

May 29, 2019

Parents and Students,

Below is a curated list of book recommendations for Rising First Grade students, in case you are looking for a place to start with book selection. Please keep in mind these specific titles are ONLY suggestions and are NOT required. Our Lower School students are at liberty to choose the titles that interest them.

- **Frog and Toad Are Friends** by: *Arnold Lobel* - (Harper Collins, 1970) *64 pages*. This classic features the escapades of Frog and Toad, an adorable amphibious duo who are the best of friends. Your child will love these five stories about friendship that include adventures such as feeling embarrassed when wearing a bathing suit, waiting for mail, finding a lost button and waking up from hibernation in the spring. Caldecott Honor Book, 1971
- **There Is a Bird on Your Head!** by: *Mo Willems* - (Hyperion Books for Children, 2007) *64 pages*. Bespeckled and a little stressed out, pessimistic Gerald the elephant has the look of a worried old man while his upbeat friend Piggie is much more kid-like and exuberant. Together they make a great pair, in much the same way as Frog and Toad. The language is simple and repetitive enough for beginning readers to enjoy. And the humor will hold their interest while they struggle with the harder parts. This book is so much fun that even struggling readers will want to read it over and over again, especially if they are able to share parts with another reader. And, happily, this is only one of several in the *Elephant and Piggie* series.
- **Is A Worry Worrying You?** by: *Ferida Wolff and Harriet May Savitz*, illustrated by: *Marie LeTourneau* - (Tanglewood Press,

2005) 32 pages. This is a cleverly written and delightfully illustrated book that enables children to investigate their fears and anxieties. An easy introduction to discussion about creative problem solving.

- **Dad, Jackie and Me** by: *Myron Uhlberg*, illustrated by: *Colin Bootman* - (Peachtree Publishers, 2005) 32 pages. An amazing semi-autobiographical picture book about a young boy and his deaf father set in Brooklyn. The year is 1947 and Jackie Robinson has just been signed to the Brooklyn Dodgers. Although Dad was never a sports fan (since he can't hear them on the radio), he becomes determined to meet Jackie in person. He wants to shake the hand of a man he views as a kindred spirit, "who works to overcome thoughtless prejudice." This book is a beautiful social justice story and also a love letter from a son to his father.
- **My Best Friend** by: *Pat Hutchins* - (Greenwillow, 1993) 32 pages. This playful story shows that two little girls can be friends and appreciate each other even though they are good at doing different things. You child will enjoy this book over and over again.
- **Raggedy Ann's Wishing Pebble** by: *Johnny Gruelle*, illustrated by: *Jan Palmer* - (Simon & Schuster, 1925) 98 pages. A beautifully illustrated book with everyone's favorite rag dolls, Ann and Andy. In this Raggedy Ann and Andy adventure, all their animal friends try to help retrieve the magic wishing pebble that has been stolen by a trickster named Minky. Opens discussions about what wishes are important.

Summer Goals for Rising First Graders

It is important that your beginning reader continue to read over the summer as to not lose all the momentum they have recently gained. Students should continue to read 20 minutes a day over the summer.

- In addition reading success is also linked to children who are read to. The summer is a wonderful opportunity to read a chapter book to your child. Last Summer we read “The BFG” by, Roald Dahl. Then we had a family movie night and watched the recent film, followed by a discussion about the differences between the book and movie.
- Have your child create a summer journal! Invite them to draw and write about their favorite things that they do each day. Children can be expected to write a sentence beginning with an uppercase letter, ending with a period and using phonetic spelling.

It’s also important to engage students in Math related activities over the summer. Addition, subtraction, money and time are all areas where your child has developed new skills this year! Keep all this new knowledge fresh and accessible by integrating activities into your daily routine for at least 10-15 minutes 3-5 days per week. For example:

- Play the “Money Game”. Have your child recognize and sort change. Then they can add coins to find out how much money they have all together!
- Teach your child how to play **Yahtzee**. As they become more familiar with the game you can encourage them to count the dice before recording their score.
- **Rat a Tat Cat** is also a fun game that teaches strategy, memory building, and addition.
- Invite your child to practice telling time throughout the day! Tell them what time dinner or snack are and let them tell you, when it’s time!
- Encourage your child to help you cook or bake! This provides them with math and fine motor practice.



Parents and Students,

Summer is upon us and it is a time for relaxing and enjoying the freedom of a less structured day. We hope our students enjoy the warm weather this summer, and we also hope that our students are able to utilize the reading skills they have up this school year.

Summer reading is incredibly important, so that our students don't experience that dreaded "summer slide" – a decline in their reading ability. Studies show that students who are not reading much, or at all, during the summer months experience a decline in their reading abilities. This effect becomes increasingly pronounced as students get older and advance in grade level.

We are encouraging our lower school students to practice their reading for a minimum of 20 minutes per day during the summer months. This can be independent reading, reading aloud with a family member, or reading with other children and/or siblings. Reading independently plays an important role in skill development as well as group reading and group discussion.

Below is a list of local Summer Reading Program links that may be helpful and fun for the students to participate in. I can't wait to see what books the children have chosen to read over the summer and the interests that have been sparked by them!

Summer Reading Programs

- Virginia Beach Public Library (June 10th-August 10th)
<https://vbpl.beanstack.org>
- Norfolk Public Library
<https://www.norfolkpubliclibrary.org>
- Chesapeake Summer Reading Program (July 1st- Aug 11th)
<https://chesapeake.beanstack.org>
- Barnes and Noble Summer Reading Program (May - September)
<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/h/summer-reading>
- Books-a-Million Summer Reading Program (mid-May - Summer)
<https://www.booksamillion.com/summeradventure>

Thank you and have a great summer!

Courtney Grew

VBFS Librarian

CourtneyG@vbfschool.org