



# SUMMER

## reading list

**Grades K to 1**  
2025

### **A Message to Pingry Families**

June 2025

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is a love of reading that will last a lifetime. The Lower School Library Summer Reading Program encourages pleasure reading as a guide for Pingry students' book choices during summer break.

We hope that our students will enjoy some wonderful experiences this summer, including sailing away with a treasured book!

Our list features a wide variety of genres and difficulty levels for every child to find something to spark their interest.

Students also have the opportunity to share their summer reading adventures! See the following resources for more optional summer reading fun:

- Postcards to the Library Program - Send postcards to the Library! See directions for participation on the next page.
- Reading Log - Set a reading goal and record all the amazing books read during the summer.

Have a wonderful and book-filled break!

Happy Reading,  
Ms. O'Holla and Miss Newman



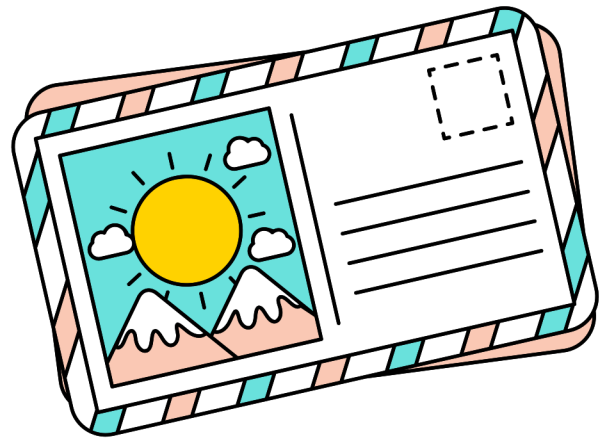


# How to Participate in “Postcards to the Library”



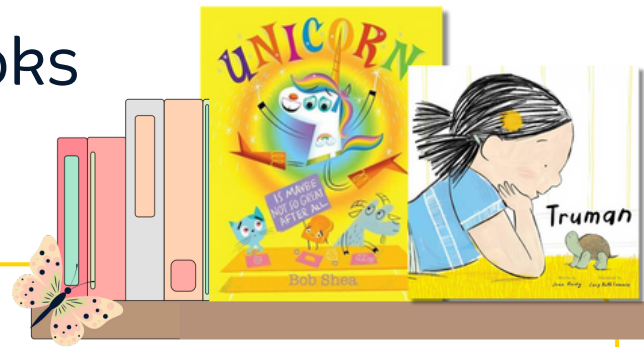
Send postcards to the Library  
at the below address:

**The Pingry School Library  
50 Country Day Drive  
Short Hills, NJ 07078**



- Send one postcard for every book you read.
- Postcards can be sent from anywhere. You do not need to travel!
- Include the book title, author's name, your first and last name, and what you liked about the book.
- Each postcard is entered in a drawing to be held at the start of the school year. Only postcards meeting the above criteria will be entered in the drawing.
- One postcard per grade will be chosen at random and prizes will be awarded. There will also be a drawing with a prize from the pool of all grades' postcards.
- Postcards will be displayed in the hallway outside the library.

# Funny Picture Books



## **How To Care for Your T-Rex** by Ken Baker

The author uses the responsibility of pet care to deliver fun dino facts ("A T-Rex can cover fifteen feet in a single step") in this super silly story.

## **Truman** by Jean Reidy

A tiny reptile knows something's up when Sarah gives him extra green beans, buttons up a brand new sweater, takes a large backpack and leaves the apartment.

## **13 Stories About Harris** by Amy Schwartz

An impervious toddler named Harris, in 13 exquisite stories from his point of view, creates chapter after chapter about the here and now as a wonderful place to live. The illustrations have the punch line.

## **Unicorn Is Maybe Not So Great After All** by Bob Shea

Unicorn is ready to start school with his friend Goat, but becomes upset when he is not the center of attention.

## **Hungry Jim** by Laurel Snyder

Young Jim wakes up one morning supremely hungry. He wanders downstairs, only to eat his mother! This wild tale is part Kafkaesque, part homage to Maurice Sendak.

## **Snail Crossing** by Corey R Tabor

Snail is a likable protagonist who spots some cabbages and is determined to get one. Unfortunately, the field of cabbages he has spied is all the way across a busy road.

**Bunny Will Not Jump!** by Jason Tharp A purple bunny drawn in a cartoon style has foot-stompin' attitude in Tharp's entry in the "Ready-to-Read" series. So why won't Bunny jump? The problem is introduced by a big blue bear who addresses readers directly. This is ideal material: simple concepts, flowing word choices, and the discovery that Bunny *loves* to jump.

## **Ducks!** by Deborah Underwood

Four little ducks are quacking along when one gets distracted and wanders off.



# Poetry Picture Books



## **Spi-ku: A Clutter of Short Verse on Eight Legs** by Leslie Bulion

This collection is filled with all forms of poetry, including haiku, limerick, concrete, and free verse. Spider lovers and readers who may learn to love these eight-legged creatures will rejoice in the fun and informative facts featured throughout the text.

## **Superlative Birds** by Leslie Bulion

This combination poetry/science book successfully blends language arts and science into an informative and fun collection of poems about the fastest, smallest, biggest, and most interesting birds.

## **Cats Are a Liquid** by Rebecca Donnelly

A bevy of things cats are and aren't is explored in rhythmic, poetic text. A vast variety of hilarious cats and kid scientists are depicted on the spreads, which match and give depth to the text, as they explore the laws of nature.

## **Rise!: From Caged Bird to Poet of the People, Maya Angelou** by Bethany Hegedus

Maya Angelou overcame an utterly terrifying childhood experience that left her temporarily mute. Despite these challenging circumstances, she went on to accomplish so much. Yet her success may have had a completely different outcome had she not had the love and support of a few key people who helped her turn fear into courage.

## **Nine: A Book of Nonet Poems** by Irene Latham

This colorful picture book of nonets (not to be confused with sonnets) features poems that incorporate the number nine. The lesser-known form of poetry is defined as "a nine-line poem in which the first line contains nine syllables; the next line, eight syllables; and so on until the last line has one syllable, or the reverse." The poems spotlight baseball games, circuses, armadillos, and planets.

## **Afternoon on a Hill** by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Edna St. Vincent Millay's short poem describes how she expects to enjoy nature on a hill. She will touch but not pick the flowers, look at cliffs and clouds, and watch the wind blow the grass.

## **A New Green Day** by Antoinette Portis

A nameless girl is awoken by the sun streaming through her window. The narrative then focuses on the everyday happenings of the natural world.

## **16 Words: William Carlos Williams and "The Red Wheelbarrow"** by Lisa Rogers

Rogers delves into the larger story behind William Carlos Williams's famous poem "The Red Wheelbarrow," opening a window into the poet's life and inviting children to consider what lies beyond those simple 16 words.



# Family Read Alouds



## **I Am Every Good Thing** by Derrick Barnes

Oil paintings bursting with energy and exuberance are the foundation for a layered manifesto of affirmation and industry, celebrating an empowered Black child while also briefly addressing and rejecting the painful sting of others' insults and dismissals.

## **Girl Versus Squirrel** by Hayley Barrett

It's a test of wills as Pearl uses Rube Goldberg-like ingenuity to build outrageous contraptions to outsmart a wily rodent squirrel—and instead of being vanquished, the squirrel excels at climbing higher, walking across tightropes, and jumping through nets.

## **Lion and Mouse** by Jairo Buitrago. tr. from Spanish by Elisa Amado.

What can another version of this classic fable possibly add to the canon? When it is created by Buitrago and Yockteng, the answer is quite a bit—from the first characterizations, readers understand that this is not their grandmother's Aesop.

## **All Because You Matter** by Tami Charles

A parent conveys a loving message to a Black boy who will be challenged by school, injustice, and more. Still, as a descendant of kings and queens, he is ready to take on his destiny and grow. Spirited, thoughtful illustrations depict a luminous journey from past to present.

## **Camp Tiger** by Susan Choi

A tiger joins a young boy and his family as they enjoy a camping weekend in the mountains. The boy and tiger spend the night together, and the creature remains throughout the weekend, even joining the family on a fishing excursion. Sharing this book allows alert readers to point out hints that the tiger is an imaginary comfort creature.

## **Birdsong** by Julie Flett

When a young girl moves to a home in the country, her initial loneliness is soothed by a new friendship. Simple and profound, this tender story is a reminder that finding a friend can make a strange place feel like home.

## **¡Vamos! Let's Go to the Market** by Raúl Gonzalez

It is an exciting day for Little Lobo. Today, he is going to the market with his dog, Bernabé. Gonzalez has created a simple narrative that includes Spanish vocabulary, which is playfully positioned surrounding the many streets, food stores, and buildings, encouraging readers to learn colorful new words.

## **Saturday** by Oge Mora

In her second picture book, Mora continues to delight and impress with her unique collage style and storytelling tone, in a story about the one day each week a girl gets to spend with her mother.





# Picture Book Biographies



## **The Key from Spain: Flory Jagoda and Her Music** by Debbie Levy

Levy's captivating picture book biography tells the story of Flory Jagoda, known today as the "Keeper of the Flame" of Sephardic culture and music.

## **Nonsense! The Curious Story of Edward Gorey** by Lori Mortensen

With straightforward, rhythmic prose and deliciously atmospheric illustrations, this picture book biography of Edward Gorey distills his unconventional life and career.

## **Itzhak: A Boy Who Loved the Violin** by Tracy Newman

An appealing picture book biography about the childhood of violinist Itzhak Perlman, born to Polish Jewish parents living in Palestine in 1945.

## **Lights! Camera! Alice!: The Thrilling True Adventures of the First Woman Filmmaker** by Mara Rockliff

As an assistant in a camera shop, story-loving Guy-Blanché saw a unique opportunity to help sell a new-fangled product: the moving-picture camera. Rather than document life, Guy-Blanché reimagined it by using film to tell stories and to innovate techniques in special effects, color, and sound.

## **Prairie Boy: Frank Lloyd Wright Turns the Heartland into a Home** by Barb Rosenstock

Instead of focusing on specific buildings Wright created, this book highlights the roots of his thinking—how what he believed as a boy influenced what he did as a grown man.

## **Mario and the Hole in the Sky: How a Chemist Saved Our Planet / Mario y el agujero en el cielo: Como un quimico salvo nuestro planeta** by Elizabeth Rusch

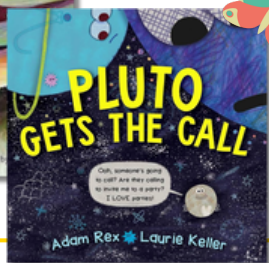
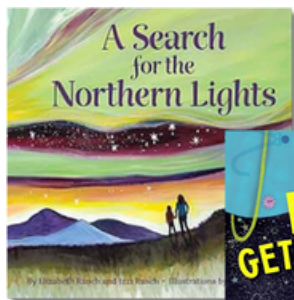
Growing up in Mexico, Mario Molina loved exploring the world around him and performing experiments with his microscope. As an adult, he made a horrific discovery: CFCs, chemicals used in countless everyday items, were damaging the environment by destroying the ozone layer.

## **Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person To Ever Run a Marathon** by Simran Jeet Singh

At age 81, Fauja Singh became a runner and eventually ran a marathon, persisting despite injuries, self-doubt, and racism.

## **Thurgood** by Jonah Winter

When six-year-old Thurgood Marshall convinced his parents to legally change his name from Thoroughgood, his future as a lawyer seemed predestined.



# STEM



## **Listening to the Stars: Jocelyn Bell Burnell Discovers Pulsars** by Jodie Parachini

Parachini's historical picture book spotlights the Irish astrophysicist Dame Susan Jocelyn Bell Burnell (b. 1943), who discovered the first radio pulsars while she was a research assistant at the University of Cambridge. The narrative showcases how Burnell discovered her love for astronomy and overcame sexism. This book could be read in a science unit that emphasizes the empowering message that everyone can study STEM fields.

## **Hey, Water!** by Antoinette Portis

This simple introduction to water is an ideal read-aloud for the youngest scientists.

## **The Boy Who Invented the Popsicle: The Cool Science Behind Frank Epperson's Famous Frozen Treat** by Anne Renaud

During an unusual cold snap in 1905 in his native California, Epperson experimented by leaving a glass of flavored soda water outside overnight. The next morning he discovered his water had frozen solid—creating a delicious treat.

## **Pluto Gets the Call** by Adam Rex

An ingeniously funny informational picture book that takes readers on an imaginative journey through the universe.

## **Glacier on the Move** by Elizabeth Rusch

Travel with a glacier named Flo as it moves through different seasons and landscapes.

## **A Search for the Northern Lights** by Elizabeth Rusch & Izzi Rusch

In this informational picture book, a young girl is fascinated with celestial phenomena. After watching a solar eclipse, Alix yearns to also witness the beauty of auroras. The child does her research and learns where the best viewing spots are in the world.

## **What Color Is Night?** by Grant Snider

Snider helps children (and adults) look beyond the darkness and see the beautiful colors that appear in the night.

## **One Is a Piñata: A Book of Numbers** by Roseanne Greenfield Thong

This companion to *Green Is a Chile Pepper* and *Round Is a Tortilla* makes learning numbers in English and in Spanish a fun fiesta for young readers.



# Mindfulness and Meditation



## **Here and Now** by Julia Denos

Using simple language to explain a complex topic, children are shown how to open their senses wide by noting that there are things going on whether they see them happening or not. Child-friendly examples include muscles growing despite the inability to feel them doing so, and broken bones and cuts inconspicuously healing over time.

## **Meditation Station** by Susan B Katz

This title challenges children to observe their thoughts as they would a passing freight train. Thoughts, similar to a train, can be noisy and fast. Whether the train cars are filled with favorite things, memories, wishes, or regrets, youngsters are advised to stop and let them pass by while returning their focus to their breath.

**Calm Monsters, Kind Monsters: A Sesame Street Guide to Mindfulness** by Karen Latchana Kenney  
Kenney provides a simple, friendly introduction to the practice of mindfulness. Familiar Sesame Street characters and children engage with troublesome feelings of frustration, sadness, loneliness, embarrassment, and worry. Adults will find that this useful compendium offers realistic situations and simple advice for talking with children about feelings.

## **Zen Happiness** by Jon J. Muth

Stillwater the panda and his friends offer suggestions for young readers to achieve happiness and make the world a better place. Each scene depicts the characters immersing themselves in and enjoying the wonders of the natural world.

## **Kaya's Heart Song** by Diwa Tharan Sanders

When Kaya hears her mother singing to herself while meditating, the young girl sets out to discover her own heart song. Kaya sets out to discover her own heart song. The story has a positive message of mindfulness and imagination.

**Bee Heartful: Spread Loving-Kindness** by Frank J Sileo  
Psychologist Sileo demonstrates the power of meditation in his follow-up to Bee Still and Bee Calm. Bentley the bee is so honey-sweet, his mantra is to "be happy, be healthy, be safe, be peaceful." The author includes a two-page note of advice for adults as well as a page of meditation scripts.

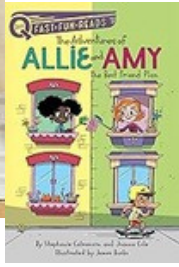
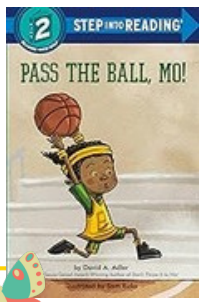
## **Deep Breaths** by Carol Thompson

Best friends Dolly the Pig and Jack the Rabbit have a disagreement and storm off in anger. Eventually, they take time to reflect on their feelings, and, after some thinking and meditation, cool off and reunite at their favorite tree, practicing their relaxation techniques together.

## **The Three Little Yogis and the Wolf Who Lost His Breath: A Fairy Tale To Help You Feel Better** by Susan Verde

The wolf knows his outbursts of anger are futile but still has a compulsion to demolish everything in his sight. He meets three piglet who teach him belly breathing, cooling breath, and other methods that help. Additional breathing exercises and poses are included at the back of the book.





# Beginning Readers



## **Pass the Ball, Mo!** by David A. Adler

Mo is the shortest player on the Bees basketball team, but he has big dreams.

## **The Shark Report** by Derek Anderson

Benny McGee has learned a lot about sharks for his report, but he is bewildered when a great white shark follows him home from school.

## **Putuguq and Kublu and the Qalupalik** by Roselynn Akulukjuk & Danny Christopher

Putuguq and his older sister Kublu are warned by their grandfather about the Qalupalik, a nightmarish, mermaidlike creature who captures those who wander too close to the water.

## **The Best Friend Plan** by Stephanie Calmenson & Joanna Cole

Inseparable besties Allie and Amy make their summer plans, including getting their fortunes told, attending the Spring Fair, skating and singing backwards, going swimming, and making a new list of things to do.

## **I Dig** by Joe Cepeda

On an ordinary, breezy day at the seashore, a wave deposits a small blue shovel on the sand and it turns out to be just the right size for the younger boy.

## **This Is Gus** by Chris Chatterton

Gus is a grumpy, stubborn dog, but things change when he is given a tiny dog as a companion.

## **Rafi and Rosi Music!** by Lulu Delacre

Two anthropomorphic tree frog siblings, Rafi and Rosi, explore their surroundings and learn about the traditions of Puerto Rico.

## **See the Cat: Three Stories About a Dog** by David LaRochelle

A humorous, self-referential, fourth wall-demolishing easy reader features a dog who seems to be at the mercy of the storyteller—or is he? Children will find a reflection of their own reading journey as well as amusement at the metafictional aspect of a dog wrestling with a book



## Funny Chapter Book Series for Emergent Readers



### **Smell My Foot!** by Cece Bell

In this send-up of the “Dick and Jane” primers, Bell returns with another story about grammar, miscommunication, and odd-couple friends.

### **Baloney and Friends** by Greg Pizzoli

Like countless lovably naive children’s book characters before him, Baloney the pig may not always know what’s going on, but he approaches every adventure with enthusiasm

### **Pizza and Taco: Who’s the Best?** by Stephen Shaskan

The Battle is on! Pizza or Taco? A beautiful friendship is put to the test when Pizza and Taco disagree over who is the best.

### **AstroNuts Mission One: The Plant Planet** by Jon Scieszka.

A wacky tale about Earth, where the polluted atmosphere reaches uninhabitable levels. Heavy with glossy pages of vibrant graphics, the book will appeal to “Captain Underpants” and “Geronimo Stilton” devotees.

### **The Fuzzy Apocalypse** by Jonathan Messinger

In this wacky sci-fi adventure, a young troop of interstellar space scouts explore both a new planet and the limits of their friendship. The fast-paced plot dabbles in high stakes problems, but the narrative remains lighthearted and at times downright silly, as do Bitskoff’s cheerful illustrations, sprinkled throughout the text.

# Make It! Draw It! Build It!

## Family Activity Books



**Cardboard Box Engineering: Cool, Inventive Projects for Tinkerers, Makers & Future Scientists** by Jonathan Adolph

This title offers a terrific assortment of projects to make using household materials. The inventive projects will excite any budding builder. Six chapters highlight projects that include robotics and animatronics, audio and optical engineering, aeronautics and nautical engineering, mechanical engineering, and harnessing energy.

**Hack Your Kitchen: Discover a World of Food Fun with Science Buddies** by Niki Ahrens

This title offers eight kitchen activities for curious youngsters, with assistance from an adult. Projects encourage budding scientists to drop balls onto flour and cocoa to make impact craters, design a lemon volcano, and create edible paper from potato flour. Activities such as making rock candy and baked ice cream will require patience but provide delicious results.

**Bots!: Robotics Engineering: With Hands-On Makerspace Activities** by Kathy Ceceri

Ceceri urges readers to collect materials from yard sales and junk drawers and to tinker fearlessly (though safety guidelines are offered). Projects include basic pressure and tilt sensors, a solar-powered wobble bot made from garden lights, and gelatin-based skin for “soft robots.”

**Engines!: With 25 Science Projects for Kids** by Donna B. McKinney

An anthropomorphic beaver and snail provide a brief history of engines and 25 hands-on activities that demonstrate the concepts presented. Each chapter ends with several projects that, as the topics progress, become more challenging and will require adult assistance in addition to trips to the hardware store, pharmacy, and possibly the grocery store.

**Create a Costume!** by Sarah Myer

This blend of fictional story and instructional manual features clear instructions and illustrations and a positive message about body positivity and the importance of confidence in cosplaying.

**Crazy Contraptions: Build Rube Goldberg Machines That Swoop, Spin, Stack, and Swivel: with Hands-On Engineering Activities for Kids** by Laura Perdew

Inspired by cartoonist (and trained engineer) Rube Goldberg, Perdew intersperses introductions to six simple machines with projects that use these principles and tools to show energy in motion and sequential actions.

**Gross Science Experiments: 60 Smelly, Scary, Silly Tests To Disgust Your Friends and Family** by Emma Vanstone

The activities in this title are grouped into chapters: “Blood and Brains,” “Baffling Bodies,” “Stinky Smells,” “Joking Around,” “Disgusting Diseases,” “Gross Foods,” “All About the Poo,” “Bugs and Grubs,” and “Gross History.” Each section provides facts and background information.