

SSA Junior School & Country Day Suggested Summer Reading 2026



Dear Shady Side Academy families,

As daylight lengthens and stretches towards summer, it is time for students to reach out and read. The Junior School and Country Day schools have created a combined list of Summer Reading titles for students' summer reading. All titles have been linked to the Carnegie Library catalog for you to see the title content and book availability.

Students in grades rising to second through fifth grade will be required to read at least 3 books over the summer.

Students entering first grade are encouraged to use the recommended titles for independent and family reading.

Students entering second and third grades must read two books from the Summer Reading list and a book of their own choosing for their third required title.

Students entering fourth and fifth grades must read the all-class required book, one book from the Summer Reading list, and a third title of their own choosing or from the official list.

While Shady Side Academy is a community of readers all year long, it is especially important for students to read during the summer. The right book in a reader's hands makes for an enjoyable escape from or exciting encounter with a new world. Summer reading also helps ensure that a student's interest in books, motivation to read, and reading level skills continue to grow. Research suggests that reading at least three books is needed to maintain a child's current reading level. It is the librarians' hope that your child will find many titles from the list to love this summer.

Wishing you a wonderful summer,

Courtney Anderson

Country Day School Librarian

Phyllis Guering

Junior School Librarian

Preventing the 'Summer Slide' [Tips from the Mayo Clinic](#)

Students Entering 1st Grade in the Fall

Family Read Alouds or Independent Reading

[Rabbit and Bear](#) (series) by Julian Gough & Jim Field*

[Humphrey's Tiny Tales](#) (series) by Betty Birney*

[Book Buddies](#) (series) by Cynthia Lord*

[The Princess in Black](#) (series) by Shannon Hale*

[Sophie Mouse](#) (series) by Poppy Green*

[Zoey and Sassafras](#) (series) by Asia Citro*

[The Rescues](#) (series) Tommy Greenwald*

[Dino Files](#) series by Stacy McAnulty*

Independent Leveled Reading Choices

Students may choose any books from the following series:

[I Like to Read Comics](#) (series)- Holiday House/Penguin Books*

[Jory John's Food Groups I Can Read](#) (series) Jory John*

[Ready-To-Read series](#) by Jonathan Fenske*

[Mo - Step Into Reading](#) (series) by David Adler*

[Zoey the Chicken](#) (series) by Adam Lehrhaupt*

[Fox](#) (series) by Corey Tabor*

[Earl and Worm](#) (series) by Greg Pizzoli*

[Geraldine Pu](#) (series) by Maggie P. Chang*

[Fox Tails](#) (series) by Tina Kugler *

[Pepper and Boo](#) (series) by Harper*

NONFICTION:

[National Geographic Kids](#) (series)*

[Giggle and Learn](#) (series) by Kevin McCloskey*

* indicates any book in the series

For First Grade Students Entering 2nd Grade in the Fall

ANIMAL STORIES:

- [Pigsticks & Harold](#) (series) by Alex Milway*
- [Sydney and Taylor](#) series by Deborah Hocking*
- [Orris and Timble](#) (series) by Kate DiCamillo*
- [Bear and Bird](#) (series) by Jarvis*
- [Heartwood Hotel](#) (series) by Kallie George*
- [Little Animal Rescue](#) (series) by Rachel Delahaye*

FANTASY:

- [Dory Fantasmagory](#) (series) by Abby Hanlon *
- [The Dragonsitter](#) (series) by Josh Lacey*
- [Big Foot and Little Foot](#) (series) by Ellen Potter*
- [Kitty and the Moonlight Rescue](#) (series) by Paula Harrison*

MYSTERY:

- [King and Kayla](#) (series) by Dori Butler*
- [MVP](#) (series) by David Kelly*
- [Detective Duck](#) (series) by Henry Winkler*

REALISTIC

- [Ellray Jakes](#) (series) by Sally Warner*
- [The Apartment House on Poppy Hill](#) by Nina LaCour
- [Stella and Marigold Mermaids and Mixups](#) by Annie Barrows

GRAPHIC NOVELS

- [Sir Ladybug](#) (series) by Corey Tabor*
- [Baloney and Friends](#) (series) by Greg Pizzoli*
- [Surviving the Wild](#) (series) by Remy Lai*
- [Crow Crowd](#) (series) by Elise Gravel*

NONFICTION

- [Adventures Through Nature](#) (series) by Neil Cross Beckerman*
- [Blastoff Readers! Natural Disasters](#) (series) by Betsy Rathbone*
- [The Over and Under](#) (series) by Kate Messner*

* indicates any book in the series

Students Entering 3rd Grade in the Fall

ANIMAL THEMES:

- [Saving Winslow](#) by Sharon Creech
- [The Shindig Is Coming](#) by Charise Mericle Harper
- [All the Best Dogs](#) by Emily Jenkins
- [Wildlife Rescue](#) by Kate Messner

FANTASY:

- [Best Wishes](#) (series) by Sarah Mlynowski *
- [Wicked Nix](#) by Lena Coakley
- [The 13 Story Treehouse](#) (series) by Andy Griffiths *
- [Last Firehawk](#) (series) by Katrina Charmin

HISTORICAL FICTION:

- [I Survived](#) (series) by Lauren Tarshis *
- [Calpurnia Tate, Girl Vet](#) (series) by Jacqueline Kelly

MYSTERY:

- [Mac B. Kid Spy](#) (series) by Mac Barnett *
- [The Secret Spy Society](#) (series) by Veronica Mang*
- [Wednesday and Woof](#) (series) by Sherri Winston*
- [Magnolia Wu Unfolds It All](#) by Chanel Miller

REALISTIC FICTION:

- [Ryan Hart](#) (series) by Renee Watson*
- [Ben Yokoyama and the Cookie of Doom](#) (series) by Matthew Swanson *
- [The Mighty Macy](#) by Kwame Alexander
- [Marya Khan](#) (series) by Saadia Faruqi*
- [J. D. and the Great Barber Battle](#) (series) by J. Dillard*
- [Gracie Under the Waves](#) by Linda Sue Park

SPORTS FICTION

- [Jake Maddox Sports](#) (series)
- [The Good Sports League](#) (series) by Tommy Greenwald

GRAPHIC NOVELS

- [S.U.I.T. \(series\)](#) by John Patrick Green*
- [Saving Sorya or Saving H'Non](#) by Trang Nguyen

NONFICTION

- [An Egg is Quiet](#) or other Diana Aston books*
- [Call Me Roberto](#) by Nathalie Alonzo
- [The Wonderful Wisdom of Ants](#) or [The Gentle Genius of Trees](#) by Philip Bunting

* indicates any book in the series

Students Entering 4th Grade in the Fall

Students at the Junior School and Country Day are required to read: Bob by Rebecca Stead and Wendy Mass

ANIMAL

- [Dogtown](#) (series) by Kathryn Applegate*
- [Odder](#) by Katherine Applegate
- [Skunk and Badger](#) (series) by Amy Timberlake*
- [Three Blue Hearts](#) by Lynne Kelly
- [The Unlikely Tale of Chase and Finnegan](#) (Warga)

FANTASY:

- [Leeva at Last](#) by Sara Pennypacker
- [Impossible Creatures](#) or sequel [The Poisoned King](#) by Katherine Rundell
- [Once Upon a Tim](#) (series) by Stuart Gibbs
- [Honest June](#) (series) by Tina Wells *
- [Adventurers Guild](#) (series) by Zack Loren Clark *

HISTORICAL FICTION:

- [Ranger in Time](#) (series) by Kate Messner *
- [Pony](#) by R.J. Palacio
- [Pocket Bear](#) by Katherine Applegate

MYSTERY:

- [Trouble at the Tangerine](#) by Gillian McDunn
- [The Explorer](#) by Katherine Rundell
- [The Lost Library](#) by Rebecca Stead & Wendy Mass
- [Fun Jungle](#) (series) by Stuart Gibbs *

REALISTIC FICTION:

- [Ferris](#) by Kate DiCamillo
- [Thirst](#) by Varsha Baja
- [The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street](#) (series) by Karina Yan Glaser *
- [Boba Time](#) by Pearl Li
- [Lucky Strike](#) by Bobby Pyron
- [Slugfest](#) by Gordon Korman

SCIENCE FICTION:

- [Klawde: Evil Alien Warlord Cat](#) (series) by Johnny Marciano *
- [Rover's Story](#) by Jasmine Warga

SPORTS FICTION:

- [Falling Short](#) by Ernesto Cisneros
- [Select](#) by Christy Matheson

GRAPHIC NOVELS

- [Hazardous Tales](#) (series) by Nathan Hale *
- [The Cartoonist Club](#) by Raina Telgemeier and Scott McCloud

NONFICTION

- [Marsupials](#) (or other animal books by Nic Bishop) *
- [Science Comics](#) by various authors

* indicates students can read any book in the series

Students Entering 5th Grade in the Fall

Students at both the Country Day and the Junior School are required to read: Soar by Joan Bauer

ANIMAL STORIES

- [The Elephant in the Room](#) by Holly Goldberg Sloan
- [The Secret Language of Birds](#) by Lynne Kelly
- [The Last Bear](#) by Hannah Gold

FANTASY:

- [The Smartest Kid in the Universe](#) by Chris Grabenstein *
- [Amari and the Night Brothers](#) (series) by B.B. Alston *
- [The Incredible Dead Pets of Rex Dexter](#) (series) by Aaron Reynolds *
- [The Forgotten Five Series](#) by Lisa McMann
- [Ice Wolves](#) (series) by Amie Kaufman *
- [Chronicles of Whetherwhy](#) by Anna James

HISTORICAL FICTION

- [Maizy Chen's Last Chance](#) by Lisa Yee
- [A Place to Hang the Moon](#) by Kate Albus
- [Some Kind of Courage](#) by Dan Gemeinhart
- [Heroes](#) by Alan Gratz

MYSTERY

- [Sherlock Society](#) (series) by James Ponti *
- [The Last Chance Academy](#) by Debbie Michiko Florence *
- [Liars Society](#) (series) by Alyson Gerber *
- [The Experiment](#) by Rebecca Stead

REALISTIC FICTION

- [Shelter](#) by Christie Matheson
- [Firefly Summer](#) by Morgan Matson
- [Doughnut Fix](#) by Jessie Janowitz
- [The Trouble with Heroes](#) by Kate Messner
- [Stranded](#) by Nikki Shannon Smith

SCIENCE FICTION

- [Last Dragon on Mars](#) by Scott Reintgen
- [Sputnik's Guide to Life on Earth](#) by Frank Cottrell Boyce
- [Outside](#) by Jennifer Holm

SPORTS FICTION

- [The Academy](#) (series) by T.Z. Lawton *
- [The Hurricanes of Weakerville](#) by Chris Rylander

GRAPHIC NOVEL

- [Ghost Book](#) or [Pawcasso](#) by Remy Lai
- [When Stars Are Scattered](#) by Victoria Jamieson

NONFICTION

- [History Smashers](#) (series) by Kate Messner*
- [The Great Wolf Rescue](#) (Science Discoveries series) by Sandra Markle *

* indicates students can read any book in the series