for Children in Grades K-1 reading at a 3rd Grade level

25 books chosen by the American Library Association & Children’s Book Council Joint Committee to provide guidance to parents, caregivers, teachers, librarians, and others interested in discovering books for children who read at an advanced level and are seeking more challenging, but still age-appropriate, books.

2020-2021
*Ada Twist, Scientist by Andrea Beaty. Illus by David Roberts
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2016
A wonderful story told in rhyme, Ada asks questions and performs experiments to understand the world around her. Just like a scientist! ▲ Spanish.

*Detective Gordon: The First Case by Ulf Nilsson. Illus. by Gitte Spee
Gecko Press, 2016
A chapter book mystery starring Detective Gordon, a toad searching for the thieves behind a stolen stash of nuts in a woodland setting. ▲ Spanish.

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by Andrea Beaty. Illus by David Roberts
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2016
A wonderful story told in rhyme, Ada asks questions and performs experiments to understand the world around her. Just like a scientist! ▲ Spanish.

*Anna Hibiscus by Atinuke. Illus by Lauren Tobia
Kane Miller Books, 2010
The charming, fascinating stories about the spunky Anna detailing her urban, middle-class life in contemporary Africa, joyfully celebrate family and everyday life while gently exploring social justice issues in such a way as to captivate young readers.

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Dryad's Voice by Sally Odgers
Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 2002
Dryad, a young dryad, tells her story about growing up in the forest and the challenges she faces as she learns to live independently.

Echo Echo: Reverso Poems about Greek Myths by Marilyn Singer. Illus. by Josée Masse
Mirror poems that are meant to be read backwards and forwards present two sides of classic Greek Myths.

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Flora and Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures by Kate DiCamillo. Illus. by K. G. Campbell
Candlewick Press, 2013
Flora rescues Ulysses from a vacuum cleaner and discovers he has incredible magical powers. He’s also a squirrel.

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I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark by Debbie Levy. Illus. by Elizabeth Baddeley
The first Jewish woman to sit on the United States Supreme Court, Ginsburg’s life story and fight for equal rights for all is the subject of this biographical picture book.

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Do Not Lick This Book by Idan Ben-Barak. Illus. by Julian Frost
Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group / Roaring Brook Press, 2018
Told from the point of view of Min the microbe, this is a perfect introduction to the microscopic world around us.

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Insect Superpowers by Kate Messner. Illus. by Jillian Nickell
Chronicle Books, 2019
Using a comic-book style, this book cleverly introduces 18 various insects and their "superpowers" in action.

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*Mr. Wolf’s Class by Aron Steinke
Scholastic / Graphix, 2018
A 4th grade first time teacher is anxious to have the first day of school go smoothly in this graphic novel.

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The Day the Universe Exploded My Head: Poems to Take You into Space and Back Again by Allan Wolf. Illus. by Anna Raff
Candlewick Press, 2019
Blast off into space with a wide variety of space poems, from silly pun-filled verses to serious poems; notes on the poems and a glossary of space terms are included.

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Firebird by Misty Copeland. Illus. by Christopher Myers
Penguin Young Readers / G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2014
Written by the American Ballet Theater dancer Misty Copeland, this beautifully illustrated story encourages a young ballet dancer to not let her low self-image and lack of confidence get in her way.

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National Geographic Book of Nature Poetry
by J. Patrick Lewis
National Geographic Kids, 2015
A broad variety of nature poetry paired with breathtaking photographs that celebrate how inspiring nature can be.

One Proud Penny
by Randy Siegel. Illus. by Serge Bloch
Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group / Roaring Brook Press, 2017
An interesting anthropomorphic penny travels from his birthplace in Philadelphia around the country, recounting his adventures.

*The Princess in Black
by Shannon and Dean Hale. Illus. by LeUyen Pham
Candlewick Press, 2014
The prim and perfect princess has an alter ego who dresses all in black and saves the kingdom from various threats. ▲ Spanish.

*Pugs of the Frozen North
by Philip Reeve. Illus. by Sarah McIntyre
Random House Children’s Books / Yearling, 2016
A lively step up from early chapter books, Not-So-Impossible Tales are packed with big adventure, quirky misfits, and two-color art on almost every page.

The Roots of Rap: 16 Bars on the 4 Pillars of Hip-Hop
by Carole Boston Weatherford. Illus. by Frank Morrison
Little Bee Books, 2019
The history of hip-hop, including its roots in folktales, spirituals and poetry, and the art and dance that co-evolved with it.

*Sam Wu is Not Afraid of Ghosts
by Katie Tsang and Kevin Tsang. Illus. by Nathan Reed
Sterling Children’s Books, 2018
A zany boy has one problem after another trying to convince his classmates that he isn’t a scaredy-cat.

Snowman - Cold = Puddle
by Laura Purdie Salas. Illus by Micha Archer
Candlebridge, 2019
A collection of seasonal poems that creatively incorporate math language and concepts.

The Stuff of Stars
by Marion Dane Bauer. Illus. by Ekua Holmes
Candlewick Press, 2018
Gorgeously illustrated, this book explores nothing less than the formation of the universe.

The Thing about Bees
by Shabazz Larkin
Readers to Eaters, 2019
A love letter to the author/illustrator’s two sons that describes how important bees are.

Trombone Shorty
by Troy Andrews. Illus. by Bryan Collier
Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2015
The true story of a musician who bucked the odds to achieve his dreams.

*Weekends with Max and His Dad
by Linda Urban. Illus. by Katie Kath
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2018
Third-grader Max pursues neighborhood adventures with his dad as they both adjust to recent changes in their family.

Wet Cement: A Mix of Concrete Poems
by Bob Raczka. Illus. by Theodore Taylor III
Concrete poetry is always popular because it is so visually pleasing. This book won’t disappoint.

Whoosh!: Lonnie Johnson’s Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions
by Chris Barton. Illus. by Don Tate
Charlesbridge, 2016
This biography of the NASA engineer who accidentally invented one of the best toys of all time is inspiring and engaging. ▲ Spanish.
We suggest the following sites for more book titles:
www.cbcbooks.org
www.ala.org/alsc

Questions?

American Library Association
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The Children’s Book Council
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