

Summer Reading Ideas for 4th Graders

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- ***The Lacemaker and the Princess*** by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley – Like her mother and grandmother, Isabelle is a lacemaker in the time of King Louis XVI, and she longs to meet Her Majesty, the Queen, Marie Antoinette, when she delivers lace to the palace. In a twist of fate, she does meet the Queen and becomes the friend of Princess Marie-Therese, who dresses her well and makes her vow to be faithful the rest of her days. This historical fiction book is an excellent introduction to the French Revolution.
- ***The Puzzling World of Winston Breen*** by Eric Berlin – Winston Breen loves puzzles so much that his brain practically thinks them. People all over town know of his obsession and share puzzles with him. But when he must solve a puzzle from wooden strips hidden in his sister's birthday gift, his thinking skills are challenged. All sorts of puzzles are woven into this creative book, and the website features others to solve.
- ***The Wish Giver: Three Tales from Coven Tree*** by Bill Brittain – While at a fair, three people from a small town purchase small cards guaranteed to get them the one wish they each desire. They soon discover that they should have carefully worded their wishes! Things begin to happen that none of them expect. This book won the Newbery Honor in 1984.
- ***Randolph Caldecott's Picture Books*** by Randolph Caldecott – This man's name is associated with the medal given to the best artwork in a children's book each year, but he was an artist and illustrator of fame in England in the late 19th century. Several of his most famous stories are reproduced in this volume, including "The House that Jack Built," "The Farmer's Boy," and "Hey Diddle Diddle."
- ***Sports Shorts*** edited by Tanya Dean – Eight short stories feature the real-life experiences of children's authors Joseph Bruchac, David Lubar, Marilyn Singer, Terry Trueman, Dorian Cyrone, Tanya West, Alexandra Siy, and Jamie McEwan. Short biographies of each writer follow their stories.
- ***Jazz on a Saturday Night*** by Leo & Diane Dillon – All the immortal musicians of the jazz scene come together for one dreamy night in this colorful and musical book. The rhythmic text brings the beat of the words to life, and an accompanying CD helps listeners hear the various instruments' sounds. Biographical information is included.
- ***The Many Rides of Paul Revere*** by James Cross Giblin – Contrary to the poetic descriptions of his life, the facts behind Paul Revere's story present a hard-working, conscientious man who rode more than once to warn others about attacks and dangers. This detailed biography sets the records straight and expands on the many talents of this American patriot.
- ***Casey Back at Bat*** by Dan Gutman – Following his strike-out in the famous poem "Casey at the Bat," the slugger wants redemption at plate! This time, the ball flies around the world and through time, striking the Leaning Tower of Pisa, breaking the Sphinx's nose, and going right back to the stadium! The illustrations are collage and paint.
- ***Blown Away!*** by Jean Hiatt Harlow – When a hurricane hits Jake Pitney's town in the Florida Keys, he searches desperately for his family, along with his new-found friend Mara and the eccentric fisherman named Sharkey for whom he has been working.
- ***Our Only May Amelia*** by Jennifer L. Holm – May Amelia is known not just as a tomboy in her neck of the woods; she is the only female child born in her family in as long as their memories stretch. She narrates the story with spirit and wit, telling of her activities with so many brothers in Oregon in the early 1900s. This book won the Newbery Honor in 2000.
- ***Emmy and the Incredible Shrinking Rat*** by Lynne Jonnell – Emmy's life with her horrible governess, Miss Barmy, never seems to have a bright spot. Her parents return home from long vacations, only to leave again after a few days. Her A+ efforts in school never satisfy anyone, and she never acquires a true friend...until the escape of the classroom pet leads her to an incredible world of fantastic animals. From there, Emmy only has to use her wits to uncover the truth about Miss Barmy and her parents. This is also a really cool flip book!
- ***One Thousand Tracings: Healing the Wounds of WWII*** by Lita Judge – In her grandparents' attic, the author found photographs, newspaper articles, and tracings of feet in desperate need of shoes and boots. The need of Europeans for basic supplies led to "the Action", a project which involved sending necessities to families whose lives were in turmoil after the battles of World War II.
- ***The Escape of Oney Judge: Martha Washington's Slave Finds Freedom*** by Emily Arnold McCully – This historical fiction picture book introduces readers to an incredibly strong woman who served as the First Lady's slave for many years, only to grasp the chance to run away when she discovers she will be "given" to a relative after Martha's death. Despite her relatively pleasant life with the Washingtons, Oney did not have choices and opportunities granted to free people, like learning to read and making money on her own.
- ***Leepike Ridge*** by N.D. Nelson – One glance at the cover of this adventure novel will make you want to open the book. Tom Hammond discovers a hidden lake, waterfall and cave, not to mention a person, after floating down the creek under the huge cliff on which his house is built. From there, he strives to get to the sunlight again, and there is no end to the surprises along the way.
- ***Gimme Cracked Corn and I Will Share*** by Kevin O'Malley – This punny book will keep you laughing as you watch two corny hens try to cross the road. The artist's carefully "egg-secuted" illustrations are bright and contain more humor.

- **The Web Files** by Margie Palatini – This picture book mystery will have you laughing at the puns and wit as the duckdetectives attempt to quack the cases of several crimes on the farm. Ask your parents about the television series Dagnet as you share some of the funniest parts in this hilarious crime story.
- **Jack Pine** by Christopher Patton – Told in well-formed verse and accompanied by lovely artwork, this is the story of one of the heartiest trees in the forest. Learn about its structure, how it helped shape the growth of the United States, and what animals and people have and do live amongst this knotty tree.
- **Pictures From Our Vacation** by Lynne Rae Perkins – Prior to their summer driving vacation to the old family home, the narrator and her brother get cameras from their mom to document the highlights of their journey. Little do they know that there is more to a trip than what meets the eye. Their maps of places, the perspectives on things, and the memories they store in their minds make this a great summer vacation book.
- **My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks: and Other Funny Family Portraits** by Hanoeh Piven – The descriptions of family members are structured similes, and the illustrations are actually found objects, arranged to look like the person or creature being described. Mom, for instance, is fluffy (and has a feather boa for hair). The dog Schmutz, is smelly and has an onion for a tail. Use this book as a springboard for writing your own family similes and creating art to accompany them.
- **Pompeii** by Richard Platt – The story of this lost city is explained well in text and illustrations of this book. Read about the building of one hut and how it becomes the center of the city of Pompeii, only to be destroyed in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.
- **My Dog May Be a Genius** by Jack Prelutsky – The U.S. Children’s Poet Laureate has created another amusing book of poetry, filled with silly rhymes and creative characters. His website provides poetry writing experiences.
- **Ox, House, Stick: the History of Our Alphabet** by Don Robb – Read about how language developed over time and consider the history of our Roman alphabet in the pages of this book. Some letters are linked to concepts, others to historical events. Interesting facts accompany the text and illustrations.
- **This is London** by Miroslav Sasek – First published in 1959, this intriguing travel book presents a colorful and interesting view of London’s history and places. Learn about the black cabs, Picadilly Circus, historic monuments, and much more. It has been updated to include 21st century facts. There are others to read in this wonderful series.
- **The Bearskinner: A Tale of the Brothers Grimm** retold by Laura Amy Schlitz – In this story of true heroism, a soldier makes a deal with an unlikely character – the devil. If he wears the skin of the bear he has killed for seven years, he will be rich for the rest of his life. Along the seven-year journey, he resists temptations and makes decisions that show his true character.
- **Doctor DeSoto** by William Steig – Dr. DeSoto is a mouse who does not treat animals dangerous to mice. When a desperate fox appears one day, he agrees to look at the fox’s aching tooth, only to suspect the fox has interesting ideas of what to do with a mouse dentist. Dr. DeSoto and his wife devise a plan to outfox the fox.
- **Madam President: the Extraordinary, True (and Evolving) Story of Women in Politics** by Catherine Thimmesh – The accomplishments of well-known and lesser-known women throughout history are highlighted in this biographical book. Women like Nancy Pelosi, Sandra Day O’Connor, Eleanor Roosevelt, Margaret Thatcher, and Abigail Adams are pioneers for their work in making opportunities for females in politics.
- **Blind Mountain** by Jane Resh Thomas – Sam is not interested in hiking with his enthusiastic, bossy dad in Montana’s mountains, but when he carelessly lets a pine bough whip against his dad’s face, their journey down the mountain becomes Sam’s responsibility. A mountain lion, his dad’s endless comments, and Sam’s choices complicate matters in this adventure story.
- **The Genius of Leonardo** by Guido Visconti – Told from the viewpoint of his apprentice, Giacomo, Leonardo da Vinci’s talents are displayed in great detail. Giacomo marvels at his master’s abilities, observes his mannerisms and techniques, and helps Leonardo as best he can. Quotes and images from Leonardo’s notes and journals abound.
- **Opposites, More Opposites, and a Few Differences** by Richard Wilbur – These witty, well-crafted poems, accompanied by carefully created artwork, present opposites in humorous ways. They are a great start to thinking about opposites in your own world!
- **Way Down Deep** by Ruth White – Ruby Jane lives in a boarding house with Miss Arbutus Ward, and she longs to know the secrets of her past. When a new family moves to town and a strange circumstance brings a mysterious boarder to the house, Ruby’s past comes to the forefront. Humorous and interesting characters abound in this story.
- **The Aurora County All-Stars** by Deborah Wiles – House Jackson is the star and captain of the baseball team in Aurora County, but an elbow injury has kept him away from the game and reading classic stories to an elderly man. When he is free to play again, the date of the town’s 200th anniversary celebration collides with the team’s only game of the season. Along with the bothersome Frances Schotz, House devises a hilarious compromise that keeps everyone content.
- **Tale of Gold** by Thelma Hatch Wyss – Orphaned in San Francisco after his father’s death, Jonathan takes his earnings as a delivery boy and follows the crowd to Alaska where he is certain gold is in his future. Along with way, he learns who to trust (and who not to trust), acquires a partner named Tip (who turns out to be a girl), and treks many miles in unbelievable conditions to seek his fortune.
- **Little Klein** by Anne Ylvisaker – As the smallest and youngest member of the Klein family, Harold Sylvester George Klein is an unlikely hero. Yet when his brothers, the Bigs, get into some trouble in the river, Little Klein and his dog LeRoy come to their rescue in an amazing, adventurous event.