

Manhattan Beach Unified School District
2021 Summer Pleasure Reading
Pleasure reading recommended by MBUSD Library Resource Specialists
For Students Entering Grades 4 and 5

Picture Books

The Barnabus Project, by The Fan Brothers (2020)

In this epic tale of escape and liberation, set in a secret lab producing genetically engineered Perfect Pets, Barnabus is a Failed Project: half mouse, half elephant, destined to be “recycled.” A heartfelt, timely allegory celebrating diversity, bravery, and solidarity.

The Rock from the Sky, by Jon Klassen (2021)

Clocking in at nearly 100 pages, this droll, dark comedy shows Turtle standing in his favorite spot, unaware of impending doom from above. His friend Armadillo thinks he has a better spot. The interplay of text and images as a giant rock falls from the sky will have readers howling at the sheer weirdness of it all.

Chapter Books

Alice’s Farm, by Maryrose Wood (2020)

An idealistic but completely inexperienced Brooklyn family buys a small farm in the Hudson Valley. When Alice, a wild rabbit, learns that developers are trying to take over the farm and surrounding land, she teams up with the family dog and other wild creatures to save the farm. This charming novel, which is reminiscent of *Charlotte’s Web*, would make a great family read-aloud.

Framed! by James Ponti (2016)

Florian Bates, seventh-grader and FBI agent, and his best friend Margaret Campbell use T.O.A.S.T. (the Theory Of All Small Things) to solve an art heist at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Also *Vanished!* (2018) and *Trapped!* (2018).

I, Cosmo, by Carlie Sorosiak (2019)

A golden retriever narrates a hilarious, heart-tugging tale of a dog working to keep his human pack together through a tumultuous year. In this love letter to dogs everywhere, Cosmo’s voice will remain in your heart long after the last page is turned.

When Mischief Came to Town, by Katrina Nannestad (2015)

An old-fashioned novel straight out of a fairy-tale land with a lovable heroine.

Otto Tattercoat and the Forest of Lost Things, by Matilda Woods (2020)

When Otto's mother disappears shortly after the pair arrives in a mysteriously cold city, Otto is duped into working in a boot polish factory run by a cruel, villainous woman. Otto is determined to find his mother as well as rescue all the children imprisoned in the factory. A fantasy with engaging characters, magical creatures, wry humor, and just the right amount of menace.

Show Me a Sign, by Ann Clare LeZotte (2020)

Mary, a young girl living on Martha's Vineyard in the early 1800s, does not realize her community of Deaf and hearing signers is unusual until a young, disdainful scientist arrives, wanting to study the Deaf and their "infirmity." When Mary is singled out by the visiting scientist, she must call upon all her strengths to save herself. A closing note provides information about Martha's Vineyard Sign Language and the Deaf community that existed there.

Poetry

My Thoughts Are Clouds: Poems for Mindfulness, by Georgia Heard (2021)

These verses that promote sensory exploration of elements common in the natural world can be used as a guide to settle and focus the mind for those growing up in this age of anxiety.

Nonfiction

Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person to Ever Run a Marathon, by Simran Jeet Singh (2020)

This is a powerful story of a modern hero, Fauja Singh, who persevered through disability, adversity, bigotry, and personal loss to become the first 100-year-old person to run a marathon. This illustrated biography includes valuable lessons on grit and determination as well as hidden gems of tiny photographs.

My Wild Life: Adventures of a Wildlife Photographer, by Suzi Eszterhas (2020)

Suzi Eszterhas wanted to be a wildlife photographer ever since she was a little girl, and she achieved her ambition. She describes the excitement, difficulties, and importance of photographing animals in nature. Her photographs appear throughout, including many of baby animals, which are her favorite subject to photograph.

***Grace Banker and Her Hello Girls Answer the Call: The Heroic Story of WWI Telephone Operators*, by Claudia Friddell (2021)**

At the age of 25, Grace Banker replied to a newspaper ad for female telephone operators willing to help the war effort in France during WWI and played a vital role in keeping army headquarters in communication with the battlefield in the face of dangerous surroundings. At war's end, Banker received the Distinguished Service Medal for her work, but she was denied veterans' benefits on the technicality that she was not a soldier. An inspiring tale of grit, charm, and bravery.

***The Teachers March! How Selma's Teachers Changed History*, by Sandra Neil Wallace and Rich Wallace (2020)**

This relevant book tells about how, in 1965, teachers marched in Selma, Alabama, to add their voices to the fight for civil rights. It's haunting to know that the teachers brought toothbrushes to the march, to indicate that they were prepared to be jailed for exercising their right to peacefully protest.

Graphic Novels

***Hilo #7: Gina, the Girl Who Broke the World*, by Judd Winnick (2021)**

D.J. and Gina are totally ordinary kids, but Hilo isn't. Hilo fell out of the sky and doesn't know where he came from or what he's doing on Earth. In book #7, magical beings have returned after hundreds of years, but Gina is the only one who can see them. She needs to protect them from danger without putting the entire planet in jeopardy. In the process, she becomes who she was always meant to be.

California Young Reader Medal (CYRM) Nominees, 2021-2022

***Wishtree*, by Katherine Applegate (2017)**

Red, an oak tree, is the neighborhood "wishtree": people write their wishes on pieces of cloth and tie them to Red's branches. When Samar and her family, who are Muslim, move into Red's neighborhood, many do not welcome them. Then, when Red's own existence is threatened, she decides she has some important things left to accomplish, including making Samar's wish come true.

***The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise*, by Dan Gemeinhart (2019)**

For five years Coyote and her dad, Rodeo, have lived on the road in an old school bus, ever since Coyote's mom and two sisters died in a car crash. Although Coyote hasn't been home since, she needs to get back there right away to rescue a memory box

buried in a city park that's slated for destruction. A crew of travelers, each on their own journey, join Coyote and Rodeo as they make their way back to what used to be home.

Other Words for Home, by Jasmine Warga (2019)

Jude never thought she would be leaving her father and older brother back in Syria, but when her town becomes too dangerous, she and her mother travel to Cincinnati to stay with relatives. Life in America is unfamiliar and fast-paced, and as a Muslim immigrant, Jude encounters ignorance and hostility. However, she also finds friends, bonds with new family members, and tries new things, such as auditioning for the school musical. This ultimately hopeful novel in verse celebrates Jude's ability to make her new life work while staying true to herself.