6th Grade Graduation/Awards Ceremony

Thursday, June 18, 2015
9:15 a.m. in the gym

NOTE: Doors to the gym will not open until 8:30 a.m.

Class Parties
Food Orders

When placing food delivery orders for class parties, please place the order in the name of the classroom teacher so the office can find you. We receive a large number of delivery orders in the office on class party days and any name other than a classroom teacher will often not be recognized. We don’t want your order to get cold while we are trying to find you! Pre-paid orders with tip included are appreciated.

Yearbooks, class photos, 6th Gr Panorama, and Spring Photos

We have a few extra yearbooks that will go on sale this Friday on a first come basis. $15 Cash only! Class photos and 6th grade panorama are $10 cash only.

Spring photo packets were sent home a few weeks ago, if you would like to purchase all or part of the packet send in cash or check in the payment envelope ASAP or return photos.

Last Day of School:
Friday, June 19th, 2 Hr Early Release

This school newsletter will be issued every Wednesday during the school year on our website, under “News and Events.” You will receive an email link to the newsletter if we have your current email address. Deadline for submissions are Mondays by Noon. Email nelda.hirji@fcps.edu Please include Panther Press in the subject.
SCA is having Color Day on Monday, June 15. Each grade is asked to dress in the following colors:

K – red  
1 – purple  
2 – green  
3 – yellow  
4 – orange  
5 – dark blue  
6 – light blue

Lost and Found

Please check the cafeteria for lost lunch boxes, coats and jackets. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the end of the school year.

Calendar

Time Out of School

Please schedule your family vacations during FCPS designated holidays / breaks, which you can see at this link: http://www.fcps.edu/cal.shtml  Be aware that missing school for extended periods of time negatively impacts your child and your child's teacher.

Week of June 8th:

Monday, June 8: 2nd GR African Market, Blacktop, Lg Pod, Sm Pod, 9 am-12 pm  
Tuesday, June 9: Summer Reading Program, Lg Pod, 8:45 am-12:30 pm  
Band Concert, Cafeteria, 7 pm  
Wednesday, June 10th: 6th GR KIC, Cafeteria, 1:45-3:15  
Thursday, June 11th: 3rd GR Business Day, Behind 3rd GR wing, 8:45-11 am  
Patrol Picnic, Behind 3rd GR wing, 11:30 am-12:30 pm  
4th GR Orchestra Concert, Gym, 7-8 pm  
Friday, June 12th: 3rd & 4th Orchestra Concert, Gym, 9:15-10:00 am  
6th GR Battle of the Books, Lg Pod 2-3 pm

Week of June 15th:

Monday, June 15: 1st GR EOY Party, Lg Pod and Lower Field, 11 am - 12:30 pm  
Tuesday, June 16: Kindergarten EOY Picnic and Fun Day, Lower Field, 9-11 am  
3rd GR EOY Party, 3rd GR playground and blacktop, 9:30 am - 12:00 pm  
5th GR EOY Party, Blacktop & Grassy area behind new wing, 11am - 3pm  
2nd GR EOY Party, Sm Pod & Classrooms, 11am-2pm  
6th GR History Museum, Gym, 9am-Noon  
Wednesday, June 17: 6th GR Party (All Day), Outside/Gym  
Thursday, June 18: 6th GR Graduation, Gym, 9:15-11:00 am  
Friday, June 19: Last day of school, 2hr Early Release  
4th GR EOY Party, upper playground, field and blacktop, 10:30 am –1pm
New Bell Schedule
for 2015-2016

- Spring Hill Elementary School will start 10 minutes later than our current bell schedule. Beginning in September, school will commence at 8:50 a.m. and dismiss at 3:35 p.m.
- The earliest students may be dropped off at school will be at 8:20 AM as no coverage/supervision is provided prior to that time.

Yabe

This summer, two of our teachers, Ms. DeWispelaere and Ms. Fitzsimmons, will accompany 10 of our students from Spring Hill Elementary school in McLean, VA on an exchange program to Spring Hill's sister school, Yabe Elementary near Yokohama, Japan. Our Spring Hill students will live with Japanese families and attend school with them.

We are raising funds for our two teachers to travel with the students and related transportation costs.

Our teachers will help organize the trip, help our students while there, and work with the Yabe school staff. It will be our third such exchange since the program began. (In the fall, Yabe students will come to the US and stay with Spring Hill families.)

It's a great way for students to learn about Japanese culture and life, to make a lasting bond with their Japanese host families, and vice versa. It's a unique exchange program for 3rd to 5th graders that we hope will grow!

Please donate and play a part in making this happen.

Please spread the word by sharing this link too.

Thank you for helping the teachers, the students, and Japan-US cultural exchange!

http://www.gofundme.com/springhillyabe
Order Next Year’s School Supplies Online
Order next year’s school supplies online now through August 7th! Save time and reduce your summer to-do list. Log onto www.ordermypack.com and enter our school code – 107867. When you place your order, remember to order supplies for the grade your child will be in next year. All orders will be delivered to your home 2-3 weeks before school starts in September. If you have any questions, contact Jill Holloman at jnholloman@cox.net. The Spring Hill PTO provides this service for our school.

Spring Hill Outdoor Classroom Maintenance Volunteer Sign Up for Summer 2015
Help us this summer weeding and watering the raised beds outdoor classroom and the courtyard. Kindly click on the sign up genius link below and volunteer to come in and water and weed (just once in a week) sometime during the summer. Alternatively email Kristin Mears at kamears@hotmail.co.uk. We will email you directions by June 19th.

http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090844AF5928A13-spring1

Thank You!
Each week there are so many volunteers that take time to make our school a little better. Many thanks to:

• Jill Holloman for coordinating the ability to purchase school supplies for next year in one easy online order
• Kayleen Widdifield and Kathy Carey for all their guidance for our Room Parents this year
• Keuri Patel and Valerie Daniels for coordinating our informative Parent University speakers this year
• Pamela Fox and Jina Lee for providing critical coffee for the Parent University events
• John Mealey for setting up the Chess Club ice cream party finale and Kristin Bone and Amy O’Quinn for their help with Chess Club this year!
SPRING HILL LIBRARY RECOMMENDS - Summer 2015 Reading Lists – Links:

Fairfax County Public Schools:
http://www.fcps.edu/is/summer/reading/

Rising 6th graders:
http://www.fcps.edu/is/summer/reading/6.shtml

Rising 7-8th graders:
http://www.fcps.edu/is/summer/reading/78.shtml

Fairfax County Public Libraries- Summer 2015 Reading Program
http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/kids/
http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/kids/gradedbooks.htm

Virginia State Reading Association: Virginia Readers’ Choice Program 2015-16:
https://www.vsra.org/virginia-readers-choice/

Caldecott Award Winners:
http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottmedal

Newbery Award Winners:
http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberymedal

U. S. Library of Congress/ Kids
http://read.gov/kids/

Jon Scieszka’s GUYS READ site:
http://www.guysread.com/

American Library Assoc.- Notable Children’s Books 2015
http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/notalists

Children’s Choice Book Awards from the Children’s Book Council:
http://ccbookawards.com/

AND DON’T FORGET TO CHECK OUT YOUR FAVORITE AUTHOR’S WEBSITE!!
50 Best Books for Summer from Instructor

Our annual summer reading list is more spectacular than ever. Twice the books means more stories to love.

Whether they’re poring over a bayou mystery in a backyard tent, cracking up over spork-wielding rats while lying on a beach, or sitting in a tree house uncovering the intricacies of nest building, your students can look forward to a summer filled with learning and trips to magical lands. You’ve played no small role in nurturing their love of books: read-alouds they won’t forget, carefully crafted and illustrated character studies to show off at family Fridays, author visits that made them dream of writing their own books.

We received a flood of wonderful, diverse books as we prepared for our summer reading spectacular. We read, and read some more; we shared fun facts and story lines. We asked our teacher advisers, Facebook fans, and Twitter followers to weigh in. The result is a list of 50 books your students (and you) won’t want to put down. Happy summer reading!

Want to share these books with your students? First, download an easy-to-print PDF of our Summer Book List. Then, check the boxes for books you recommend for your class. Download the PDF here:

• Instructor's 2015 Summer Reading List

Humor

Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer
In letters to her dearly departed abuelita and others, Sophie worries about missing L.A., her dad’s unemployment, and poultry thieves. Her voice rings true in this tale of family, adventure, and raising chickens.
Return to Augie Hobble
“This has a little bit of everything: twisted fairy tales, werewolves, bullies, and humor.”
—Karen Arendt, librarian, T. J. Connor Elementary, Scottsville, NY and blogger at TJ Connor Elementary Media Center.

The Terrible Two
Far be it from us to condone pranking, but if we were to, we’d recommend this very funny manual on the art. Plus, there are cows, goofy drawings, shouting principals, and other stuff preteens will find hilarious.

Petlandia
A fiendish alpha cat, her dim-witted canine nemesis, and a lovesick hamster declare independence from humans and form the nation of Petlandia. Power struggles ensue as rats, snakes, and even fleas demand a voice. Sublimely immature.

Frank Einstein and the Electro-Finger
By Jon Scieszka, illustrated by Brian Biggs. $13.95. Grades 3–6.
“It has action and adventure, it’s graphic-intensive, and it has a superhero vibe. I just won’t mention the science part too loudly.” —Kendra Patterson, librarian, Andrews (TX) Middle School and blogger at Library Chat with Ms. Pat.

Cassidy’s Guide to Everyday Etiquette (and Obfuscation)
Worst. Summer. Ever? That’s what it looks like to tomboy Cassidy, who is dreading the five weeks she must spend in etiquette classes. Not to mention her mother’s tendency to use words like obfuscation.

Dragons at Crumbling Castle
From the fertile imagination of the late best-selling author comes a ridiculously droll collection of stories that are one part Roald Dahl, one part Monty Python, and the rest pure Pratchett.

Rude Cakes
This pretty pink cake is a nasty piece of work—pushy and rude—until it’s taught a lesson about manners by a goofy troupe of colorful Cyclopses.

Fantasy & Adventure

Circus Mirandus
“Some books take readers to different places or let us experience fantastical lands, but Circus
Mirandus brings the magic to our world.” —Jen Vincent, coordinator of instructional technology, School District U-46, Elgin, IL and blogger at Teach Mentor Texts.

**Last of the Sandwalkers**
In this funny, adventure-filled graphic novel deeply rooted in science, a society of beetles, led by young scientist Lucy, explores the precarious desert world outside its palm tree.

**Ratscalibur**
With his super-heightened sense of smell (chicken bones—yum!) and a magical spork dubbed Ratscalibur in hand, kid-turned-rat Joey fights to save a kingdom of fellow rats.

**The Princess in Black**
By Shannon Hale and Dean Hale, illustrated by LeUyen Pham. $6.99. Grades K–3.
Princesses in black are bored by teatime, gallop breakneck on jet-black ponies (not pink-maned unicorns), and rescue boys from monsters. Finally, the perfect role-model princess!

**Nightbird**
In a place where monsters might be real, 12-year-old Twig stores up her hurts “as if they were a tower made of fallen stars”—until she finds a friend to help her break a curse and release her family’s secrets.

**Pip Bartlett's Guide to Magical Creatures**
High-strung unicorns and lilac-horned Pomeranians are a few of Pip’s allies as she battles villains like government functionary Mrs. Dreadbatch in this fantastical field guide to magical creatures.

**The Lost Track of Time**
“For fans of The Phantom Tollbooth, Alice in Wonderland, puns, space-time continuums, philosophy, and, most of all, those who know the value of a good idea, this book is a must-read.” —Brian Wyzlic, teacher, Cardinal Mooney Catholic High School, Marine City, MI and blogger at WYZ Reads.

**Interstellar Cinderella**
Antimatter hammers and sonic socket wrenches are the tools a space-age Cinderella uses to win the heart of the prince—and the happy ending involves her agreeing to be his chief mechanic, not his royal bride.

**Nonfiction**
Welcome to the Neighborhood
This intricate pop-up book explores the dwellings of seven animals that share the same forest home.

Emmanuel’s Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah
Emmanuel was born with only one functioning leg, but that didn’t stop him from achieving great things. As a child, he hopped to school two miles each way; as an adult, he bicycled 400 miles across Ghana for disability awareness.

Gingerbread for Liberty!: How a German Baker Helped Win the American Revolution
Young history buffs will love this story about a Philadelphia baker who helped change the course of the Revolutionary War with gingerbread—and kindness.

Growing up Pedro
This picture-book bio captures the struggles, and the deep brotherly bond, of MLB legends Pedro and Ramón Martinez—from their impoverished upbringing in the Dominican Republic to their glory days in the big leagues.

A Nest Is Noisy
Whether it’s the foamy home of a frog or the sandy one of a sea turtle, this book reminds readers that all nests bustle with activity.

Why’d They Wear That?: Fashion As the Mirror of History
Ever wonder why ruff collars became all the rage during the Renaissance or how sneakers came to be? Learn from this detailed account of fashion through the ages.

The Founding Fathers!: The Horse-Ridin’, Fiddle-Playin’, Book-Readin’, Gun-Totin’ - Gentlemen Who Started America
“Kids will love learning about the early leaders of our country, and the good, the bad, and the ugly character traits of each one.” —Holly Mueller, fifth- and sixth-grade ELA gifted intervention specialist, Kings Local School District (OH) and blogger at Reading, Teaching, Learning.

I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives
By Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda, with Liz Welch. $18. Grades 6–8.
Caitlin and Martin lived a world apart—she in the U.S., he in Zimbabwe—but they were brought together by a pen pal exchange that lasted six years. This uplifting memoir will have students reaching for their pens.
Realistic Fiction

**A Handful of Stars**
“Lord weaves themes of acceptance, friendship, and bravery into a novel that also celebrates the beauty of nature and the richness that animal companions bring to our lives.” —Jennifer Brittin, K–5 media teacher, Warren E. Sooy Jr. Elementary School, Hammonton, NJ

**The Penderwicks in Spring**
The fourth installment of this series finds the Penderwicks with a new sibling named Lydia. It’s an endearing story about friendship and family.

**Listen, Slowly**
On a trip to Vietnam, California-born protagonist Mai struggles to find a balance between the culture she was raised in and her family’s roots. Unlike Lai’s award-winning *Inside Out and Back Again*, this story is told in prose instead of poetry, but it’s equally as powerful.

**Gone Crazy in Alabama**
The award-winning author rounds out a trilogy about three sisters as they travel from Brooklyn to Alabama to visit their grandmother.

**Dear Hank Williams**
Eleven-year-old Tate P. Ellerbee writes a series of letters to country music star Hank Williams as part of a class assignment in a relatable story of family, tragedy, and love.

**Ice Cream Summer**
Sís cleverly slips lessons on history, vocabulary, and math into this tale of summer fun as Joe narrates everything he’s learned in a letter to his grandfather.

**The Way Home Looks Now**
Amid family loss, a boy turns to baseball in hopes of bringing some normalcy back to his homelife. This touching story is more than a sports book—it’s a testament to the healing power of family.

**Fish in a Tree**
Ally struggles with dyslexia, which she covers up with troublemaking antics. Mr. Daniels—who reminds his students of the maxim that no one should “judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree”—is a wonderful role model.
Lost in the Sun
Perfect for students preparing for middle school, Graff’s latest is all about making a fresh start.
Trent struggles with a tragic accident in his past while trying to start anew.

Magic & Mystery

The Island of Dr. Libris
Stuck at an old cabin with a broken iPhone, 12-year-old Billy braces himself for a boring summer—until he opens a book.

Echo
Set before and during WWII, this magical tale follows an enchanted harmonica and the lives it touches as it travels through space and time.

Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective: The Sweetest Heist in History
“The diverse cast of characters solves an intriguing mystery that is more interesting than ones in many clue-oriented books.” —Karen Yingling, teacher-librarian, Blendon Middle School, Westerville, OH and blogger at Ms. Yingling Reads.

Pieces and Players
Thirteen masterpieces go missing from a museum, and finding the perpetrator might be tough—but it’s nothing compared with becoming a teenager.

Smashie McPerter and the Mystery of Room 11
By N. Griffin, illustrated by Kate Hindley. $15.99. Grades 2–5.
When Room 11’s hamster goes missing, Smashie and best friend Dontel are on the case. Great for developing logical reasoning skills.

William & the Missing Masterpiece
Crisis in Paris: The Mona Cheesa is missing! William, cat detective, agrees to put his vacation on hold and use his observational skills to save the day.

Honey
When Melody overhears her widowed father calling someone “honey,” she sets out to track down the mystery woman—and discovers a connection to her mother.

Bayou Magic
New Orleans native Maddy is nervous about spending a summer with her grandmother, but she soon discovers the magic of the bayou—and her own ancestors.

**Book Scavenger**  
Emily’s family is always moving. One constant: Book Scavenger, a game where players solve puzzles to find books. When the game’s creator is attacked, Emily embarks on the ultimate scavenger hunt.

**Picture Books**

**Last Stop on Market Street**  
CJ’s nana helps him see beyond poverty to the beauty around them. De la Peña tackles questions of class and privilege in a way that will resonate.

**Sea Rex**  
Cordelia enjoys a day of fun with her little brother, a basket of beach supplies, and a few dinosaurs. Kids will absorb summer safety tips while laughing out loud at Idle’s subtle humor.

**An Ambush of Tigers: A Wild Gathering of Collective Nouns**  
“Who could resist the shiver of sharks with their scarves and hats? I highly recommend this for any language arts class.” —Suzanne Costner, library media specialist, Fairview Elementary School, Maryville, TN and blogger at The Fairview Review.

**Duncan the Story Dragon**  
Duncan has a problem: He loves to read, but when he gets excited, his fire-breath burns the story up!

**Marilyn’s Monster**  
In a world where every kid has his or her own monster, Marilyn hasn’t found hers yet. Rather than wait as told, she sets off to find her monster—and prove that it doesn’t always pay to play by the rules.

**999 frogs and a Little Brother**  
When the smallest tadpole in the family meets a baby crayfish, he is thrilled to be mistaken for the crayfish’s big brother. What begins as a funny misunderstanding becomes a sweet friendship.

**How to Read a Story**  
By Kate Messner, illustrated by Mark Siegel. $16.99. Grades K–3.  
Messner takes young readers from the library shelf to “the end” with time-tested tips such as
“Find a cozy reading spot…just be careful not to get stuck.” What better way to get kids excited about reading?

**Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl’s Courage Changed Music**  
By Margarita Engle, illustrated by Rafael López. $16.99. Grades K–3. Based on a true story, this vibrant book stars a Chinese-African-Cuban girl who dreamed of playing the drums at a time when female drummers were taboo. The poetic verse has a beat of its own.

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**Related Resources**

- [Summer Reading Roundup](#)  
  By [Kim Greene](#)  
  20 books to keep your students reading until the next school bell rings.  
  [Read more >](#)

- [Pam Allyn’s 5 Tips for Summer Reading](#)  
  By [Pam Allyn](#)  
  Key strategies to prevent the summer slide and help kids discover the power of a good book from Instructor Magazine.  
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**YOUR FAVORITE AUTHOR’S WEBSITE- LOTS OF IDEAS AND FUN ACTIVITIES!!**
Pam Allyn's 5 Tips for Summer Reading

Key strategies to prevent the summer slide and help kids discover the power of a good book from Instructor Magazine.

By Pam Allyn

Summer holds 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](http://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](http://scholastic.com/summer) to enroll every classroom in this mission. Beginning May 6, kids of all ages can track their reading minutes online (at [scholastic.com/summer](http://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.

3 | **Come On and Get Appy!**
Technology is a power tool for building literacy skills. To develop strong reading muscles, children need to read lots of text. The [Reading Rainbow](http://www.readingrainbow.com) app, based on the beloved TV series, invites children to travel to themed islands to discover books. [Tales2Go](http://www.tales2go.com) is an award-winning mobile and desktop audiobook app designed to provide thousands of glorious read-alouds for your students. And [Storia](http://www.storiaapp.com), 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 click here)

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.

Writers on Reading
Scholastic authors share their page-turning tips for the Summer Reading Challenge.
By Catherine Logue
“I glanced over my shoulder to make sure that no one followed me into the library, then took a deep breath and opened the glowing book....”

What happens next depends on whom you ask. At Scholastic, we posed this writing prompt to some of our favorite authors and asked each of them to write a short story for the 2015 Scholastic Summer Reading Challenge (find the stories, and more, at scholastic.com/summer). Over the course of the challenge, kids will “unlock” these original adventures as they log their reading minutes and hit major milestones. The goal: to inspire kids to fall in love with reading.

In support of that mission, 11 of the participating authors share how they get kids excited about reading. The authors dug into their own experiences as teachers, parents, writers, and once-upon-a-time kids to create this collection of classroom-ready lesson ideas, personal anecdotes, and so much more.

**Blue Balliett says: Make It a Mystery**

**Author of:** Pieces and Players, Chasing Vermeer

**Tried-and-True Tip:** As a class-room teacher and now as an author, I love recommending books that make kids want to bring the story alive within their own world and in their own way. I find that mysteries are extra powerful because reading a mystery is partnering with the writer—joining in a hunt or a search or a puzzle.
For instance, I once read *Treasure Island* to one of my classes and everyone made detailed neighborhood maps, argued about what valuables might be hidden where, whether stolen goods could ever be kept once found, and so on. I love fiction that makes the real world sparkle and deepen once the book is closed. Curiosity opens so many doors and turns so many pages!

**R. L. Stine Says: Let Kids Lead**

**Author of:** Goosebumps and Fear Street series  
**Tried-and-True Tip:** Let students read what they choose to read. My son read only *Garfield* comics his whole childhood. My wife and I wished he would read a bigger variety of books. But he read only *Garfield*. Then he went to college and was an English major! He loved to read.

**Gordon Korman Says: Host a Quote Contest**

**Author of:** *Ungifted, Pop*  
**Tried-and-True Tip:** One great trick for getting kids excited about reading is a literary quotes contest. Students choose their favorite quotes from books and hang posters “advertising” them. Inevitably, kids are drawn to some of the quotes [and wonder]: What did the author mean by that? Why would the character say such a thing? Pretty soon, there’s a run on the books that the most popular quotes come from and a genuine competition to come up with the next “hot” one. End the contest with a school-wide vote to choose a winner and runners-up. If the winning quote comes from one of my books, that means major bragging rights.

**Wendy Wan-Long Shang Says: Go With the Flow**

**Author of:** *The Way Home Looks Now, The Great Wall of Lucy Wu*  
**Tried-and-True Tip:** As a school library volunteer, I love seeing students share their favorite titles with one another. Why not encourage students to share favorites in the form of a flow chart? Kids can start with a popular title and then use decision points—such as type of protagonist, author, setting, or genre—to expand into other books. We Need Diverse Books created one of my favorite flow-chart book selectors ([bit.ly/diverse_books](bit.ly/diverse_books)).

**Roland Smith Says: Find the Perfect Pairing**

**Author of:** *I, Q and Cryptid Hunters series*  
**Tried-and-True Tip:** When I write a book, I am trying to create a reader. It takes only one book to create a reader, but it has to be the right book, the perfect pairing. For me, this book was *The Cricket in Times Square*, by George Selden. I told my third-grade teacher that I wasn’t interested in books about bugs. I was wrong. If she hadn’t taken the time to get to know me, to guess at what I might like, I might not have become a reader or a writer.

**Patrik Henry Bass says: Work Together**

**Author of:** *The Zero Degree Zombie Zone, Like a Mighty Stream*  
**Tried-and-True Tip:** I recall my own childhood. I equated reading with eating vegetables, which I knew were good for me, but because adults said so, I resisted.

I always have to remind myself reading is a solitary experience, so how does one make it communal? Having kids take the plot and turn it into a mini-play always works. Also, ask kids to draw their favorite character or situation and explain why. Activities like this bring everyone together, and the drawings are fantastic!
Jude Watson Says: Play Detective

**Author of:** *Loot*, Jedi Apprentice series

**Tried-and-True Tip:** Invite kids to be story detectives. All books start with a problem. Young readers often don’t articulate what that problem is, but they know it intuitively. I’ll name the problem and see if the kids can identify the book. Then we talk about the problem underneath the problem—the one you have to figure out like a detective. Hint: It always involves an emotion.

For example, in *Loot*, March’s problem is that he has to steal seven magic moonstones. The problem underneath the problem is that he needs a new family. Then, we brainstorm different problems—a surface problem (the crazier, the better) and an underneath problem—and everyone writes a scene. By the end of the exercise, students will have insight into what makes a story work: action and emotion.

Michael Northrop Says: Explore the Possibilities

**Author of:** *Plunked*, TombQuest series

**Tried-and-True Tip:** I talk about how stories are built using two keywords: would and could. I explain how most scenes in a book answer a basic question: “What would probably happen next?” But the story turns on a few key points that answer a slightly different question: “What could possibly happen next?”

First, I’ll say: “Seven kids are trapped in their school during a blizzard. What would probably happen next?” (It would probably stop snowing after a day or so). I’ll follow with: “But what could possibly happen?” (It could snow all week.)

This gives kids something to look for when they’re reading: those pivotal moments that make a story special.

Varian Johnson Says: Start a Dialogue

**Author of:** *The Great Greene Heist, Saving Maddie*

**Tried-and-True Tip:** I use other kids to generate excitement about reading. When I’m speaking at a school event, I ask students what they’re reading. Usually, a few will talk about a book that I’ve read, and if so, we both discuss what we liked about it, which in turn excites the other kids. At the end of the presentation, one or two of the quieter kids come up to me and say, “I didn’t want to ask earlier, but what was the title of that book you were talking about?”

Tui Sutherland Says: Imagine Dragons

**Author of:** Wings of Fire and Menagerie series

**Tried-and-True Tip:** One of the things I love about Wings of Fire readers is how imaginative and enthusiastic they are. To inspire that kind of enthusiasm, invite students to invent their own dragons. Kids can choose a tribe, imagine a name, and give their dragon a power or an interesting family connection. Then, ask them to create original art related to the stories. I’ve seen incredible dragon drawings and fantastic fan fiction, too. My hope is that this fantasy world of dragons can be a fun place for readers to let their own imaginations fly...which, with luck, will make them more excited about reading!

Lauren Tarshis Says: Consider Craft

**Author of:** I Survived and Emma- Jean Lazarus series

**Tried-and-True Tip:** At Storyworks, where I’m the editor, we provide detailed lesson plans for every
piece of content in the magazine. So as I was writing my story for the Summer Reading Challenge, I was naturally thinking, How could I teach with this? One idea would be to discuss genre. Ask students, “What is the genre of this story [fantasy], and what evidence can you find to support that claim [e.g., magic]?” Then, lead into a discussion of craft. I chose to write a fantasy story using the first line provided for the challenge. What other kinds of stories could be written using that same first line?

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