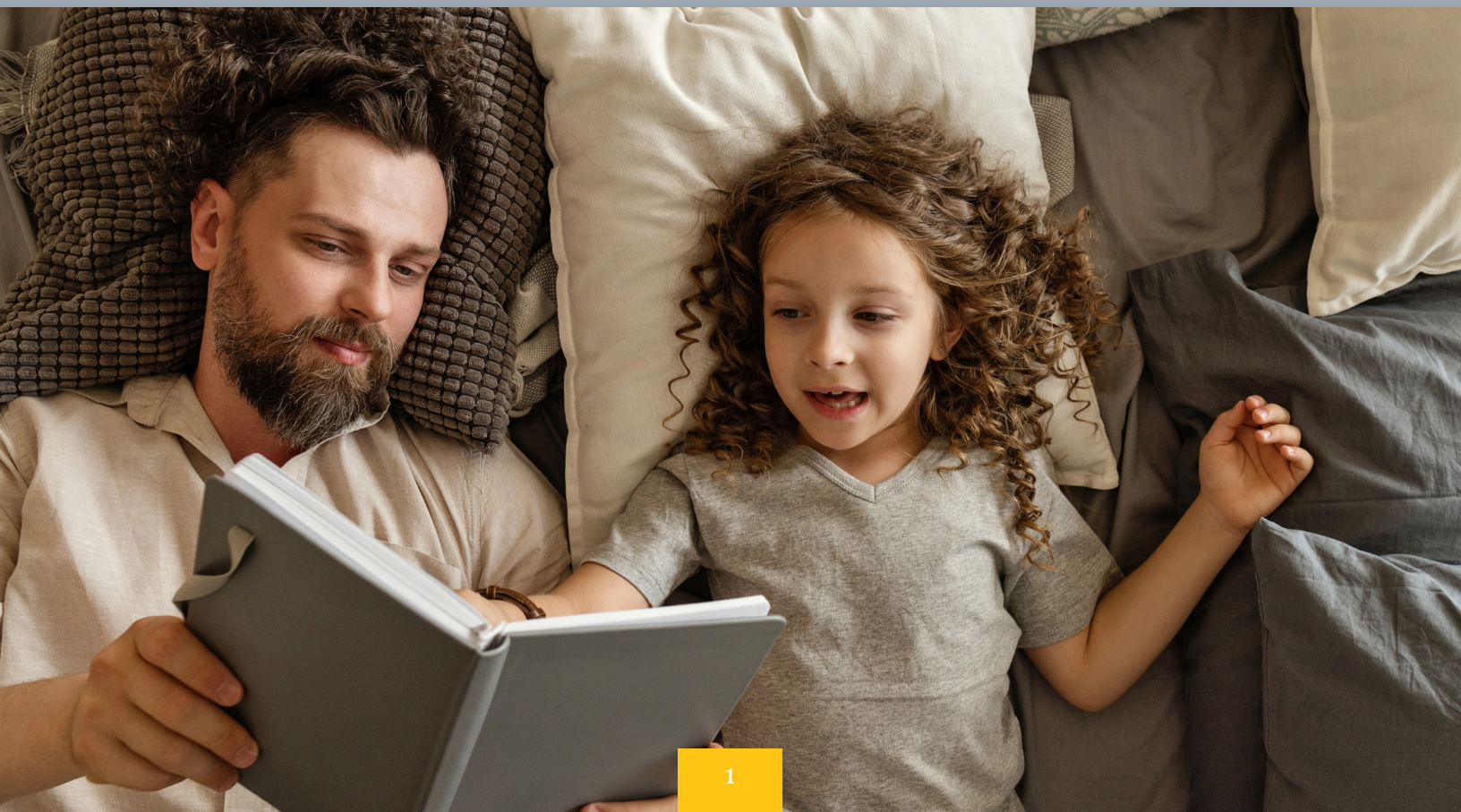
table of contents

Kindergarten – Grade 2.....	1
Grades 3 – 5.....	7
Poetry	12
Grades 6 – 8.....	14
Grades 9 – 12	20

Storytime

Kindergarten to Second Grade

Reading to your little ones is so important! Stories are a key part of establishing a routine. A story at the end of the day can help your child unwind and relax. Reading with your child can be a bonding experience as well. Watching you read, your child will learn how they should emotionally respond to certain situations. When you find something sad, they do. When you laugh, they laugh. Finally, hearing the stories will help your child's vocabulary explode! It's an easy way to set your child up for later academic success.



STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS

[A Child's Garden of Verses](#)

A classic book of poetry for children, filled with delightful and imaginative poems that can be enjoyed by all ages. Used in Kolbe's Primary Literature.

RL: 3.0 | Poetry

BROWN, MARGARET WISE

[A Home in the Barn](#)

From a beloved children's book author and a Caldecott-winning illustrator comes the story of farm animals finding shelter from the weather in a warm barn.

Book | Picture & Lapbook

AESOP

[Aesop's Fables](#)

In these classic tales, Aesop, a former Greek slave, depicts sly foxes, steady tortoises, and foolish humans to share wisdom and moral lessons. These extraordinary stories have contributed hundreds of metaphors and ideas to Western culture, still just as relevant and profound as when they were first told more than two thousand years ago.

RL: 4.9 | Fables | Moral Tale/Fables | Ancient Greece

ANDERSEN, HANS CHRISTIAN

[An Illustrated Treasury of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales](#)

With beautiful illustrations and stories of wonder and magic, this collection of well-known fairy tales includes *Thumbelina*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *The Princess and the Pea*, and more!

Collection | Picture & Lapbook/Fairy Tales

DAUGHERTY, JAMES

[Andy and the Lion](#)

In this retelling of a classic folktale, Andy befriends a lion on his walk to school one day.

Book | Picture & Lapbook/Folk Tale

EASTMAN, P. D.

[Are You My Mother?](#)

A baby bird goes in search of his mother in this classic early reader.

RL: 1.6 | Book | Picture & Lapbook/Reader

POTTER, BEATRIX

[Beatrix Potter: The Complete Tales](#)

The complete collection of all twenty-three of Beatrix Potter's tales with original illustrations, plus four previously-unpublished works.

RL: 4.2 | Collection | Storybook

BROWN, MARGARET WISE

[The Big Red Barn](#)

A classic story with rhythmic text and comforting pictures about a day in the life of farm animals.

RL: 2.4 | Book | Picture & Lapbook

MCCLOSKEY, ROBERT

[Blueberries for Sal](#)

As Sal and her mother, along with Little Bear and his mother, gather blueberries on Blueberry Hill, they inadvertently get mixed up with each other, following the wrong mother. The mix-up leads to humorous and heartwarming moments as the two families try to find each other.

RL: 4.1 | Book | Picture & Lapbook | 1900s, America: ME

WARREN, DAVID MICHAEL

[Brilliant! 25 Catholic Scientists, Mathematicians, and Supersmart People](#)

Faith and science are complementary, not contradictory, as is proven in this book, filled with twenty-five great Catholic thinkers and their extraordinary accomplishments.

Book | Picture & Lapbook/Religious/Biography | Medieval Era-Modern History



THE POWER OF A STORY:

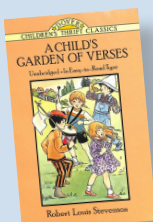
C.S. Lewis on Beatrix Potter

Then came the Beatrix Potter books, and here at last beauty. It will be clear that at this time—at the age of six, seven, and eight—I was living almost entirely in my imagination; or at least that the imaginative experience of those years now seems to me more important than anything else . . . in mapping and chronicling Animal-Land I was training myself to be a novelist.

Note well, a novelist; not a poet. My invented world was full (for me) of interest, subtle humor, and character; but there was no poetry, even no romance, in it. It was almost astonishingly prosaic. Thus, if we use the word imagination in a third sense, and the highest sense of all, this invented world was not imaginative. But certain other experiences were, and I will now try to record them.

The second glimpse came through Squirrel Nutkin; through it only though I loved all the Beatrix Potter books. But the rest of them were merely entertaining; it administered the shock, it was a trouble. It troubled me with what I can only describe as the Idea of Autumn. It sounds fantastic to say that one can be enamored of a season, but that is something like what happened; and, as before, the experience was one of intense desire.

And one went back to the book, not to gratify the desire (that was impossible—how can one possess Autumn?) but to reawaken it. And in this experience also there was the same surprise and the same sense of incalculable importance. It was something quite different from ordinary life and even from ordinary pleasure; something, as they would now say, “in another dimension.”



WHITE, E. B.

Charlotte's Web

Wilbur is a lonely runt piglet who learns he is being raised to become Christmas dinner. But when he befriends a spider named Charlotte, she spins compliments about Wilbur into her web, convincing the humans that Wilbur is a spectacle to be seen. People come to see him and the web from all over, giving Wilbur hope that he may be worth saving after all.

RL: 4.4 | Book | Animal Fiction/Read Aloud | 1940s, Rural America

WILDER, LAURA INGALLS

Farmer Boy

While Laura Ingalls grows up on a prairie, her future husband Almanzo Wilder grows up on a big farm in upstate New York. As he plants, harvests, chops wood, and cuts ice on the farm, he also enjoys peddler visits and the fair.

Series | Historical Fiction | 1800s, New York

FERRIS, HELEN, ED.

Favorite Poems: Old and New

With more than seven hundred classic and modern poems from Tolkien, Dickinson, Shakespeare, and Hughes, among others, this collection contains poems about all things sure to please children—nature, animals, holidays, playtime, family, and nonsense.

RL: 4.0 | Poetry

EASTMAN, P. D.

Go, Dog. Go!

With only seventy-five words and edited by Dr. Seuss, this charming story about dogs going by bike, roller skates, and cars to a party is the perfect early reader.

RL: 1.2 | Book | Picture & Lapbook/Reader

BROWN, MARGARET WISE

Goodnight Moon

A calming bedtime book beloved for generations featuring a small bunny saying goodnight to all the objects in his room as the sun sets and the moon rises outside the window.

RL: 1.8 | Book | Picture & Lapbook

WINKLER, OFM CONV., REV. JUDE

Great Men of the New Testament

A perfect introduction for kids to the greatest figures of the New Testament.

Book | Picture & Lapbook/Religious/Biography

WINKLER, OFM CONV., REV. JUDE

Great Men of the Old Testament

A perfect introduction for kids to the greatest figures of the Old Testament.

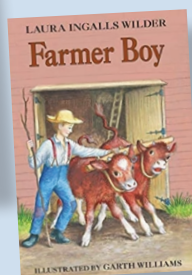
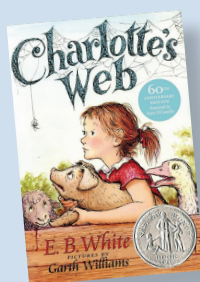
Book | Picture & Lapbook/Religious/Biography

WINKLER, OFM CONV., REV. JUDE

Great Women of the Bible

A perfect introduction for kids to the greatest women of the Bible.

Book | Picture & Lapbook/Religious/Biography



DR. SEUSS

Green Eggs and Ham

When the narrator insists he doesn't like green eggs and ham despite Sam-I-Am's persistent offers, Sam-I-Am's hypothetical situations about where he might like them get wilder and wilder. Due to his persistence, the narrator finally gives in and tries the green eggs and ham, discovering something surprising when he does.

RL: 1.5 | Book | Picture & Lapbook/Reader | Futuristic

CARLE, ERIC

Have You Seen My Cat?

When a little boy's cat goes missing, he searches far and wide to find it, coming across lions and tigers and bobcats. It isn't until he reaches the end that he finds his cat and discovers why it went missing in the first place.

RL: 2.0 Book | Picture & Lapbook

BROWN, MARGARET WISE

Home for a Bunny

A little bunny searches for a home of his own one spring in this lovable tale from the children's book author Margaret Wise Brown.

RL: 1.8 | Book | Picture & Lapbook

Family Read Aloud Corner

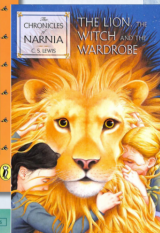
These are books that might be a bit challenging for young children to read but they can understand them. Older children love them too!

Winnie-the-Pooh by A.A. Milne

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

The Children's Homer by Padraic Colum

My Side of the Mountain by Elizabeth Yates



DR. SEUSS

[Hop on Pop](#)

A perfect rhyming book for emerging readers or for a read-aloud, *Hop on Pop* is funny and delightful, in true Dr. Seuss fashion

RL: 1.5 | Book | Picture & Lapbook/Reader

BERENSTAIN, STAN AND JAN

[Inside, Outside, Upside Down](#)

Brother Bear explores different spatial ideas as he climbs into a box, gets moved outside, and is turned upside down.

RL: 3.5 | Book | Picture & Lapbook/Reader

BELLEVANCE, SUSAN JOY

[King of the Shattered Glass](#)

A king who fills his home with beautiful glass pieces requires his servants to bring any broken glass pieces to him. While everyone hides their broken pieces to avoid getting in trouble, one housemaid owns up to her mistakes time and time again, despite everyone's warnings. What she finds in return is a gift more merciful than she has ever dreamed.

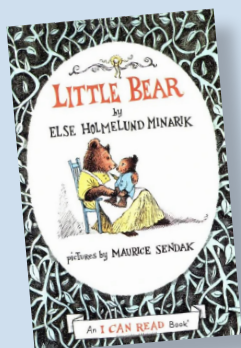
RL: 0.8-3.7 | Book | Picture & Lapbook/Religious

MINARIK, ELSE HOLMELUND

[Little Bear](#)

Little Bear and his friends explore the world in these playful stories with gentle lessons perfect for early readers.

RL: 2.4 | Picture & Lapbook/Reader



MCCLOSKEY, ROBERT

[Make Way for Ducklings](#)

When Mr. and Mrs. Mallard hatch eight new ducklings, they move to a new home with the help of others.

RL: 4.1 | Book | Picture & Lapbook | 1940s, Boston

BURTON, VIRGINIA LEE

[Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel](#)

A charming tale about loyalty and never giving up. Mike Mulligan sets out to prove he and his trusty steam shovel can complete a seemingly impossible job.

RL: 4.4 | Book | Picture & Lapbook | 1939, Urban America

MCCLOSKEY, ROBERT

[One Morning in Maine](#)

Sal is excited for her special trip to Buck Harbor with her dad and even more excited to discover her loose tooth. She can't wait to put it under her pillow when she returns home. But when that loose tooth becomes a lost tooth, Sal must learn to overcome her disappointment and discover the unexpected joy in ordinary moments.

RL: 4.4 | Book | Picture & Lapbook/Storybook | 1950s, America, ME

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

[Patron Saint of First Communicants: The Story of Blessed Imelda Lambertini](#)

When Imelda turned five years old, she saw the pile of presents and asked for one more: to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion. When her parents couldn't grant her this request, she went to Our Lord Himself, earning her the title of the Patroness of First Communicants.

Book | Religious/Biography

PROKOFIEV, SERGEI

[Peter and the Wolf](#)

A musical fairy tale about a boy who outwits the wolf threatening his home.

Book | Picture & Lapbook

POTTER, BEATRIX

[Peter Rabbit and Eleven Other Favorite Tales](#)

A collection of Beatrix Potter's beloved animal stories filled with warmth and whimsy, including *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*, *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny*, *The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher*, *The Tale of Mrs. Tittlemouse*, and more.

RL: 4.2 | Collection | Picture & Lapbook/Storybook/Animal Fiction

JACKSON, DESSI

[Roses in the Snow: A Tale of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary](#)

Little Elizabeth loves the roses her grandmother planted the day she was born, and she especially looks forward to the day they take some to the church in honor of her namesake, St. Elizabeth of Hungary. As her grandmother recounts the story of this great saint, Little Elizabeth and her grandmother appreciate her holiness and charity.

Book | Picture & Lapbook /Religious/Biography | Early 1200s/Present Day, Hungary

JACKSON, DESSI

[Saint Clare and Her Cat](#)

As they travel to San Damiano, Nonna shares with Antonio the story of St. Clare—her Franciscan spirituality and the cat that loved her.

Book | Picture & Lapbook /Religious/Biography | 1200s/Present Day, Assisi

To register for a *Kolbe Summer Reading Club* and to learn about our *Summer Reading Challenge* visit kolbe.org/summer-reading-program



JACKSON, DESSI

Saint Felix and the Spider

When a spider is cast out from a tidy woman's home, he finds shelter—and loneliness—in a dark cave. But then he meets a friend, St. Felix, and the spider ends up saving his life.

Book | Picture & Lapbook / Religious/Biography | 200s, Italy

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

Saint Martin de Porres: The Story of the Little Doctor of Lima, Peru

Meet the South American saint known as the “Little Doctor of Lima” who is best known for caring for the sick, speaking to animals, and working miracles.

Series | Picture & Lapbook / Religious/Biography | 1500s-1600s, Peru

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

Saint Rose of Lima: The Story of the First Canonized Saint of the Americas

Born Isabel de Flores, her name became Rose after her face was transformed by a mystical rose as an infant. Denied entry into a convent by her parents, she made herself a hermit in a tiny hut in her backyard and cared for the sick in her parents' home.

Series | Picture & Lapbook / Religious/Biography | Late 1500s-Early 1600s, Peru

HUNTER-KILMER, MEG

Saints Around the World

Meet over one hundred saints from more than sixty countries with differing abilities, races, ages, and states of life. There are scared saints and adventurous saints, saints who made big mistakes and saints who made big discoveries, all with stories to remind you that holiness is possible. Each book in the series features the stories of fifteen saints—young, adventurous, ordinary, royal and warrior, talented, and unshakable—and is fully illustrated.

Series | Picture & Lapbook / Religious/Biography

LANG, ANDREW, ED.

The Blue Fairy Book

A classic collection of fairy tales from around the world with vivid characters and strong moral lessons.

Collection | Fairy Tales/Storybook

WARNER, GERTRUDE CHANDLER

The Boxcar Children

Four orphaned siblings run away and find shelter in an abandoned boxcar. As they find odd jobs to take care of each other in their new home, they discover that family and love are the greatest treasures of all.

RL: 3.9 | Adventure/Mystery | 1940s, America



KRAUSS, RUTH

The Carrot Seed

A young boy plants a carrot seed and cares for it with great diligence and hope, despite everyone telling him the seed won't sprout. Will his faith be rewarded?

RL: 1.9 | Book | Picture & Lapbook

BENNETT, WILLIAM J.

The Children's Book of Virtues

A treasury of stories with excerpts from fairy tales, folklore, fables, and real-life heroes emphasizing life lessons and virtues, like perseverance, responsibility, resilience, compassion, faith, and loyalty.

RL: 5.0 | Collection | Non-Fiction/Fables/Folklore/Short Stories/Read Aloud

PIPER, WATTY

The Little Engine That Could

The story of the little blue engine, whose brave determination and optimism brings great joy to children on the other side of the mountain.

RL: 3.5 | Book | Picture & Lapbook

BURTON, VIRGINIA LEE

The Little House

This book tells the story of a small, quaint house that is built in the countryside and watches as the world changes around it over the years.

RL: 4.2 | Picture & Lapbook/Historical Fiction: America | 1900s, America



The official podcast of Kolbe Academy with lively discussions on home & distance education, Kolbe Academy, and our Catholic community.

Look for the Kolbecast in your favorite podcast app and subscribe for effortless episode delivery.

Check out these popular episodes.

[Episode 247 Lightbulb Moments for Young Readers](#)

[Episode 252 Timelines of Fulton Sheen with Dr. Cheryl Hughes](#)

[Episode 198 The Sign of Our Salvation: Dr. Gilbert Lavoie on the Shroud of Turin](#)

BROWN, MARGARET WISE

The Little Island

As the seasons pass on a little island, the island and the creatures who call it home experience the sights, smells, and sounds of the changing seasons. When a little kitten comes to visit, the kitten believes the island is too small, but the kitten soon learns the importance of every living thing.

RL: 3.4 | Book | Picture & Lapbook

SWIFT, HILDEGARDE H. AND LYND WARD

The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge

When a great big bridge is built above a lighthouse, the little lighthouse feels useless. But he soon learns he has his own role to play.

Book | Picture & Lapbook | 1930s, America: NY

HOFFMAN, E. T. A.

The Nutcracker

On Christmas Eve, young Marie receives a nutcracker from her godfather, which is immediately broken by her brother. But when midnight strikes, magic takes Marie and the nutcracker on an adventure she'll never forget.

Book | Picture & Lapbook

LEAR, EDWARD

The Owl and the Pussycat

In this nonsense poem, Owl and Pussycat set off on a boat on their way to get married while sea creatures beneath the boat have their own adventures.

RL: 2.5 | Book | Picture & Lapbook/Poetry

BROWN, MARGARET WISE

The Runaway Bunny

A little bunny keeps running away in a game, asking his mother what she'll do in each scenario. Her answers are always full of love and comfort and the promise of finding the little bunny.

RL: 2.7 | Picture & Lapbook

JACKSON, DESSI

The Saint and His Bees

When St. Modomnoc was put in charge of the bees at the monastery, a surprising friendship ensued.

Book | Picture & Lapbook/Religious/Biography | 500s, Wales

LEAF, MUNRO

The Story of Ferdinand

While the other bulls run and fight, Ferdinand prefers sitting and smelling the flowers. When he's expected to become a hero in the Madrid bullfights, he shows the value in peace and knowing oneself as he continues his peaceful ways.

RL: 3.7 | Book | Picture & Lapbook | 1936, Spain

COURTNEY-TICKLE, JESSICA

The Story Orchestra: In the Hall of the Mountain King

In this musical retelling of Grieg's *Peer Gynt*, a boy longs for adventure and sneaks off from a wedding into the Norwegian countryside. When he's dared by dairy people to go to the lair of the king of the trolls, he accepts. But when he finds the trolls in the dark cave, he must find a way to escape before he's captured for good.

Book | Picture & Lapbook

COURTNEY-TICKLE, JESSICA

The Story Orchestra: Sleeping Beauty

A remarkable retelling of the classic ballet brought to life with Tchaikovsky's original music. When the king and queen have a party for baby Princess Aurora, an evil fairy puts a curse on the princess. The kingdom must find the one person who can defeat the curse and awaken the sleeping princess.

Book | Picture & Lapbook/Fairy Tales

WHITE, E. B.

The Trumpet of the Swan

A young trumpeter swan named Louis is born without the ability to make a sound, so he learns to play a trumpet to communicate and vie for the affection of Serena.

RL: 4.9 | Book | Animal Fiction/Read Aloud

CARLE, ERIC

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Watch as the hungry caterpillar eats through fruit, treats, and leaves and transforms into a beautiful butterfly.

RL: 2.9 | Book | Picture & Lapbook

GRAHAME, KENNETH

The Wind in the Willows

Enchanting and magical, this story of four animal friends who set forth on amazing adventures and comic capers offers lyrical prose and childhood wonder.

RL: 4 | Animal Fiction | Read Aloud

KRAUS, ROBERT

Whose Mouse Are You?

A lonely mouse wants to belong, but his mom was eaten by a cat, his dad is trapped, his sister is far away, and his brother doesn't exist. He decides to rescue them, finding the answer to "Whose Mouse Are You?" in his family.

RL: 0.8 | Book | Picture & Lapbook

MILNE, A. A.

Winnie-the-Pooh

The unforgettable adventures of the beloved stuffed bear Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends—Christopher Robin, Piglet, Tigger, Rabbit, Owl, Eeyore, Kanga, and Roo—as they nearly catch a woozle, try to get a stuck Pooh unstuck, celebrate Eeyore's birthday, survive a flood, and look for Eeyore's tail.

RL: 4.6 | Book | Animal Fiction/Storybook



Let's Adventure

Third Grade to Fifth Grade

Reading is so much more than an entertaining tale. Reading encourages creativity, increases a child's focus and vocabulary, and it gives the child something truly worthy of shared communication. In sharing his ideas and thoughts, the child begins to wonder; he is stepping outside himself and exploring the world around him. Reading is also a place where, because the child can immerse himself in another world, he will be wholly present to that world, thinking deeply about one thing.



L'ENGLE, MADELEINE

A Wrinkle in Time (A Wrinkle in Time Book 1)

A strange visitor arrives at the Murry house and beckons Meg, her brother, and their friend on a dangerous journey through space and time to find Meg's father, who disappeared while engaged in secret work for the government.

RL: 4.7 | Series | Fantasy | 1960s, England

LOVELACE, MAUD HART

Betsy-Tacy

The adventures of five-year-old best friends Tacy Kelly and Betsy Ray range from the simple adventures of everyday life to the extraordinary adventures of their imaginations.

RL: 4 | Series | Fiction | 1900s, America: MN

SEWELL, ANNA

Black Beauty

A classic novel, narrated by a horse named Black Beauty, following his life from his early days as a colt through various owners and experiences.

RL: 7.7 | Book | Fiction | 1800s, England

BRINK, CAROL RYRIE

Caddie Woodlawn

The adventures of a spirited and courageous eleven-year-old girl growing up on the Wisconsin frontier in the 1860s.

RL: 6 | Book | Fiction | 1800s, America: WI



AUTHOR JEAN LEE LATHAM was a master teacher. Students who immerse themselves in *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch*, will learn history, science, and vocabulary. All of this comes along with an engaging story! Readers today are still fascinated by Nat, an eighteenth-century nautical wonder and mathematical wizard. This book is packed with complex vocabulary that is explained in the text naturally, explanations of the math and science behind navigation, and the true history of the man who improved navigation in early America.

SPEARE, ELIZABETH GEORGE

Calico Captive

On the brink of the French and Indian War, young Miriam Willard and her family are kidnapped by Native Americans when they raid her small New Hampshire town. They have no way of knowing if they will be killed, be kept in slavery, or even survive the dangerous march north. Inspired by the true story of Susanna Willard Johnson, whose family was taken captive by the Abenaki tribe in 1754.

RL: 6 | Historical Fiction: Early America | 1700s, America: NH

LATHAM, JEAN LEE

Carry On, Mr. Bowditch

Nathaniel Bowditch, a mathematical genius, dreams of being a sailor, but he's considered too small to be one. With determination and resourceful use of his gifts, he perseveres and changes navigation and seafaring forever.

RL: 4.1 | Book | Historical Fiction | 1700s, America: MA

DAHL, ROALD

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Charlie Bucket loves chocolate more than anything and breathes in the delicious smells from the local chocolate factory each day, but he is only able to afford the indulgence of one chocolate bar per year on his birthday. So when he wins a golden ticket to Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory, he is delighted by the chance to explore his beloved sweets. On the tour with the other winners, misbehavior and vices are swiftly punished, and—as Charlie will soon find out—kind-heartedness is greatly rewarded.

RL: 4.8 | Book | Fiction | 1960s, England

D'AULAIRE, INGRI AND EDGAR PARIN

D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths

In this collection of Greek mythology featuring gods, goddesses, heroes, and monsters, readers will treasure both the stories and illustrations while learning cultural history.

RL: 6.6 | Collection | Mythology | Ancient Greece

GARDINER, S.J., HAROLD C.

Edmund Campion

Edmund Campion was on his way to becoming Archbishop of Canterbury when he reverted to his Catholic faith. After becoming a Catholic priest, he returned to England during severe persecutions and became the leader of the underground Catholic ministry until his martyrdom.

Series | Religious/Biography | 1500s, England

SHEEHAN, ARTHUR AND ELIZABETH

Father Damien and the Bells

In 1872, Fr. Damien traveled to Molokai, an island where lepers were exiled. He spent his life caring for the lepers and appealing to the world for help. Even after Damien himself contracted leprosy, he carried on his mission until the end.

Book | Religious/Biography | 1800s, Hawaii

O'DELL, SCOTT

Island of the Blue Dolphins

Years ago, Karana was left behind on an isolated island called San Nicolas off the coast of California. It's a place full of wonder, with dolphins and shimmering blue waves. But it's not all beauty and relaxation, especially in isolation, as she battles the pack of wild dogs, the otter hunters, and the constant lack of food.

RL: 5.4 | Book 1 | Historical Fiction: Native American | 1800s, America: CA

FLEISCHMAN, PAUL

Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices

A collection of poems meant to be read aloud by two people, celebrating insects and all their resounding noises.

RL: 4.0 | Poetry

BROWN, EVELYN

Kateri Tekakwitha: Mohawk Maiden

After her family died from smallpox, Kateri was adopted by an anti-Christian chief. Kateri was never baptized, despite her mother's wishes, but when French missionaries arrived, she converted to Christianity. The tribe ostracized her, leading to her daring escape and total surrender of her life to God.

Book | Religious/Biography | 1600s, America: NY/Canada

HENRY, MARGUERITE

Misty of Chincoteague

On an island inhabited by a breed of wild horses, one special wild mare named Misty develops a relationship with two young children and embarks on a journey to become domesticated.

RL: 5.3 | Historical Fiction: America | 1900s, America: NC

O'BRIEN, ROBERT C.

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH

When Mrs. Frisby's youngest son falls ill and can't move to their summer home before spring plowing, Mrs. Frisby enlists the help of the Rats of NIMH. The rats are technologically advanced and literate after experiments at the NIMH laboratory boosted their intelligence and allowed for their escape. The rats come up with a brilliant plan to move her home, but to carry it out Mrs. Frisby must face the cat that killed her husband.

RL: 5.1 | Series | Fantasy

MACDONALD, BETTY

Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle

As Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle cares for children, she encourages good behavior in humorous and heartwarming ways.

RL: 5.2 | Fiction | 1940s, America

BLISS, S. J., GEOFFREY

My Path to Heaven: A Young Person's Guide to the Faith

Based on the traditional Ignatian retreat, this simple and thoughtful presentation of the faith teaches children the tenets of the faith and inspires proper devotion to lead them to great holiness.

Book | Religious

GEORGE, JEAN CRAIGHEAD

My Side of the Mountain

Determined to escape his miserable life in New York City, Sam Gibley runs away to the Catskill Mountains and relies on a pocketful of belongings and his wits to survive.

RL: 5.2 | Trilogy: Book 1 | Fiction | 1900s, America: NY

COLLODI, CARLO

Pinocchio

Pinocchio, a wooden puppet carved by Geppetto, comes to life. He meets a good fairy, who tells him if he can behave, he will become a real boy. But he also meets a cast of characters who distract him, encourage him to lie (which causes his nose to grow), and even cause him to start transforming into a donkey.

RL: 5.3 | Book | Fantasy | 1883, Italy

JACQUES, BRIAN

Redwall (Redwall Book 1)

In Redwall Abbey lives a community of peaceful mice who love hosting feasts and helping others. But when an army of rats led by Cluny the Scourge threatens their home, Mathias fights to defend himself, his friends, and the abbey they call home.

RL: 5.6 | Series | Fantasy

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

Saint Catherine of Siena: The Story of the Girl Who Saw Saints in the Sky

From her mystical visions to her bold efforts to guide church leaders, Catherine's courage and deep faith transformed the Church. Though known for arguing with the pope himself to return to Rome, she started out desiring to be a hermit. Readers will see how she learned to love God—by loving those she encountered on her way.

RL: 4.0 | Book | Biography | 1347-1380, Italy

DERLETH, AUGUST

Saint Ignatius and the Company of Jesus

When Ignatius was wounded in battle, his hopes of an adventurous life as a soldier were dashed. Confined to bed with only religious books to read, he had a profound conversion to Christianity. He lived his life in service to Christ, founding the Society of Jesus and encountering popes, emperors, and kings.

Series | Religious/Biography | 1500s, Spain and Italy



To register for a *Kolbe Summer Reading Club* and to learn about our *Summer Reading Challenge* visit kolbe.org/summer-reading-program

LOMASK, MILTON**Saint Isaac and the Indians**

In the seventeenth century, when Frenchmen drew near the St. Lawrence River in search of furs and wealth, Jesuit missionaries also came, but to give, not get. This is the story of one of these missionaries, Isaac Jogues, who lived a dangerous life among the tribes as he taught them about health and truth, became enslaved, escaped, and ultimately was martyred.

Series | Religious/Biography | 1600s, North America

MACLACHLAN, PATRICIA**Sarah, Plain and Tall**

When Anna's father puts out an advertisement for a wife, Sarah Elisabeth Wheaton travels from Maine to the Midwest to become a stepmother to Anna and her brother Caleb. Anna and Caleb wonder what this new woman will be like, but more importantly, they wonder if she will stay in their life or leave.

RL: 3.4 | Book | Historical Fiction: Expansion | 1800s, America

ALEXANDER, LLOYD**The Black Cauldron (The Chronicles of Prydain Book 2)**

Taran, Assistant Pig-Keeper, and his companions set out on a journey to save Prydain. To do so, they must destroy the Black Cauldron, which Arawn, the Lord of the Land of Death, uses to create his soldiers.

RL: 5.2 | Series | Fantasy

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN**The Children of Fatima**

Through the examples of the three children at Fatima, discover the message of love and repentance brought by Our Lady in her apparitions.

Series | Religious/Biography | Early 1900s, Portugal

COLUM, PADRAIC**The Children's Homer: The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy**

Combining the stories of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Padraic Colum weaves a saga of adventure, drama, and heroism. Odysseus and Achilles travel to Ancient Greece to seek vengeance against the Trojans, and then Odysseus journeys to faraway lands, where he encounters Cyclopes, Circe the Enchantress, the terrible Charybdis, and the terrifying Scylla.

RL: 6.9 | Book | Fantasy | Ancient Greece

SELDEN, GEORGE**The Cricket in Times Square**

When Chester Cricket from Connecticut arrives in New York City, he learns to navigate the hustle and bustle of Times Square with the help of his new friends, the wise mouse and the clever cat.

RL: 4.9 | Series | Animal Fiction | 1950s, New York City

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN**The Curé of Ars**

An account of the many spiritual struggles of St. John Vianney, including battles with the devil, as he pursued the priesthood and answered God's call.

Book | Religious/Biography | Late 1700s/Early 1800s, France

**FITZGERALD, JOHN****The Great Brain**

Tom, aka the Great Brain, is the best con man in the Midwest—and he's only ten years old! Whether he's saving kids from school or helping the new kid, the Great Brain is always willing to help—as long as he gets paid.

RL: 5.2 | Book | Fiction | 1900s, America: UT

TOLKIEN, J. R. R.**The Hobbit**

Bilbo Baggins enjoys a quiet, comfortable life in his hobbit hole. But when he finds himself called to adventure by the wizard Gandalf and a band of dwarves, he reluctantly joins. As they attempt to raid the dragon Smaug's treasure, Bilbo encounters a magic ring and a curious creature named Gollum.

RL: 6.6 | Series | Epic Fantasy | Middle-earth

LEWIS, C.S.**The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (The Chronicles of Narnia Book 1)**

Four siblings—Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie—step through a wardrobe door and into the land of Narnia, ruled by the White Witch and cursed into an eternal winter. But when Aslan, the Great Lion, returns, he brings with him a great change—and a great sacrifice.

RL: 5.7 | Series | Fantasy

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN**The Little Flower**

This adaptation of St. Therese's *Story of a Soul* is designed for children, introducing them to the Little Way that led St. Therese to loving God with all her heart.

Series | Religious/Biography | 1800s, France

“Someday you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again.”

—C.S. Lewis (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*)

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

The Miraculous Medal

The story of how Mary appeared to St. Catherine Labouré and told her to make the Miraculous Medal.

Book | Religious | 1800s, France

CLEARY, BEVERLY

The Mouse and the Motorcycle

When a young mouse named Ralph finds a toy motorcycle unattended at the hotel he lives in, he decides to ride it. But he soon encounters challenges, like dodging a rowdy terrier and keeping his nosy cousins away. With his new friend, Keith, the toy's owner, there's nothing this little mouse can't handle.

RL: 5.1 | Series | Animal Fiction

DICAMILLO, KATE

The Tale of Despereaux

A brave, story-loving mouse named Despereaux sets off on a quest to rescue the princess from danger, fighting darkness, rats, and betrayal.

RL: 4.7 | Book | Animal Fiction/Adventure

FLEISCHMAN, SID

The Whipping Boy

When spoiled Prince Brat embarks on a reckless adventure that gets him kidnapped by outlaws, his clever, long-suffering whipping boy, Jemmy, follows him to save him. As they travel together through forests and villages, they face wild animals, thieves, hunger, and suspicious townsfolk and must learn to trust each other.

RL: 3.9 | Book | Historical Fiction/Adventure

RAWLS, WILSON

Where the Red Fern Grows

The story of Billy Coleman, a young boy in the Ozarks, and his two hound dogs who become the best hunting team in the county. Billy's grandfather supports them and offers Billy important lessons in growing up.

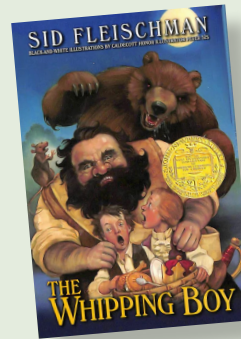
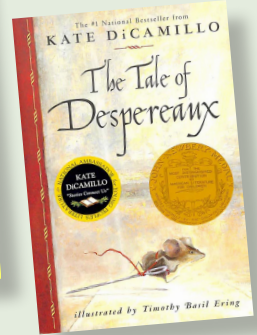
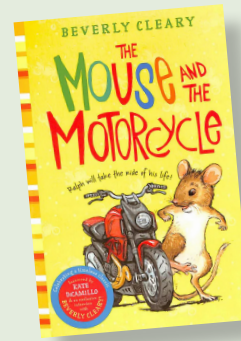
RL: 4.9 | Book | Fiction | 1900s, America: OK

LONDON, JACK

White Fang

White Fang, part dog and part wolf, is the lone survivor of his family and must kill to survive in the wild. Through a series of abusive owners, he becomes a savage killer—until one kind man rescues him.

RL: 7.4 | Book | Adventure/Animal Fiction/ Historical Fiction | 1890s, Yukon



Adventure Story Starters

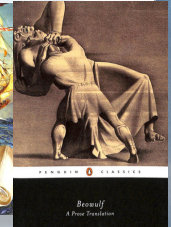
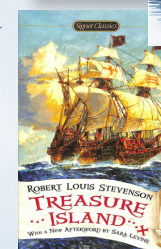
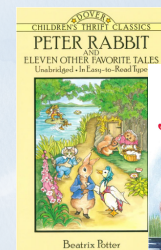
Looking for an age appropriate adventure story? We've got you covered!

K-2: [Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter](#)

3-5: [The Trumpet of the Swan by E.B. White](#)

6-8: [Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson](#)

High School: [Beowulf](#)



To register for a Kolbe Summer Reading Club and to learn about our Summer Reading Challenge visit kolbe.org/summer-reading-program

Poetry & Great Classical Works

TIPS FOR POETRY

Faith & Theology

- Begin mornings with a short recitation or a psalm.
- Spark discussion with simple questions: What image stood out to you? What might the poet be saying about God, nature, or human life?
- Invite imitation: invite students to write a psalm-style prayer.
- Make connections across subjects: read Dante in conversation with theology.

Language Arts

- Use a stanza for copywork or handwriting practice.
- Experiment with voice: whisper, sing, or read with character.
- Memorize a favorite two-line poem and recite it with flair!

Nature & Science

- Make connections across subjects: read Hopkins alongside a nature study.
- Write short descriptive poems as nature journaling after a walk outdoors.
- Capture the sights and sounds of the forest.

Arts & Creativity

- Invite children to illustrate lines or images from the poems they are learning.
- Pair poetry with visual art: place a painting, sculpture, or photograph alongside a poem so your child can connect words with imagery and explore both together.

Drama & Performance

- Share poems aloud as recitations at meals, family gatherings, or a special “poetry night” with friends.
- Act out or stage short poems using voice, posture, and gesture.

These simple practices help students see that poetry is not just studied but lived—shaping the way they pray, think, and imagine.

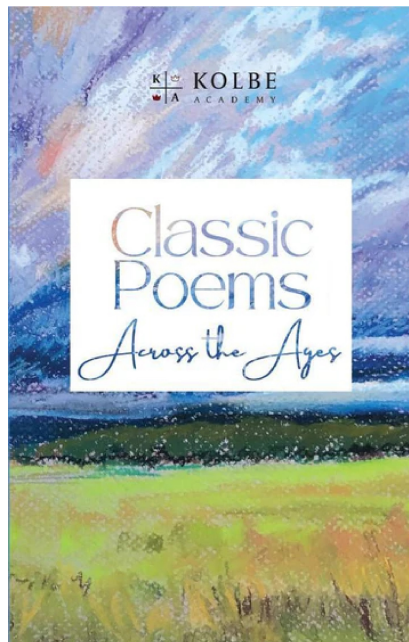




Kolbe Academy Press Presents:

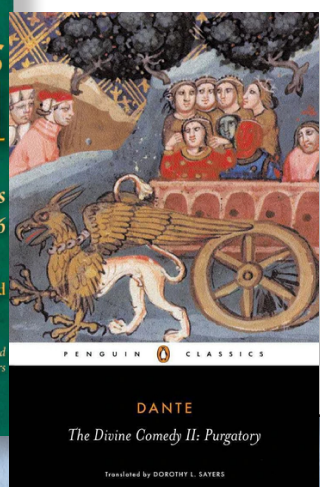
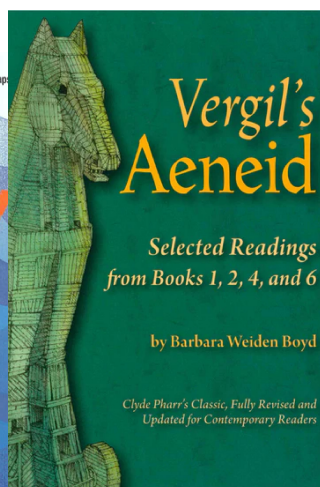
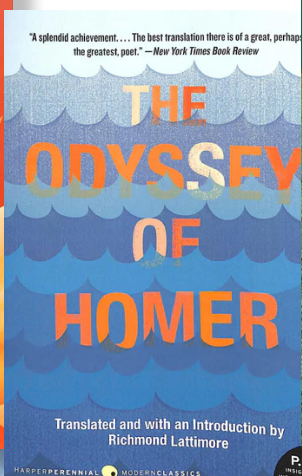
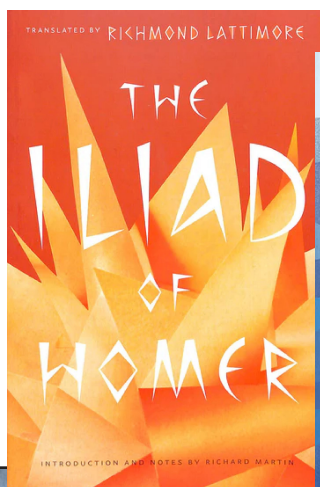
Classic Poems Across the Ages

This year Kolbe Academy Press published a collection of poems especially for Catholic, classical homeschoolers. Our carefully curated poetry collection, *Classic Poems Across the Ages*, offers a rich journey through the great poetic traditions of Western civilization. Currently used in Kolbe Academy's Junior High Literature program (with some selections also appearing in Literature 6) this volume serves as an inspiring resource for families seeking to cultivate a love for beauty, truth, and the written word.



Organized by poetic periods, the collection introduces young readers to the historical, cultural, and literary movements that shaped poetry across centuries. From the epic verses of Homer and Virgil to the soul-stirring works of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Chesterton, each poem is paired with a biography that connects the poet's life to his or her art.

Poetry prepares you to read some of the greatest classical works ever written:



Engaged Readers

Sixth Grade to Eighth Grade

Reading is not just something one does for a school assignment. Reading fosters a culture of lifelong learning. Even at the young age of 12 or 14, children can build up a wealth of experience, which will lead to greater wisdom and prudence as they grow. Reading expands the children's horizons. Also, reading gives children an edge in the college process. They will already have an impressive vocabulary.



VERNE, JULES

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

On a mission to destroy a ship-sinking sea monster, Professor Pierre Aronnax and his team discover the “monster” is actually an incredible submarine commanded by Captain Nemo. Taken prisoner on the invention to keep them quiet about its existence, they embark on an underwater adventure around the world through shipwrecks, coral reefs, ice barriers, and sea creatures as the villainous Captain Nemo seeks revenge on society.

RL: 10 | Series | Science Fiction | 1860s, Various

DICKENS, CHARLES

A Christmas Carol

The cold and lonely miser Ebenezer Scrooge journeys with the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future in this classic Christmas tale.

RL: 6.7 | Novella | Fiction | Mid-1800s, London

PARK, LINDA SUE

A Single Shard

The orphan Tree-Ear dreams of becoming a potter in the village known for celadon ware. His life is altered when he must repay a debt to the master potter Min. With courage and perseverance, Tree-Ear embarks on a difficult journey for Min.

RL: 6.6 | Book | Historical Fiction: Medieval | 1100s, Korea

ORWELL, GEORGE

Animal Farm



An allegorical exploration of the dangers of totalitarianism. The animals of Manor Farm dream of equality and freedom from their owner, but as they start a revolution, the power-hungry pigs prove that a change in leadership doesn't mean freedom from oppression.

RL: 7.3 | Book | Fantasy/Dystopian

MONTGOMERY, LUCY MAUD

Anne of Green Gables

Eleven-year-old Anne, an orphan, is sent to live with the Cuthberts on Prince Edward Island, but she soon discovers they wanted a boy. Before they send her back, she wins them over with her charm and imagination.

RL: 7.3 | Anne of Green Gables: Book 1 | Fiction | 1900s, Canada

KIPLING, RUDYARD

Captains Courageous



The story of a privileged young boy named Harvey Cheyne who falls overboard from an ocean liner and is rescued by a fishing boat. Thrown into a world of hard work, rough living conditions, and camaraderie, Harvey begins to undergo a transformation. He learns the value of manual labor, humility, and the importance of earning his keep.

RL: 8 | Book | Fiction | 1890s, America

BRADBURY, RAY

Dandelion Wine



This semi-autobiographical novel tells the story of twelve-year-old Douglas Spaulding and the simple joys and magic of Green Town, Illinois, in the summer of 1928.

RL: 6 | Book | Historical Fiction: America | 1900s, America

POLLAND, MADELEINE

Fingal's Quest

When Irish monks come to Gaul in the mid-500s to restore Christianity, Fingal's master, Brother Columban, is chosen to go with them. Fingal, unwilling to lose his beloved master, follows after him. As he travels the country and comes up short, he leaves a trail of conversions behind that makes him wonder if God might be using his hardship for something greater.

RL: 5 | Book | Historical Fiction: Medieval | 500s, Ireland/France

SPYRI, JOHANNA



Heidi

Heidi, a young orphan, is brought to live with her bitter and reclusive grandfather in the Swiss Alps. Heidi builds a strong relationship with him and desperately misses him and their mountain home when she is sent into town to attend school.

RL: 8.2 | Book | Fiction | 1800s, Switzerland

HOLM, ANN

I Am David

The story of a young boy named David, who escapes from a concentration camp and embarks on a journey across Europe to find freedom and discover his true identity.

RL: 5.6 | Book | Historical Fiction: WW2 Era | 1900s, Europe

STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS

Kidnapped



Set in eighteenth-century Scotland, this story follows the journey of young David Balfour as he faces treachery, betrayal, and danger.

RL: 7.6 | Book | Fiction | 1800s, Scotland

HEYERDAHL, THOR

Kon-Tiki

The true story of a Norwegian explorer who sailed on a raft across the Pacific Ocean to prove that people from South America could have settled the Polynesian islands. After building the raft with ancient techniques and materials and naming it after an ancient sun god, he and his crew faced storms and sharks on an extraordinary expedition of daring and courage.

RL: 8 | Book | Non-Fiction/Adventure | 1940s, Pacific Ocean

“Pearls rarely turn up in oysters served to you on a plate; you have to dive for them.”
—Thor Heyerdahl (*Kon-Tiki*)

FREEDMAN, RUSSELL



Lincoln: A Photobiography

With dozens of authentic photographs and a detailed account of his life, this photobiography brings to life our sixteenth president, from his boyhood in the country to his assassination and everything in between. Lincoln's wit and humor are evident as he spends his days as a lawyer, courts Mary Todd, and grapples with the country's divisions during the Civil War.

RL: 7.7 | Book | Non-Fiction | Biography

ALCOTT, LOUISA MAY



Little Women

As the March sisters grow up in Civil War-era New England, they learn lessons in morality, friendship, and womanhood.

RL: 7.9 | Book | Historical Fiction: Civil War Era | 1800s, America

GIPSON, FRED



Old Yeller

When fourteen-year-old Travis is left in charge of his family farm while his dad is away, he reluctantly keeps a stray dog. As the summer passes, Old Yeller quickly proves his worth through his protection of Travis and his family. But on one fateful day, Old Yeller's self-sacrifice results in a tragedy that tests Travis' maturity.

RL: 5 | Book | Animal Fiction | 1860s, America: TX

LEWIS, C.S.

Out of the Silent Planet (The Space Trilogy Book 1)

Dr. Ransom, a Cambridge academic, is abducted by a megalomaniacal physicist and his accomplice and taken to the red planet of Malacandra, which he knows as Mars. When his captors plot to offer Ransom as a sacrifice to the native creatures, he must elude his captors and risk his life as a stranger in an unknown land to return to Earth.

RL: 7.4 | Trilogy | Science Fiction: Aliens Futuristic

WALLACE, SR. M. IMELDA



Outlaws of Ravenhurst

Charles must defend the Catholic faith and ensure that Clan Gordon's castle, Ravenhurst, is in the right hands. But little does he know the history of persecution for Catholics in the kingdom nor the future persecution he faces upon his arrival.

RL: 5 | Book | Historical Fiction | 1600s, Scotland

FORBES, F. A.

Saint Athanasius

A biography of the saint who was called "The Champion of Orthodoxy" for his effort fighting the Arian heresy. As a young cleric, he attended the Council of Nicaea, and the famous Athanasian Creed was named after him.

Book | Religious/Biography | 300s, Alexandria, Egypt

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

Saint Benedict

The famous life of the founder of the Benedictine Order, including the miracles of saving someone from drowning, raising someone from the dead, and identifying poisoned wine. Plus, stories with his sister, St. Scholastica.

Book | Religious/Biography | Late 400s/Early 500s, Italy

FORBES, F. A.

Saint Catherine of Siena

Known for inspiring the pope to return to Rome, St. Catherine's story starts with her believing she should be a hermitess. See how young Catherine grows in her love of God and humble service through her love of others.

Book | Religious/Biography | 1300s, Italy

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

Saint Dominic

The incredible story of the man who received the rosary from Mary, founded the Dominican Order, performed miracles, and defeated the Albigensian heresy.

Book | Religious/Biography | Late 1100s/Early 1200s, Europe



WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

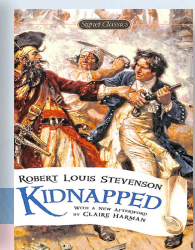
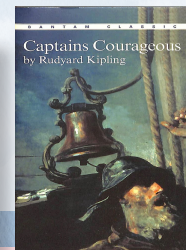
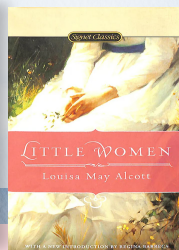
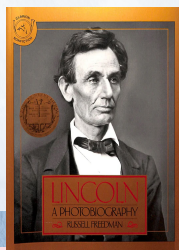
Saint Francis Solano

Saint Francis Solano healed the sick, found a spring in the desert, and converted slaves and Indians with a single sermon.

Book | Religious/Biography | Late 1500s/Early 1600s, Spain and South America

American Literature Collection

- Looking for good **American Literature**? 
Look for the **American Flag**.
- Want **British Literature**? 
Look for the **British Flag**.



WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

Saint Hyacinth of Poland

St. Hyacinth met St. Dominic and became one of the first Dominican friars. He worked many miracles and planted the faith in Poland, Lithuania, and Russia.

Book | Religious/Biography | Late 1100s/Early 1200s, Eastern Europe

FORBES, F. A.

Saint Ignatius Loyola

While recovering from a battle wound, St. Ignatius read a book that led to his conversion to Christianity. From there, he repented, studied, and gathered a following before founding the Jesuits.

Book | Religious/Biography | Late 1400s/Early 1500s, Spain

DE WOHL, LOUIS

Saint Joan: The Girl Soldier

Joan, a humble maiden in a small town, received visions from St. Michael, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret to lead the French in battle. As she courageously and lovingly followed God's will, she convinced the French of the validity of her mission but was also betrayed, imprisoned, and ultimately burned at the stake. Through it all, she exemplified heroism and great faith in God.

RL: 6 | Book | Historical Fiction: Medieval | 1500s, France

FORBES, F. A.

Saint John Bosco

The biography of John Bosco, who was known for his impact on countless young souls. While he grew up poor and fatherless, he discovered a talent for entertaining others in his youth that served him well as he became a priest.

RL: 5.0 | Book | Religious | 1800s, Italy

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

Saint John Masias

A Dominican brother who prophesied, worked miracles, held the Christ Child, and freed a million souls from purgatory.

Book | Religious/Biography | Late 1500s/Early 1600s, Spain and South America

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

Saint Louis de Montfort

A biography of the "Apostle of Mary," preacher and author of *True Devotion to Mary* and *The Secret of the Rosary*.

Book | Religious/Biography | Late 1600s/Early 1700s, France

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

Saint Margaret Mary

The story of the nun who received revelations of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Book | Religious/Biography | 1600s, France

SMITH, JEREMIAH J.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe: Knight of the Immaculata

This biography shows how Fr. Kolbe worked to win the salvation of souls through Mary Immaculate, even to the point of offering his own life in Auschwitz.

RL: 5.0 | Book | Religious | Early 1900s, Poland

FORBES, F. A.

Saint Monica

A biography of St. Monica, the famous mother whose prayers, patience, and example led to the conversion of her wayward son, St. Augustine.

Book | Religious/Biography | 300s, Algeria

WINDEATT, MARY FABYAN

Saint Paul the Apostle

The story of the perils and adventures of St. Paul as he spread the gospel.

Book | Religious/Biography | First century, Mediterranean

FORBES, F. A.

Saint Teresa of Avila

A biography of one of the Doctors of the Church, a mystic who reformed the Carmelites.

Book | Religious/Biography | 1500s, Spain

FORBES, F. A.

Saint Vincent de Paul

After being enslaved by the Moslems in Africa, St. Vincent returned home to do great work for God. Known as "The Father of his Country," he is a model of charity for all.

Book | Religious/Biography | Late 1500s/Early 1600s, France

POAGE, FR. GODFREY

St. Maria Goretti: In Garments All Red

In July of 1902, twelve-year-old Maria Goretti fought to preserve her purity from the attacks of Alessandro Serenelli. Yet even in her trial, her concern was for the soul of Alessandro, as she implored him to stop to avoid sinning. He stabbed her fourteen times, leaving her a martyr. Years later, Maria's own mercy led to Alessandro's conversion.

Book | Religious/Biography | Late 1800s-Early 1900s, Italy

TWIN, MARK

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Tom Sawyer, mischief-maker in a town near the Mississippi River, befriends the town outcast, Huck Finn. Together, they entertain themselves with pranks that lead to both punishments and adventures, like finding treasure and witnessing a murder.

RL: 8.1 | Book | Historical Fiction: Civil War Era | 1800s, America: MO



STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS 

The Black Arrow

Set against the backdrop of the War of the Roses, one of England's bloodiest periods, this classic adventure follows Richard Shelton, as he joins an outlaw group called the Black Arrow, who are caught in a civil war. As Richard seeks justice for the mysterious death of his father, he navigates battlefields, journeys through castles, and faces tough choices between seeking vengeance and standing up for what is right.

RL: 9 | Book | Historical Fiction: Medieval/Adventure | 1400s, England

SPEARE, ELIZABETH GEORGE

The Bronze Bow

Daniel bar Jarmin is an Israelite teenager who is consumed with thoughts of revenge after his father is crucified by the Romans. That is, until he meets a mysterious traveling carpenter who causes Daniel to question everything.


RL: 5 | Book | Historical Fiction: Ancient | Judea

HENRY, O. 

The Gift of the Magi and Other Short Stories

With warm humor and ironic twist endings, this collection of stories from one of America's most popular storytellers is sure to delight all who read it. Includes *The Gift of the Magi*, which is about a husband and wife who each sell their most beloved possession to buy a gift for the other.

RL: 6.2 | Book | Fiction | Early 1900s, New York City

IRVING, WASHINGTON 

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

When the superstitious schoolteacher Ichabod Crane moves to Sleepy Hollow, he becomes obsessed with local ghost stories and legends—and then becomes part of one.

RL: 11 | Short Story | Gothic Fiction/Horror | 1790, Rural New York

SAINT-EXUPÉRY, ANTOINE DE

The Little Prince

A young prince travels from his tiny asteroid to various planets, encountering absurd characters along the way. On Earth, he meets a stranded pilot, the narrator, and teaches him about love, friendship, and the truth that the most important things are often felt with the heart, not seen with the eyes.


RL: 5 | Book | Fantasy

TOLKIEN, J. R. R.

The Lord of the Rings

In ancient times, Sauron forged the One Ring to rule all the other Rings of Power. But while he has gathered the Rings of Power, he is still searching for the One Ring. Frodo, a young hobbit, is entrusted to carry the ring through Middle-earth with a small fellowship of companions to the only place it can be destroyed—Mount Doom, in the middle of Sauron's realm.

RL: 6.2 | Trilogy | Epic Fantasy | Middle-earth

GIBSON, WILLIAM 

The Miracle Worker

The compelling and inspiring true story of Helen Keller and her teacher, Anne Sullivan, demonstrating the resilience, determination, and transformative power of education.

RL: 5.2 | Play | Historical Play/Non-Fiction | 1900s, America



HEMINGWAY, ERNEST 

The Old Man and the Sea

An old fisherman in Cuba sets out to the Gulf Stream in hopes of catching his biggest fish yet and prove his worth. He succeeds in catching a giant marlin, but he then loses it to a shark in a battle of courage and perseverance.

RL: 5.1 | Novella | Fiction | Mid-1900s, Cuba

CRANE, STEPHEN 

The Red Badge of Courage

After deserting the Union Army on the battlefield, Henry returns, longing to redeem himself by earning a red badge of courage, a wound that proves his bravery in the war.

RL: 8 | Book | Historical Fiction: Civil War Era | 1800s, America

LEWIS, C. S. 

The Screwtape Letters

In this satirical novel, a senior demon named Screwtape writes a series of letters to his nephew Wormwood, a junior tempter, advising him how to ensnare souls and lead them astray. Lewis' unconventional approach provides a thought-provoking exploration of human nature.

RL: 8.8 | Book | Religious/Satire

BURNETT, FRANCES HODGSON 

The Secret Garden

Sent to live with her uncle in a mysterious estate, Mary discovers a secret garden. With the help of her sick cousin, she restores the garden—which may just restore health to the whole house.

RL: 6.3 | Book | Fiction | 1900s, England

LONGFELLOW, HENRY WADSWORTH 

The Song of Hiawatha

The tale of young, brave Hiawatha, who talks with animals and uses his magic moccasins to bring peace to his people.

RL: 6 | Poetry | Epic Poetry/American folklore | 1850s, America: MI

VAN DYKE, HENRY

The Story of the Other



Wise Man

Artaban, a priest of the Magi, follows the star to join the other three wise men, but he continues to be delayed as he stops to help those in need.

RL: 7 | Short Story | Religious Fiction/Allegory | Era of Christ, Middle East

WYSS, JOHANN DAVID

The Swiss Family Robinson

As Father Robinson and his family sail toward Australia, they meet a violent storm that damages their ship. Finding refuge on an uninhabited island nearby in the East Indies, the family must find food, build shelter, and rely on their faith in God to survive.

RL: 9.7 | Book | Historical Fiction: Modern | 1700s

SPEARE, ELIZABETH GEORGE.

The Witch of Blackbird Pond



Kit Tyler knows her new home in Connecticut will never compare to the island of Barbados she left, but she finds solace in the meadows with an old Quaker woman known as the Witch of Blackbird Pond. But then the Puritan community notices their friendship, and they accuse Kit of being a witch herself.

RL: 5.7 | Book | Historical Fiction: Early America | 1600s, America: CT

RAWLINGS, MARJORIE

The Yearling



A classic novel about the journey from boyhood into manhood and the love between a child and a pet. Jody Baxter is a young boy living in rural Florida who adopts an injured fawn and raises it as his beloved pet. As Jody and his fawn both mature and grow, Jody learns that along with adulthood comes many decisions and difficulties.

RL: 5 | Book | Fiction | 1900s, America: FL

STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS



Treasure Island

A swashbuckling classic novel in which an innkeeper's son discovers a treasure map in the possessions of a deceased guest. The map takes the boy on an adventure filled with pirates, deserted islands, and buried treasure.

RL: 8.3 | Book | Historical Fiction: British | 1700s, England

“Seaward ho! Hang the treasure! It's the glory of the sea that has turned my head.”
—Robert Louis Stevenson
(*Treasure Island*)

CLEAVER, VERA & BILL

Where the Lilies Bloom



A coming-of-age story in which fourteen-year-old Mary Call struggles to keep the promise she made to her dying father—that she will keep her siblings together in the Great Smoky Mountains. Mary must find courage and perseverance to keep her family together and alive through the cruel winter months.

RL: 5.2 | Book | Historical Fiction: America | 1900s, America: NC

LONDON, JACK

White Fang



White Fang, part dog and part wolf, is the lone survivor of his family and must kill to survive in the wild. Through a series of abusive owners, he becomes a savage killer—until one kind man rescues him.

RL: 7.4 | Book | Adventure/Animal Fiction/ Historical Fiction | 1890s, Yukon

Fantasy Story Starters

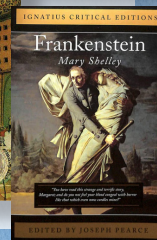
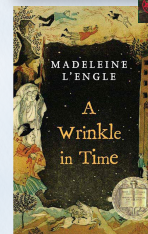
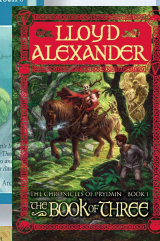
Fantasy stories can teach profound truths about the human person. Here are some important introductory stories.

K-2: [*An Illustrated Treasury of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales*](#)

3-5: [*The Book of Three* by Lloyd Alexander](#)

6-8: [*A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle](#)

High School: [*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley](#)



Engaged Readers

Ninth to Twelfth Grade

We live in a world that is full of interruptions and instant information. This has greatly reduced people's ability to focus on a task for a long period of time. Allow young adults time to read and reduce interruptions. The result is a less stressed, more focused youth! It's no wonder that escaping into the world of a good book is recommended to reduce depression and improve sleep. Reading can also help one become more empathetic and more relaxed.



ORWELL, GEORGE



1984

Winston Smith works for the Ministry of Truth and lives his life under the watchful eye of Big Brother. Expressing discontent with the Party is grounds for punishment, and even thinking such rebellious words is considered a thought crime. But when Winston begins expressing his thoughts in a diary and falls in love with the rebellious Julia, he puts his life in great danger as he seeks freedom.

RL: 8.9 | Book | Science Fiction: Dystopian

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM



A Midsummer Night's Dream

A comedy play that revolves around the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta, this popular work of Shakespeare involves amusing, interconnected subplots with young lovers and mischievous fairies.

RL: 10.9 | Play | Comedy | Ancient Greece

DICKENS, CHARLES



A Tale of Two Cities

After eighteen years in a Bastille prison, Doctor Manette is released to the care of Lucie, the daughter he's never met. Set leading up to the French Revolution and subsequent Reign of Terror in London and Paris, Dickens weaves an unforgettable story about the atrocities of the era and the hope of resurrection.

RL: 9.7 | Book | Fiction | 1700s, Europe

PIEPER, JOSEF

Abuse of Language—Abuse of Power

A reflection of the power of language, the way it can be abused to distort truth and manipulate, and the moral responsibility of preserving communication and the acquisition of wisdom.

Book | Philosophy

TWIN, MARK



Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Huck Finn and Jim, an escaped slave, travel down the Mississippi River toward freedom, encountering many adventures along the way.

RL: 6.6 | Adventures of Tom & Huck: Book 2 | Historical Fiction: Civil War Era | 1800s, America: MO

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM



As You Like It

After a usurpation at the court, Rosalind, Orlando, and others are exiled and take refuge in the Forest of Arden. Rosalind and her friends disguise themselves to keep safe, leading to funny mistaken identities and playful mind games with her suitor Orlando.

Play | Comedy | Late 1500s, England

UNKNOWN. DAVID WRIGHT, TRANS.

Beowulf: A Prose Translation



When a monster named Grendel attacks the king's hall, Beowulf, a mighty warrior, fights and defeats him with his bare hands. While his heroic act brings him great honor, it also brings more trouble, as he then must face Grendel's vengeful mother and defend his kingdom against a dragon.

RL: 10.4 | Poetry | Epic Poetry | 500s, Scandinavia

BALL, ANN

Blessed Miguel Pro: 20th Century Mexican Martyr

Spending most of his priesthood fleeing from the Mexican police, this young Jesuit disguised himself to administer the sacraments, give spiritual talks, and beg for food and money for the poor. In the end, he paid the ultimate sacrifice for the Church in his martyrdom.

Book | Religious/Biography | Early 1900s, Mexico

HUXLEY, ALDOUS

Brave New World

In a dystopian future where humans are genetically engineered and psychologically manipulated for their pre-determined caste, Bernard is on the brink of exile. When he visits the Savage Reservation and returns with two residents with connections to the World State, he saves himself and earns a newfound popularity. But the new residents challenge everything he's been conditioned to believe in this brave new world.

RL: 7.5 | Book | Science Fiction: Dystopian Futuristic

WAUGH, EVELYN



Brideshead Revisited

Charles Ryder, an only child, recalls when he first became enchanted by his Oxford classmate Sebastian Flyte, his lavish lifestyle, and his Catholic family. As Charles visits the family estate, Brideshead Castle, over the years, he witnesses flaws, temptations, decline, and, ultimately, the relationship between sin and grace.

RL: 10 | Book | Fiction | 1920s, England

BUTLER, ALBAN

Butler's Lives of the Saints: Concise Edition

Featuring a saint or two for each day of the year, this compilation of saint biographies is great for the entire family and includes a "lesson" from their lives to help apply the virtues they exemplified to our own lives.

Book | Religious

FROISSART, JEAN

Chronicles

Froissart depicts the deeds of knights during the Hundred Years' War, portrays the Peasants' Revolt, and illustrates the Anglo-French rivalry during the reigns of Edward II and Richard II.

Book | History | 1300s, Medieval Europe

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

City of God

Written as a defense of Christianity during the Roman Empire's collapse, *City of God* is one of the most influential works in Christian theology. As St. Augustine examines Rome's ancient pagan philosophy, he counters with biblical truths and points the way to eternal citizenship in the City of God.

RL: 12+ | Book | Religious

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM

Complete Sonnets



With more than 150 sonnets, this volume contains Shakespeare's complete nondramatic works, which are considered among the finest sonnets ever written. Rotating between addressing the poems to the "lovely boy," the "dark lady," and the rival poet, themes of love, death, beauty, and friendship unfold.

RL: 11.5 | Poetry

DOSTOEVSKY, FYODOR

Crime and Punishment

Raskolnikov, an ex-student, commits a random murder in St. Petersburg to free himself from poverty, rationalizing that some actions can be moral based on the ends and intentions. But when he is plagued by a heavy conscience, he seeks to reconcile his actions.

RL: 8.7 | Book | Historical Fiction: Modern | 1860s, Russia

DE TOCQUEVILLE, ALEXIS

Democracy in America



On his return trip to France in 1831, a young French aristocrat recorded his observations about the strengths and weaknesses of democracy and America, poignantly analyzing both. With various vignettes and portraits that contain something to teach and interest everyone, this book still remains one of the most quoted books about the United States.

RL: 13.4 | Non-Fiction | 1830s, America

STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde



The mild-mannered Dr. Jekyll develops a potion that unleashes the evil Mr. Hyde, his alter ego hidden inside. In a battle between the ego and the id, Jekyll must gain control of Hyde before Hyde gains control of his soul.

RL: 9.5 | Book | Mystery & Horror/Science Fiction | 1880s, England

LOUTH, ANDREW, ED.

Early Christian Writings

A selection of letters and theological treatises from the Apostolic Fathers that provides a rich guide to the emerging traditions of the early Church.

Collection | Religious/History

BARNET, SYLVAN, MORTON BERMAN, AND WILLIAM BURTO, ED.

Eight Great Comedies

In one volume, find eight of the world's greatest plays, including *Mandragola*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Arms and the Man*, and more.

Collection | Comedy/Play

BRADBURY, RAY

Fahrenheit 451



Guy Montag is a fireman who destroys the most illegal of commodities, the printed book. But when Clarisse, a young neighbor, introduces him to a past where people lived without fear and a present with enlightening ideas from books instead of mindless television, Montag questions his job, society, and his whole world.

RL: 5.2 | Book | Science Fiction: Dystopian | Futuristic

PLUTARCH

Fall of the Roman Republic

This collection of selected biographies from Plutarch's *Lives* creates a picture of the political divisions, battles, and leaders that led to the fall of the Roman Republic.

Book | History | Second & First Century B.C., Roman Republic

GOETHE, JOHANN WOLFGANG VON

Faust

Dissatisfied with his life despite his vast education, Dr. Faust strikes a deal with the devil—the devil will give him a moment in life so glorious he wishes it to never end. But if the devil succeeds in granting this moment, then Dr. Faust's soul belongs to the devil after death.

RL: 9 | Play | Drama | 1400s-1500s, Germany

KIERKEGAARD, SOREN

Fear and Trembling

From a leading pioneer of existentialism and one of the greatest philosophers of the nineteenth century comes an analysis of the anxiety Abraham must have felt when he was commanded to surrender all and offer Isaac as a human sacrifice.

Book | Religious/Philosophy

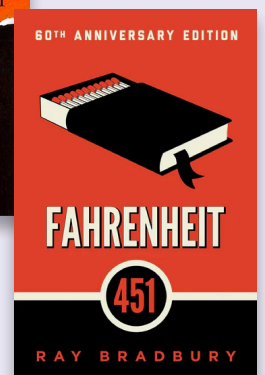
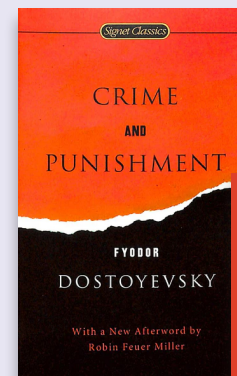
SHELLEY, MARY

Frankenstein



Originating from a challenge to write a ghost story when Mary Shelley was only eighteen years old, *Frankenstein* is the tale of one man's obsession with the secret of life. When Victor Frankenstein succeeds in creating life from nothing, he finds the creature ugly and shuns it. Frankenstein's monster lives a lonely life, shunned by everyone, and eventually seeks revenge on Frankenstein.

RL: 12.4 | Book | Classics/Horror/Science Fiction/Gothic | Late 1700s, Europe



DICKENS, CHARLES

Great Expectations

Pip, an orphan boy who is poor and bullied, dreams of better days in Victorian England. But when he's given the opportunity to reach his goals, he realizes that he may have left behind what he truly values in his pursuit of these "great expectations."

RL: 9.2 | Book | Fiction | 1800s, England

SWIFT, JONATHAN

Gulliver's Travels

Lemuel Gulliver embarks on four sea voyages to fantastic lands, meeting tiny people, giants, impractical thinkers, and savage humans, all which bring to light the flaws in humans and in society.

RL: 13.5 | Book | Adventure/Fantasy

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM

Hamlet

Considered Shakespeare's masterpiece, *Hamlet* follows a young prince's revenge for the murder of his father. As he seeks justice, he finds himself facing a ghost, murders, and madness, calling into question revenge vs. justice and appearance vs. reality.

RL: 10.5 | Play | Drama | Late Middle Ages/Early Renaissance, Denmark

THUCYDIDES

History of the Peloponnesian War

Thucydides' detailed account of the causes and consequences of the decades-long war between Athens and Sparta.

RL: 12+ | Book | Non-Fiction/History/Politics
Ancient Greece

DE SALES, FRANCIS, TRANS. RYAN, JOHN K.

Introduction to the Devout Life

Addressed as a personal letter to Philothea, "lover of God," this spiritual guidebook encourages readers to recognize their call to holiness and shows them how to grow in that holiness by incorporating prayer and sacraments into their schedule, practicing virtues, and battling temptations.

RL: 12+ | Book | Religious

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM

Julius Caesar

When Julius Caesar's ambition drives him toward becoming king of Rome, conspirators plot to kill him for "the good of Rome." But their betrayal turns into civil war and tragedy. Based on Plutarch's *Lives*, this account of Caesar's assassination explores political idealism and the consequences of unchecked ambition.

RL: 10.8 | Play | Drama | Ancient Rome

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM

King Lear

When King Lear divides his kingdom between his daughters based on how much they love him, he soon discovers the cost of his pride as his kingdom and family fall apart.

RL: 8.8 | Play | Drama | Ancient Britain

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM

Macbeth

When three witches prophesy that Macbeth will become king, he lets his ambition consume him. He murders to gain the throne, but is driven into madness by guilt and fear, leading to his downfall.

RL: 10.9 | Play | Tragedy | 1000s, Scotland

FRANKL, VIKTOR E.

Man's Search for Meaning

In this moving memoir, a Holocaust survivor shares his experiences in the Nazi concentration camps and explores logotherapy, the idea that finding meaning is the key to survival.

RL: 10 | Book | Non-Fiction/Memoir | 1940s, Europe

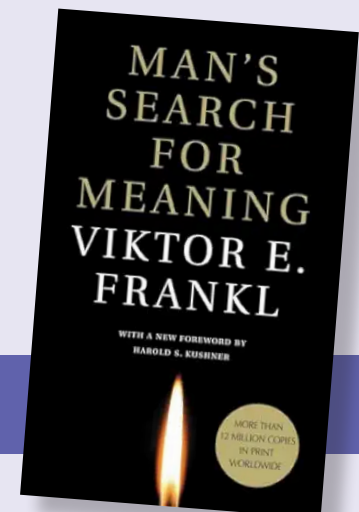
SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM

Much Ado About Nothing**Nothing**

A comedy of deception in which Don John tricks the smitten Claudio into distrusting Hero, and friends trick the sparring Beatrice and Benedick into falling in love.

Play | 1600s, Italy

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.”
—Viktor E. Frankl (*Man's Search for Meaning*)



DICKENS, CHARLES

Oliver Twist

Oliver Twist, an orphan, runs away from the workhouse to be taken in by a den of thieves. As he attempts to survive, his childhood innocence is threatened by the criminal ways of those around him.

RL: 11.3 | Book | Fiction | 1800s, England

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

On Christian Doctrine

Offering both practical and theoretical instruction on reading and interpreting Scripture, this foundational work of Christian theology and biblical interpretation lays the groundwork for modern hermeneutics and semiotics as well as exploring Scripture, signs and symbols, and living in unity with Christ.

Book | Religious/Philosophy

CICERO, MARCUS TULLIUS

On Duties

A commentary on the political and ethical values of the governing class of the Roman Republic.

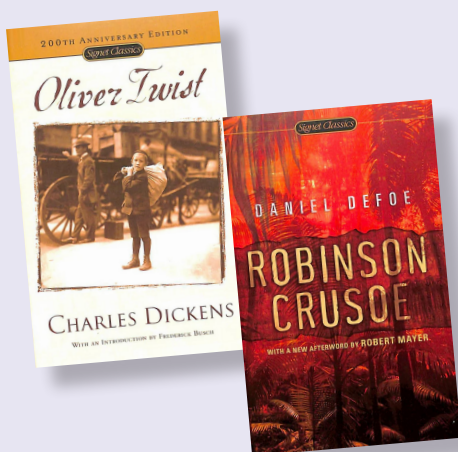
RL: 12+ | Book | Philosophy | Ancient Rome

CICERO, MARCUS TULLIUS

On Friendship

Cicero lists qualities that make good friends and distinguishes those from bad friends, providing personal examples and emphasizing virtue's essential role in friendship.

RL: 12+ | Book | Non-Fiction/Philosophy | Ancient Rome



SOLZHENITSYN, ALEXANDER

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

A memoir-style account of the harsh environment of the prisoners' daily struggle in a Soviet labor camp.

RL: 5.5 | Book | Historical Fiction: Modern 1950s, Russia

PLATO

Plato's Dialogues

Containing seven of Plato's most esteemed works, including *The Republic*, this volume embodies the shining spirit of Platonic philosophy.

RL: 12 + | Collection | Classics/Non-Fiction Ancient Greece

PLUTARCH

Plutarch's Lives (or, Parallel Lives)

A collection of biographies that pairs up notable Greek and Roman leaders to compare their moral virtues and failings.

RL: 12 + | Book | Non-Fiction/Biography Ancient Rome and Greece

AUSTEN, JANE

Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen's classic story takes place in the nineteenth century English countryside and portrays the complexities of human relationships through the Bennet family. These complexities are particularly seen through the romantic complications of the independent and spirited Elizabeth Bennet and the proud yet mysterious Mr. Darcy.

RL: 12 | Book | Fiction | 1800s, England

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM

Richard III

The ruthless Duke of Gloucester manipulates and murders his way to the English throne, where he meets his tragic demise.

RL: 9.5 | Play | Drama | Late 1400s, England

DEFOE, DANIEL

Robinson Crusoe

Shipwrecked on an island, a young seaman must survive in the wilderness for nearly three decades.

RL: 12.3 | Book | Historical Fiction: British 1600s

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM

Romeo and Juliet

Two young people from feuding families fall in love, which creates a chain of events filled with betrayal and tragedy.

RL: 8.6 | Play | Drama | Renaissance, Italy

ANONYMOUS

Sir Gawain and theGreen Knight

When a mysterious knight in green armor challenges the honor of King Arthur's court, the gallant Gawain volunteers to face him, beginning an adventure that tests his loyalty, honesty, and ability to forgive.

RL: 9.0 | Poetry | Medieval/Fantasy/Poetry | Arthurian Middle Ages, England

VIRGIL

The Aeneid

Aeneas escapes the fall of Troy to fulfill his destiny and lay the foundations of Rome. On his journey, he navigates storms, encounters love and loss, descends into the world of the dead, and battles fierce enemies, all while caught between personal desire and the irresistible force of fate.

RL: 12+ | Poetry | Epic Poetry | Ancient Mediterranean World

“Fear of danger is ten thousand times more terrifying than danger itself.”
—Daniel Defoe (*Robinson Crusoe*)

TACITUS

The Annals of Imperial Rome

A clear and vivid account of the major historical events from shortly before Augustus' death to the death of Nero, including the reign of terror; the great fire of Rome; and the wars, poisonings, scandals, conspiracies, and murders of imperial life.

RL: 12+ | Book | Non-Fiction/History | Ancient Rome

GIOIA, DANA AND R. S. GWYNN

The Art of the Short Story

A collection of short stories paired with explanations of the elements of fiction and critical articles.

Anthology | Fiction

CHAUCER, GEOFFREY

The Canterbury Tales



A vivid portrait of fourteenth-century society through the tales of pilgrims on their way to Canterbury.

Collection | Fiction/Poetry/Short Stories | 1300s, England

POTOK, CHAIM

The Chosen



An accident at a softball game sparks an unlikely friendship between Reuven, a modern Orthodox Jew, and Danny, a Hasidic boy bound by strict religious traditions. As they face their futures and their families' expectations, they come to rely on each other and learn what true friendship really means.

RL: 6.6 | Book | Historical Fiction/Religious | 1940s, New York City

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

The Confessions

Penned after he became a bishop, Augustine's autobiography recounts his early years caught between two worldviews, his pagan father's and his devout Catholic mother's; his struggles with temptation and secular ambitions; and his eventual conversion to Christianity. Woven within his personal narrative is one of the most sophisticated theological arguments in the history of Christianity, which has profoundly impacted the course of history and continues to influence souls today.

RL: 9.7 | Book | Religious/Autobiography

BOETHIUS

The Consolation of Philosophy

As a Christian high-ranking government official who fell out of favor with Emperor Theodoric, Boethius composed this work as he was imprisoned and awaiting execution. In it, he formulates answers to some of life's most enduring questions in the form of a conversation with Lady Philosophy in one of the most influential works of the Middle Ages.

RL: 12+ | Book | Philosophy | 500s, Roman Empire

MILLER, ARTHUR

The Crucible



Set during the historic Salem witch trials and based on historical people and real events, this play brings to life the hysteria caused by fears of witchcraft as a parable about McCarthyism.

Play | Historical Fiction/Tragedy | 1600s, America: Salem, MA

ALIGHIERI, DANTE

The Divine Comedy (Part I: Hell, Part II: Purgatory, Part III: Paradise)

An allegorical poem in which Dante, guided by Virgil, journeys through hell, purgatory, and heaven. Representing the soul's journey toward God, Dante witnesses the punishments of souls in hell, the cleansing of souls in purgatory, and the divine truth and beauty of heaven.

RL: 9 | Series | Poetry

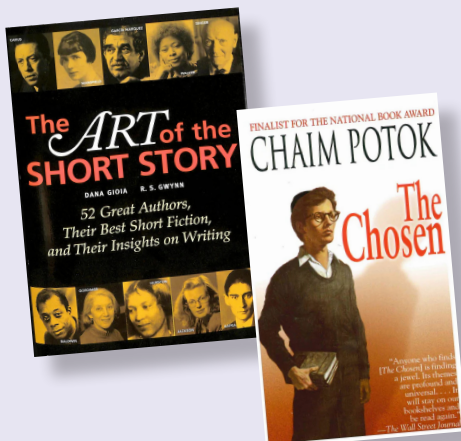
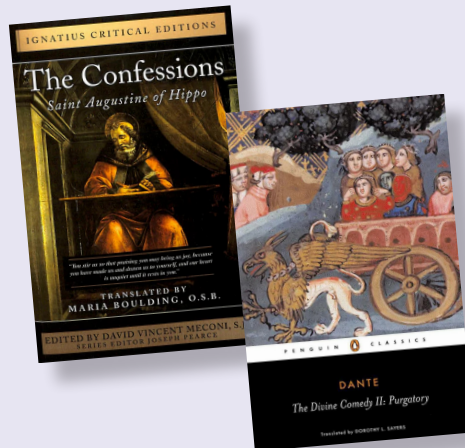
ANONYMOUS

The Dream of the Rood



The finest religious poem in Old English, in which the cross ("rood") describes Christ's crucifixion from its own perspective and depicts Christ as a warrior hero. The Dreamer in the poem relates a "vision" that provides a profound meditation on faith and sacrifice.

RL: 10 | Poetry | Religious/Poetry | First century, Holy Land



“The day that man allows true love to appear, those things which are well made will fall into confusion and will overturn everything we believe to be right and true.”
 -Dante Alighieri (*The Divine Comedy*)

LIVY

The Early History of Rome

With events from the foundation of Rome through the seven kings, the Republic's establishment and struggles, and Rome's recovery from the Gallic invasion, Livy records the characters and legends of Rome in a brilliant, imaginative style.

RL: 12+ | Book | History | Ancient Rome

HAMILTON, ALEXANDER, JAMES MADISON, AND JOHN JAY

The Federalist Papers



Hailed by Thomas Jefferson as the "best commentary on the principles of government which was ever written," this collection of eighty-five essays by our Founding Fathers was intended to persuade voters to ratify the Constitution. Created during a critical moment in our nation's history, *The Federalist Papers* provides a running ideological commentary on the key issues facing American democracy.

RL: 12+ | Essays | Non-Fiction/Political Essays | 1780s, America

LEWIS, C. S.

The Four Loves

An examination of the four types of human love—affection, friendship, erotic love, and the love of God—and how love works in our daily lives.

Book | Religious/Philosophy

CAESAR, JULIUS

The Gallic War

Caesar's autobiographical account of the conquest of Gaul and the Roman invasions of Britain and Germany.

Book | History | 50s B.C., Roman Republic

HERODOTUS

The Histories

From the "Father of History," who wrote around 440 B.C., comes one of the earliest surviving historical narratives. Weaving truth and legend into his accounts of the Trojan War and the Greco-Persian Wars, *The Histories* continues to capture our modern imagination.

RL: 12+ | Book | Non-Fiction/History | Ancient Greece

EUSEBIUS

The History of the Church

With a record of martyrdoms, heresies, schisms, and Church councils, this is the only surviving account of the Church during the first three hundred years.

Book | History | Early Christianity-A.D. 300s

HUGO, VICTOR

The Hunchback of Notre-Dame

Set against the grandeur of the towering Notre-Dame cathedral, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* follows Quasimodo, the deformed bell ringer, and his unrequited love for the kind-hearted gypsy, Esmeralda. As Hugo contrasts the timeless beauty of the cathedral with the corruption of humanity, he critiques social inequality and upholds compassion.

RL: 11.8 | Book | Gothic Fiction | 1482, Paris

HOMER

The Iliad

Homer's timeless poem conveys the horror and heroism of men and gods amid the devastation of the final days of the Trojan War.

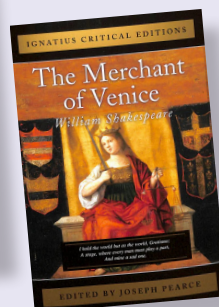
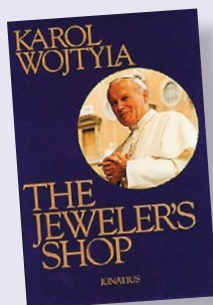
RL: 11.3 | Poetry | Epic Poetry | Ancient Greece

WOJTYLA, KAROL

The Jeweler's Shop

Written by Pope Saint John Paul II before he was pope and set in front of a jeweler's shop where wedding rings are purchased, this three-act play is full of wisdom and insights into the nature of love and the risks and rewards of deep, lasting commitment.

RL: 8 | Play | Fiction/Play | 1960s, Poland



CHESTERTON, G. K.

The Man Who Was



Thursday: A Nightmare

When Gabriel Syme, a detective, infiltrates a secret organization where seven anarchists operate using the days of the week as their secret names, he uncovers plots of terrorism and conspiracy that prove surreal and thought-provoking.

Book | Mystery/Philosophical Allegory | Early 1900s, London

SALVUCCI, CLAUDIO R.

The Menagerie of Marsepink



When a bright zoology professor arrives at Long Island College, he discovers an angelic heiress in a hidden tower who watches over a collection of handmade mystical animals. A tribute to the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Menagerie of Marsepink* is a moral allegory on the limits of natural science and the supernatural reality of the soul.

RL: 9 | Novella | Moral Allegory | Modern Day, New York

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM

The Merchant of Venice



Bassanio desires to impress the wealthy heiress Portia, but he doesn't have money to do so. He borrows from a Jewish moneylender Shylock, and when he can't pay back the money, Shylock demands a pound of Antonio's flesh. In a clever courtroom twist, Portia intervenes to save Antonio in this lively comedy.

RL: 9.4 | Play | Comedy | 1590s, Venice

HOMER

The Odyssey

As Odysseus strives to return home from the Trojan War, his wife fights off suitors trying to win her hand and the throne. Odysseus must survive shipwreck, outwit Cyclops, persevere against gods and goddesses, and endure the temptation of the Sirens in this ten-year voyage that is an evocation of an everyman's journey through life.

RL: 10.3 | Poetry | Epic Poetry | Ancient Greece

AESCHYLUS

The Oresteian Trilogy

A powerful ancient Greek trilogy of tragedies filled with murder, madness, and justice. When King Agamemnon returns home as a victor in war, he is betrayed and killed by his wife. What follows is a cycle of revenge until a system of civil justice finally transforms society.

RL: 11 | Play | Tragedy | Ancient Greece | Ancient Rome

XENOPHON

The Persian Expedition

An account of Xenophon's epic march into Persia as they confronted the barbarian world, possibly compiled from diaries of the time.

Book | History | 400s B.C., Ancient Greece and Persia

WILDE, OSCAR

The Picture of Dorian Gray



Gray

Young Dorian Gray is drawn to pursue a life of pleasure and sells his soul in exchange for eternal youth and beauty. While he dives into a life of sin, he is viewed as a gentleman by society. Yet his portrait, originally painted by a friend, changes and records every one of Dorian's misdeeds.

RL: 7.7 | Book | Fiction | Late 1800s, England

SYNGE, J. M., SEAN O'CASEY, AND W. B. YEATS

The Playboy of the Western World: And Other Plays

When a young man claims to have killed his father, the Irish villagers hold him up as a local hero. But when the father arrives, alive and well, the villagers turn on him. A culturally significant play that was greeted with riots at its first performance and marks a vital stage in the explosion of Irish drama at the turn of the century.

Play | History | Drama | 1900s, Ireland

PLATO

The Republic

Through conversations between Socrates and his companions, Plato explores the ideal society and the virtues of the human soul. He covers organization, education of rulers, and what makes society—and an individual—truly good.

RL: 12+ | Book | Non-Fiction/Philosophy | Ancient Greece

ST. BENEDICT OF NURSIA

The Rule of St. Benedict

A practical guide to Christian monastic life, providing guidance for daily routines, moral conduct, and spiritual discipline to make progress in the Christian virtues and gain eternal life.

RL: 8 | Book | History | Religious | 500s, Italy

HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL

The Scarlet Letter



In Puritan Boston in the 1600s, Hester Prynne is forced to wear a scarlet "A" on her chest as punishment for having a baby out of wedlock, though she refuses to reveal the identity of the baby's father. When her husband arrives in town seeking revenge, he plots to expose the father's identity.

RL: 11.7 | Book | Fiction/Historical Fiction | 1640s, Massachusetts

ANONYMOUS

The Song of Roland

Charlemagne's warrior nephew valiantly led his men into battle against the Saracens but died in the massacre, defiant to the end. Told in majestic verses, the battle becomes a symbolic struggle between Christianity and paganism, while Roland's last stand is the ultimate expression of honor in twelfth-century France.

RL: 9.8 | Poetry | Epic Poetry | Medieval Europe

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM



The Tempest

Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, and his daughter, Miranda, have been stranded on a magical island for years. As part of Prospero's plot for justice, he creates a magical tempest to shipwreck Antonio, his usurping brother, on the island. But while Prospero tries to control the reconciliation, Miranda travels the path of love and mercy.

RL: 13.1 | Play | Comedy | Late 1500s/Early 1600s, Mediterranean Sea

SOPHOCLES

The Theban Plays

With profound insights into the human condition and mankind's struggle with fate, these three plays (King Oedipus, Oedipus at Colonus, and Antigone) center on legends surrounding the royal house of Thebes.

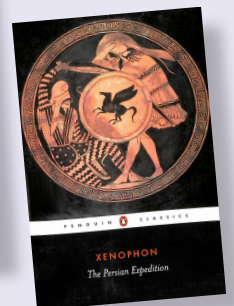
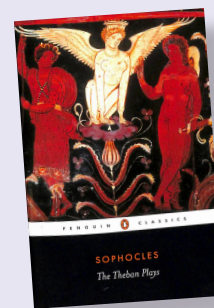
RL: 5 | Play | Drama | Ancient Greece

LIVY

The War with Hannibal

An account of the Second Punic War with rich details of the immense armies of Hannibal crossing the Alps with his elephants; Hannibal's panic as he approaches the gates of Rome; and the massacre of the Roman army in thick fog at the Battle of Lake Trasimene.

Book | History | 200s B.C., Roman Republic



ELIOT, T. S.



The Waste Land, Prufrock, and Other Poems

Including one of the most influential poetic works of the twentieth century, *The Waste Land*, this collection contains T. S. Eliot's defining early works. Layered with myths, musical language, literary allusion, and universal emotions, these poems establish Eliot's defining voice.

RL: 14.1 | Poetry

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM



Twelfth Night

When twins Viola and Sebastian are separated by a shipwreck, Viola disguises herself as a man named Cesario to serve Duke Orsino. Duke Orsino sends Cesario to woo the Countess Olivia, and Olivia falls in love with Cesario. Meanwhile, Sebastian arrives and is confused to be Cesario. As mistaken identities confuse and complicate love, comedy ensues.

Play | Comedy

STOWE, HARRIET BEECHER



Uncle Tom's Cabin

Following several characters as they endure beatings for heroically sticking to their beliefs, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, upheld for its historical and literary significance, depicts the atrocities of slavery and the incompatibility of it with Christian morality and American ideals.

RL: 7.7 | Book | Fiction | Late 1800s, America: LA

BECKETT, SAMUEL

Waiting for Godot

As two homeless men wait for someone or something named Godot, they engage in a drama spun of their consciousness. With comical wordplay of poetry and nonsense, interpreted as mankind's search for meaning, this play is considered one of the most magical allegories of our time.

Play | Tragicomedy

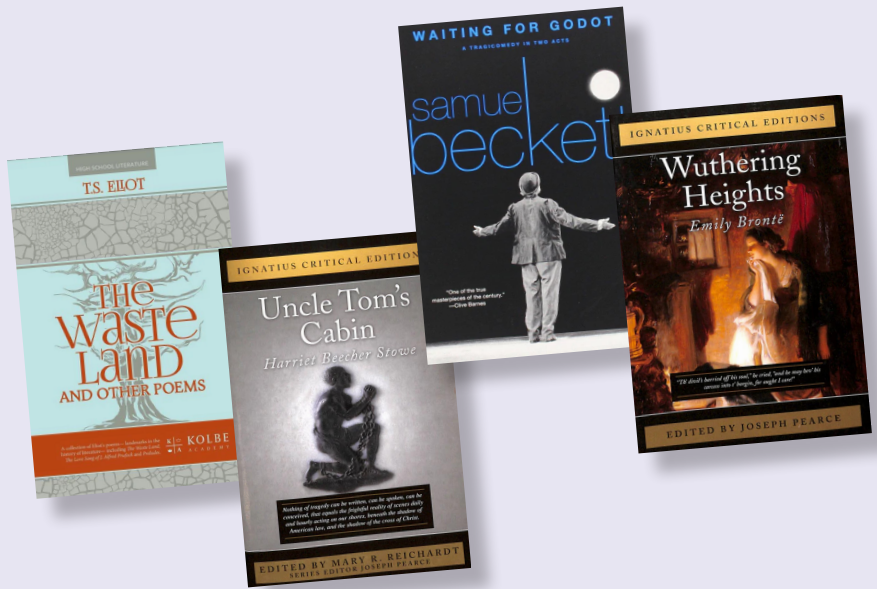
BRONTE, EMILY



Wuthering Heights

Among the moors of eighteenth-century England, the lives of two families become intertwined through the forces of marriage, passion, and revenge.

RL: 11.3 | Fiction | 1700s, England



Animal Story Starters

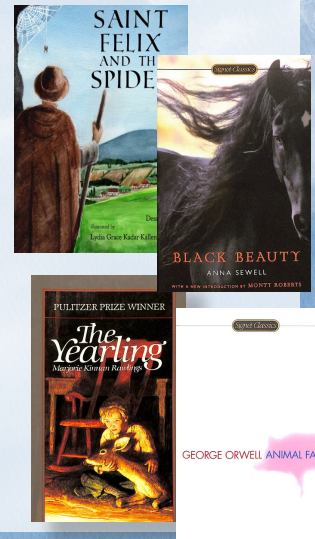
Some students' pathway to delving into stories is through animals. Here are classical tales in which animals play a key role.

K-2: [St. Felix and the Spider by Dessi Jackson](#)

3-5: [Black Beauty by Anna Sewell](#)

6-8: [The Yearling by Marjorie Rawlings](#)

High School: [Animal Farm by George Orwell](#)



KOLBE

SUMMER CAMPS!

For a more interactive experience, our Summer Reading Clubs provide opportunities to connect with other readers and discuss books in a virtual setting. Enroll for these courses and clubs through the [Kolbe Portal](#) and see our extensive course listing at courses.kolbe.org (to view summer courses, select "2026-SU" from the Academic Term filter).

Summer 2026 Camps, Clubs, and Classes

Faith & Playdough PK-1
Faith & Legos 2-5
Theology of the Body for Middle School
Theology of the Body for High School

Baking Class 3-9
Cooking Class 3-8
Lego Stop Motion 5-8

Pre-Reader Bootcamp PK-1
Emerging Reader Bootcamp K-2
Reading Fluency Bootcamp 2-4
Spelling Bootcamp 2-4
Grammar Skills 3-5: Grammar Basics
Writing Skills 3-5: Paragraph Writing
Creative Writing Camp 6-8
Writing Skills 6-8: Essays and Outlining
Writing Skills 7-9: MLA Bootcamp
Writing Skills 9-10: Quote Integration

Study Skills: Summarizing & Paraphrasing 3-5
Study Skills: Notetaking 5-7
Study Skills: Microsoft 365 Word
Study Skills: Microsoft 365 PowerPoint
Study Skills: Notetaking 8-10
Study Skills 9-10: How to Read a Book

Book Club Camp K-2: Saint Story Read Alouds
Book Club Camp K-2: Fairy Tales
Book Club Camp 3-5: Book of Three
Book Club Camp 3-5: Magician's Nephew
Book Club Camp 3-5: Pippi Longstocking
Book Club Camp 6-8: Out of the Silent Planet
Book Club Camp 6-8: Treasure Island
Book Club Camp 9-12: Fahrenheit 451
Book Club Camp 9-12: The Great Divorce

PK-2 STEM Camp
Math Fact Bootcamp 1-2
Math Fact Bootcamp 3-4
Math 5/6 Readiness
Introduction to Coding
Math 7/8 Readiness

Let your imagination soar...

kolbe.org/summer



JOIN US!

CLICK HERE!

