SUMMER HELDS MANY OF MY STRONGEST and most powerful reading memories. I remember sitting under a tree in the backyard as a child, reading *Anne of Green Gables* as the shadows crossed the grass. I could not believe such grief was possible when I found out what happened at the end. I remember sitting in the backseat of the car on a long family road trip, sharing jokebooks with my brother and sister and laughing until we cried. I remember bumpy bus rides to my first job as a teen, trying to spend every minute I could reading *The Lord of the Rings*, wondering how it was possible that an author had crafted those lines. These memories became crucial stepping-stones in my life. I was making choices as a reader and having experiences with books that transformed me.

I want all kids to experience the power of those choices, first, because they feel so good, and second, because the secret power of summer reading is that it will set the stage for academic success. Scholastic has gathered some vital statistics (see “Critical Facts About Summer Reading” at scholastic.com/summer) to remind us of this.

- By the time a struggling reader reaches middle school, summer reading loss has accumulated to a two-year lag in reading achievement.
- It is estimated that the “summer slide” accounts for as much as 85 percent of the reading achievement gap between kids from lower-income families and their middle- and upper-income peers.
- Third graders who can’t read on grade level are four times more likely to not graduate by age 18 than proficient readers.

Building and shaping a strong reading life during out-of-school months plays a key role in giving every child a chance to succeed. Let’s inspire our students to create a reading plan before we send them off for the summer. Here are five ways to motivate kids for summer reading.

1. **Take the Scholastic Summer Challenge**
   The Common Core State Standards are challenging schools nationwide to raise the bar. I love the playful nature of the Scholastic Summer Challenge to enroll every classroom in this mission. Beginning May 6, kids of all ages can track their reading minutes online (at scholastic.com/summer) to earn rewards for themselves and their school. Let’s get our students ready to reach their own reading goals.

   Friendly competition gives children something to strive for, and the Summer Challenge also invites them to work in teams and be part of something bigger than themselves.

2. **Make Reading More Like Summer Camp**
   My literacy organization, LitWorld, runs LitCamps in New York City and around the world. LitCamps reimagine traditional summer camp through an innovative combination of hands-on activities and exercises that build community.

   Last year, at the end of our Harlem LitCamp, one of the children made a wistful yet wise observation. She said, “I wish tomorrow was next summer.”
Let’s make reading more like summer camp. We can take field trips to the library and search the shelves for books on a topic chosen out of a hat. We can make teams and have a “color war” for reading, trying to best one another in reading minutes for the Scholastic Challenge. We can ask our students to create something innovative in response to one of the books they’ve read and bring that creation in to share on the first days of school.

“Sometimes it’s great to download and read the digital version of a book, and other times it’s just so wonderful to turn the pages of a beautiful picture book propped up on your lap.”

3 Come on and Get Appy!
Technology is a powerful tool for building literacy skills. To develop strong reading muscles, children need to read lots of text. The Reading Rainbow app, based on the beloved TV series, invites children to travel to themed islands to discover books. Tales2Go is an award-winning mobile and desktop audiobook app designed to provide thousands of glorious read-alouds for your students. And Storia, a free e-reading app from Scholastic, is one of the only platforms of its kind that’s just for kids. It provides easy access to leveled e-books and lets kids highlight text, take notes, and use an in-app dictionary. Many of Storia’s e-books have built-in activities, and the app also includes a Reading Report feature that tracks reading habits.

Many children want to move back and forth between e-readers and the printed page. My daughter recently said to me: “Only old people are so strict about which is better or which is worse!” The young people with whom we work understand that sometimes it’s great to download and read the digital version of a book, and that other times it’s just so wonderful to slowly turn the pages of a beautiful picture book propped up on your lap.

4 Make Children the Curators of Their Reading Lives
Scholastic’s most recent Kids & Family Reading Report, released this January, found that 86 percent of children read during the summer, and on average, they read 12 books. (For more stats from this report, turn to page 34.)

Have students set summer reading goals for themselves. Set up a summer blog so you can all share recommendations and rate books as thumbs-up, thumbs-down, or middling. Students can rotate as “chief curators” of the blog each week so that over the course of the summer each of them takes on the responsibility of replying to posts and highlighting a popular title.

5 Bring the Outdoors Back in to Summer Reading
Taking “curiosity walks” is a fantastic way to bring informational text into a child’s reading repertoire. These walks also provide opportunities for authentic writing. Have children take an inspiration notebook on a class walk outside and jot down anything they see that they would like to learn more about.

Poetry also lends itself well to nature and curiosity walks. Share collections of poems with your students and set up a special section of your class blog just for poetry and “poems of the week.” By praising the merits of reading across all genres, we can build the powerful reading minutes that grow the strongest lifelong readers.

Pam Allyn is a world-renowned literacy advocate, founder of LitWorld, and acclaimed author of many books for families and educators. She is Scholastic’s Ambassador for the Read Every Day, Lead a Better Life global initiative.
Kid Reading

What are kids reading these days? Scholastic did the research!

In fall 2012, Scholastic, in conjunction with Harrison Group, conducted a survey of 1,074 children ages 6–17 and their parents to learn about family attitudes and behaviors regarding reading. We discovered some surprising shifts since the survey was last conducted in 2010. Below, we've shared some key findings from the Kids & Family Reading Report (4th edition) that you, as teachers, should find of interest and might even be able to use to your advantage!

**SHIFTING ATTITUDES**

"I like picking out library books with my mom."
—9-year-old girl, Virginia

The importance of reading books for fun has spiked upward for boys, even as it has dipped for girls.

More than half of kids say they're reading an equal mix of fiction and nonfiction at school.

Among boys and girls who read books for fun frequently (5–7 days a week), the gender gap emerges in high school.

**THE PARENT FACTOR**

More parents are saying their child does not spend enough time reading for fun.

Parents who build reading into kids’ daily routines have better success getting them to read.

83% of parents have bought a book for their child in the past 6 months (13 books on average).

"Reading is fun when it’s something I like to learn about."
—9-year-old girl, North Carolina
the Numbers

DIGITAL FUTURE

The percentage of kids who have read an e-book has almost doubled since 2010.

Half of kids ages 9-17 say they would read more books for fun if they had greater access to e-books (a 50% increase since 2010).

51% of kids who have not read an e-book are interested in doing so (including 67% of kids ages 9-11).

“It’s cool to read books on an e-reader.”
—11-year-old boy, New Jersey

SUMMER READING

99% of parents think kids their child’s age should read over the summer.

11 Number of books parents think kids should read over the summer.

92% of kids say they are more likely to finish a book that they have chosen themselves.

86% of children say they read a book (or books) over the summer.

12 Number of books kids say they read over the summer.

To learn more about the Kids & Family Reading Report, visit mediaroom.scholastic.com/kfrr.