

2026 Summer Reading List - Grade 2

Grade 2 readers are often making the leap to longer texts. On-grade picks include picture books with richer stories and early chapter books. Challenge titles are for strong readers ready for chapter-book independence.

ON-GRADE LEVEL · 5 BOOKS

Fiction

Thread by Thread

Alice Brière-Haquet, illus. Michela Eccli

The mouse family's house is unraveling! A picture book that handles forced migration and displacement with warmth and accessibility.

ISBN 9780802856395

Nonfiction

Over and Under the Coral Reef

Kate Messner, illus. Christopher Silas Neal

The latest in Messner's beloved series dives into vibrant coral reefs. Great STEM connections with back matter and further reading resources.

ISBN 9781797225357

Nonfiction

Welcome to Our Playground

Maira Butterfield, illus. Harriet Lynas

Games, toys, and playtimes from around the world — perfect summer inspiration organized by type of play.

ISBN 9798887771571

Fiction

Words with Wings and Magic Things

Matthew Burgess, illus. Doug Salati

Imaginative poems that play with words and meaning, illustrated by Caldecott medalist Salati. A spellbinding collection.

ISBN 9781774880289

Fiction

To See an Owl

Matthew Cordell

Patience, persistence, and more patience — Janie's quest to spot an owl is perfect for budding naturalists.

ISBN 9780593649893

CHALLENGE READS · 3 BOOKS

Fiction

Orris and Timble: Star Stories

Kate DiCamillo, illus. Carmen Mok

The third in DiCamillo's early chapter-book series. Orris the rat and Timble the owl navigate a changing friendship. A wonderful gateway to chapter books.

ISBN 9781536227581

Fiction

Rumpelstiltskin

Mac Barnett, illus. Carson Ellis

A witty, sophisticated retelling of the fairy-tale classic — a challenge for strong Grade 2 readers who love language and humor.

ISBN 9781338673852

Fiction

A Book of Maps for You

Lourdes Heuer, illus. Maxwell Eaton III

Rich with detail, community, and kindness — and a surprise ending that rewards careful, engaged readers.

ISBN 9780823455706

DIGITAL RESOURCES

PBS Kids

pbskids.org

Videos and games for early learners.

Highlights Kids

highlightskids.com

Trivia, puzzles, and games on this colorful interactive site.

Reading Rainbow

readingrainbow.org/watch

Enjoy episodes of Reading Rainbow with librarian Mychal Threets.