


65 of the Top Recommended and Most Loved Books by Children and Teens

*Also added are recommendations for a reluctant reader by
Arizona Certified Teacher, Kara Peterson.





Recommendations to help your reluctant reader enjoy reading!

1. Find the genre (type of book) that interests your child most. My oldest loved fantasy, my youngest loves humor.
2. Read to your child. I don't just mean when they are little. I still love a great story read to me. Pick out a fabulous chapter book that appeals to your child and read a chapter each night.
3. As interest in the story grows and you know the capability is there, have your child switch off with you: you read one page, your child reads one page. You are still reading together. Sometimes, children will do anything for that time together...even read!
4. While you are on longer road trips (that soccer game out of town), making dinner together, organizing the sock drawer, etc. Listen to an audio book. This not only hooks your child into a story, but it also works on their audio skills and helps them learn to listen for details. Because the subject interests your child, they will pay attention. **My child then loved to get the actual book copy and read it, he had already listened and it was easier for him.**
5. You are finally weaning yourself away from "hands on" work (I know, you work hard and are tired and would love time off in the evening), your child is now willing to read, they just need some incentive. Plan family reading time. Read together. You read your book, your child reads theirs. We have a fabulous cuddle chair that three of us can fit into and a super reading light overhead; this way we can snuggle, read our own thing, and feel close.
6. Now that the child is reading on their own, be familiar with what they read. If you don't have time to read the actual book, cheat and go to Goodreads.com or a place like it and get really good details on the book. Ask your child about the book and the conflicts that are occurring.
7. Buy books. Find a favorite used bookstore or garage sale that has a good selection of the age group of books for your child. Every time you go in allow your child a \$10 or so book allowance. Or you can do a dollar match, for every dollar they spend you will match them. Encourage them to get excited about books and show them you are willing to spend your money on books.



Board Books

Description

Good Night Moon

by Margaret Wise Brown

"A great story right before bed, calming. I loved it when this was read to me at night."

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

By Eric Carle

"I loved the colors most about this book."

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

By Bill Martin Jr.

Many children remembered this book and "liked the rhythm and learning ABC's".

Barn Yard Dance

By Sandra Boynton

This book is a rhythm and fun book, I guess a play time book. Not a sleepy time book. I loved it. (I got this kind of answer from a couple of children).

Hand Hand Fingers Thumb

By Al Perkins

This book is "sing-song and has rhythm."

Simple First Sounds

"Noisy Trucks"

By Roger Priddy

It was my boys that loved this book, "I loved it because trucks are great and sounds are better."

Early Read Alouds/Picture Books

Description

Where the Wild Things Are

By Maurice Sendak

Every child interviewed listed this book; if you don't have it on your shelf it looks like you need to! "Rhyming, I showed the imagination that kids have, shows control over monsters."

Ferdinand the Bull

By Munro Leaf

"I just loved this book. I liked the illustrations." (Black & white)

Alexander & the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

By Judith Viorst

Funny! **It is so interesting to me when I get book recommendations for the same book by EVERY child. This was one of those books. If this isn't on your shelf, according to the panel interviewed, it needs to be!

Are You My Mother?

By P.D. Eastman

"I liked the sweetness of the story and the oddness of the animals asked." (A duck, for example, asks a pig if the pig is its mother-the silliness was fun).



Early Read Alouds/Picture Books

Description

Bernstein Bears Collection

By Stan & Jan Berenstain

"I loved that there were a ton of books in the series! When I finished reading one, there was always another one to start!"

Miss Nelson is Missing

By Harry G. Allard Jr.

"The crazy things that the students come up with for while the teacher is gone!" This is funny! (This is a series)

The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs

By Jon Scieszka

"I loved the different perspective of a story everyone thinks they know so well!"

I Will Love You Forever

By Caroline Jayne Church

"A sweet story, you can almost sing it. Great at bedtime. Talks of a parent loving the child forever. When my mom read it to me, I just knew she was talking to me; she would always love me."

Lion and the Mouse

(I didn't list an author because there are so many versions to this tale, Aesop is the original author).

"I loved the classic fairy tales and I liked animals who were friends that shouldn't be."

Moonglow Roll-O-Rama

By Dav Pilkey

You can only get this book as used, it is now out of print. It is a favorite at my house. The boys remember the pictures 15 years later and still talk about it. When asked about their favorite kid's books, the 21 year old said, "the one with the amazing pictures and the animals flying around. Oh, by the way, you saved it for my kids, right Mom?"

Morris Has a Cold

By Bernard Wiseman

This is another out of print book. If you can get it, do. My boys insisted on me reading it every time we went to the doctor, hospital, or anything else that caused them distress. It uses puns that children get and love. (Is your forehead hot? I don't have four heads!").

Stellaluna

By Janell Cannon

So many of the children remember this story and love it, it is a sweet story of a lost baby bat. Although, they don't remember much else about the story, they do remember that they like it.

Cars and Trucks and Things

By Richard Scarry

This book was an all-time favorite because you have to find Gold Bug on every page!



Very First Chapter Reads

Description

Wacky Wednesday

By Dr. Suess

The boys loved this book because they liked to find all the things that were “wacky”. I tried not to include in this list “obvious” favorites, like Dr. Suess, but this one came up among several children because of the ability to find things “wrong” on the many pages.

Frog and Toad Books

By Arnold Lobel

“Friends doing stuff together all of the time.” Many of the children remembered these books. I listed them last on the list in this category because they are easy first reads and are a nice transition to chapter books.

Very First Chapter Reads

Description

Junie B. Jones

By Barbara Park

“Funny, I loved her character and her description of her classmates.”

Magic Tree House Series

By Mary Pope Osborne

“I loved the history element, I actually learned real stuff, but it wasn’t boring. What I also loved was the magical element. Action packed.” **It is important to note, other children I interviewed didn’t like this series at all. If your child likes history, I think this is a good series.

Sideways Stories from Wayside School

By Louis Sachar

“Super funny. Very silly. Very engaging and everything a kid wants to laugh about.” Recommended by both boys and girls.

The Secrets of Droon

By Tony Abbott

This is a fantasy and a really easy read. It is a series that has a ton of books in it. I know some children that start it in 2nd and 3rd grade and keep reading the series in later years (7th grade) because they love the story! Recommended by boys and girls. One boy listed this as his reason for liking and starting to read.

The Mouse and the Motorcycle

By Beverly Cleary

The way this was described, it sounded like the original *Toy Story*! A pet mouse “comes out to play” when his owner is gone. The mouse (Ralph) has fabulous adventures on his owner’s (Keith’s) toy motorcycle.



Very First Chapter Books

Description

Horrible Harry

By Suzy Kline

Every child I interviewed remembered the *Horrible Harry* books. Some liked other series better, but they all remembered the *Harry* books and had read more than one; that says something!

Stink Series

By Megan McDonald

This series was recommended by a girl even though the main character is a boy. "This is super funny. Judy is a typical big sister," (I read into that-not super nice), "and Stink-really bad name, especially at school, but it is really, really funny, anyway, Stink is great...Yeah, I love Stink."

Roscoe Riley Rules

By Katherine Applegate

At this age the children seem to favor funny! This is another one that comes highly recommended because it is so funny. It is described as, "he gets into all kinds of trouble, but he really doesn't mean to and it is super funny". It reminds me of a current, male, Pippi Longstocking.

Amber Brown

By Paula Danziger

"This is a great story. It has funny parts and really good parts."
**I didn't know what that meant so I looked up what the book was about, two best friends seem to have their adventures and then need to work out that one is moving.

Clementine

By Sara Pennypacker

"She (Clementine) is super funny and does all kinds of things you aren't supposed to do."

Judy Moody Series

By Megan McDonald

The child who recommended this book really liked "Stink" and thought it was funny and then as an afterthought, said, "Oh yeah, Stink has an older sister, Judy Moody, she is very popular and lots of the girls seem to love her books."

The Trouble with Chickens

J.J. Tully Mysteries

By Doreen Cronin

Animal lovers! A search and rescue dog comes out of retirement due to boredom and solves mysteries! For an "early chapter book" this one is harder: words like: particular and sweltering. Also, I put this on the list-it did not come recommended, simply because it is a chapter series that few have heard of that stars all animals.



Very First Chapter Books

Description

Galaxy Zack

By Ray O’Ryan

I had never heard of this before! If you have a child with an amazing imagination who is having trouble adjusting (the child I interviewed didn’t say to what-school?, moving? family?) and if your child leans toward humor and fantasy, this book is for your child! This is a little harder, but the content keeps them interested.

Bad Kitty

By Nick Bruel

All of my nieces love this cat! This is a funny series. Easy to read. (One of the easiest reads in this section).

8 Class Pets +1 Dog/1 Squirrel=Chaos

By Vivian Vande Velde

“Get ready to laugh...a lot!”

The Lost Treasure of the Emerald Eye

By Geronimo Stilton

This is a great series with lots of action about a mouse who is a reporter. It has funny parts too. **This looks harder to read, but the child that recommended it said that he liked it because the word were “different”. The format is different, if you look. Some words in color, some bigger than others, etc.

“I can read, I just don’t like to”

Description

Goose Girl Series

By Shannon Hale
(Harder book in this section)

“I loved that the series highlighted a different character in each book. The story of a princess who should have ruled that is struck down to poverty. It is done in an original and enchanting way!”

The Clique

By Lisi Harrison

Several recommendations for this. Girls feel this is true to what they are suffering in school. With real texts, mean girls and the desperate need to fit in.

Series of Unfortunate Events

By Lemony Snicket

I got a few recommendations for this. I have to confess, I found it creepy. The kids (especially the girls) said they read the whole series and loved it. However, it does not have a happy ending. It has an older girl taking care of two younger siblings as their parents have died and they are sent to a creepy older, removed cousin who seems out for their money in any way.



“I can read, I just don’t like to”

Description

Fablehaven

By Brandon Mull
(Harder book-384 pages)

Kids love it! They can’t put it down! It is “Potter-esque” with fantasy and magic, but in a whole different way! (Boys and girls gave this great reviews).

Princess Academy

By Shannon Hale

What girl with a love of romance and adventure wouldn’t love the thought of being poor and working hard all her life and then readying herself for the prince who is coming to select a bride?

The Selection

By Kiera Cass

This is interesting. A bachelor has to choose a wife out of 35 women. You would think this is all romance but it has traces of the *Hunger Games* (dystopian society) in it to make it interesting. This was marked as a favorite and must read.

Mr. Poppers Penguins

By Richard & Florence Atwater

Very funny and a little easier in this category. It was liked simply because of the impossible nature of the situation—who has a bunch of penguins living with them?

Harriet the Spy

By Louise Fitzhugh

“More of a thinking book, about relationships and mystery.”
**It is interesting to note the children’s description of the books (listed first) when I read the description, it sounded like these would be funny. Neither of the girls who recommended these said the books were funny—they were concentrating on the relationship aspect.

Artemis Fowl Series

By Eoin Colfer

“Action, funny, great characters, you get to route for the bad guy!” Voted best series by my most reluctant male reader.

Redwall Series

By Brian Jacques

Very clever. Full of action and the perfect story of good vs. evil. It has fantasy so if you aren’t ready for *The Hobbit* or even the *Potter* series, this one is great and engrossing.

The Familiars

By Adam Jay Epstein

Easy next step in reading. Wizards have familiars. This is about all of the familiars and their lives.

Alex Rider Series

By Anthony Horowitz

Kids love it when the hero saving the world is a teenager! This series is action-packed and the teen is doing all of the saving!



“I can read, I just don’t like to”

Description

The BFG

By Ronald Dahl

Great humor! Wonderful story! My boys liked this better when it was read to them.

Gregor Overlander

By Suzanne Collins

A reluctant male reader said this was one of the first series he started with after the early chapter books and loved. This is a fantasy (and this child doesn't like fantasy), it is about an 11 year old taking care of the family who “falls” into the underworld of the city and lives there.

Warriors

By Erin Hunter

This is all about different cat clans. It sounds weird, but I have a high recommendation from a girl and a boy that this is a great series for different reasons! One loved the clever names and the clans. The other just liked the adventures and that it was about cats.

The Thief and the Beanstalk

By P.W. Catanese

This was well loved because it was a completely different perspective than the classic tale of Jack and the Beanstalk. It has mischief, action, and thievery. Fabulous tale!

Revenge of the Shadow King

By Derek Benz & J.S. Lewis

If your child likes fantasy, a little scary, kids who get whisked away through a game and have to save the world with fairies and goblins this is for them!

The Big One-Oh!

By Dean Pritchford

Your child is in for a treat if he or she likes funny and child humor. It has the world and school seen the way children see it. It has gross references kids love. Still probably one of my boys’ favorite books of all time!

The Chronicles of Vladimir Tod

By Heather Brewer

Most vampire books are aimed toward girls. This one is for boys. It stars a middle school boy who is a vampire but can’t let anyone know. He is dealing with the pressures of middle school, kids who don’t like him a girl who likes his best friend and he has to stop vampire urges. Humor.

Vampirates

By Justin Somper
(easy read in this category)

For girls or boys. Action and adventure. These kids are out against the world. When the brother and sister get separated, the sister ends up with a boat of vampires. The brother ends up with a boat of pirates. The two are going to war.



"I can read, I just don't like to"

Description

H.I.V.E.

By Mark Walden

Action, suspense, comedy, drama. Both of my boys loved this series. It is about an elite school that trains the best of the best in talented children to be super villains. The thing is, older readers have a lot of critical things to say (character development especially). However, my boys ate this series up!!

I Am Number Four

By Pittacus Lore

An alien race trying to save the world against another alien race. Real friendships. Real school relationships. Sadness. Funny parts. The kids loved it!

Harder Books

Description

I don't know what makes the books end up in this category. The children I interviewed said they should be here. It could be subject matter, cursing, or length of the book.

Graceling

By Kristin Cashore

Many children are born with a gift. Because of this gift they are hunted. Action and adventure. (As this was described to me, it reminded me of H.I.V.E, maybe one appeals more to girls and one to boys-this one was recommended by the girls and the boys had not heard of it).

Cinder

By Marissa Meyer

Romance and a twist on the typical Cinderella. This one has machines. It is set in a dystopian world.

Throne of Glass

By Sarah J. Maas

Action. A girl is an assassin trying to win her freedom.

Pendragon

By D.J. MacHale

Not a really hard series, but forewarned it does have stuff that, well, teenage boys love. (It starts with kissing the hottest girl in the school). It is a fantasy. Bobby is whisked away to another dimension to save the world where he encounters really gnarly stuff. He wants to get home, no such luck! Quick read, action adventure, crazy stuff happens!

Bartimaeus Trilogy

By Jonathan Stroud

This is a fabulous trilogy. It is about magic. It is about a genie who has a particular disdain for humankind. However, he still has to do the bidding of a 12 year old new wizard. People are trying to kill them both and they have to figure out how to work together. Magical fun. Lots of sarcasm.



Harder Books

Description

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief

By Rick Riordan

This series is not hard, but it is a longer series with little print. What most kids who love this series like most is the mythology aspect to it. It has good characters. Lots of action and adventure.

Skulduggery Pleasant

By Derek Landry

Violence. Danger. Magic. This is an amazing book! The guy who looks like the bad guy (a walking skeleton-for a kid, how cool is that?), is saving a girl from certain evil.

Graphic Novels

Description

Diary of a Wimpy Kid

By Jeff Kinney

What adults don't understand is that for kids a lot of this world is real. The bullying. The stinky cheese that has been left in the corner for a week that if you touch it you will be shunned for ever... it seems!

Captain Underpants

By Dav Pikey

It was hysterical. A principal was hypnotized into thinking he is a superhero so at random times he strips down to his underwear, wears a cap and tries to save the world.

Bone (Out of Boneville is #1)

By Jeff Smith

A graphic novel/comic strip book series that my boys couldn't put down. Adults read this. It is super funny I am told.

Amulet Series

By Kazu Kibuishi

This is a great graphic novel series for boys or girls. You have: abandonment, survival, adolescence, saving parents, monsters, and a mechanical rabbit-seriously could this series be anything but amazing?!