

Dear Rising Fourth Graders,

I am so excited to be welcoming you to Fourth Grade Language Arts and Reading! This summer you will be responsible for reading two books. One book will be required and the other will be one that you choose. Our group selection will be *Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus* by Dusti Bowling. You may choose a book from the listed recommendations. You may also choose a different book that you have been wanting to read. The main goal is that you have fun reading this summer! Of course, you're welcome to read as many books as you wish this summer. If you do, I'd love to see a list of the books you chose! I look forward to seeing you in September!

Best,

Mrs. Lynch
4th Grade Language Arts and Reading Teacher

Assignments:

Please write 3 journal entries as you read the group book. Journal entries should be at least a half of one page. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- *How did the book make you feel
- *Whether you are enjoying the book or not and WHY
- *What type of reader would you recommend this to
- *A quick summary of the part you are up to
- *What you predict will happen
- *Something you're wondering about
- *What you think the author's message is
- *Something you don't understand
- *How you feel about a character
- *How the setting affects the characters

For your choice book, you may prepare a book talk to present in class the first week of school.

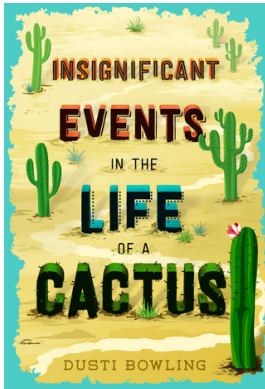
A book talk is a short oral presentation (1-2 minutes)

The following is a list of points that should be included (and what should not be included)

- Bring the physical book
- Title
- Author
- Genre
- Any awards or movie adaptations (you may have to research to find this information)
- Give the listener a basic understanding of the set-up of the book without summarizing the plot or spoiling the story.
- Your goal is to inspire others to want to read this book
- It's a good idea to pick out similar books to mention or some character or plot aspect to compare it to. For example:

- If you loved Winn Dixie, you will love Charlotte's Web.
- If you love stories that feature characters who have to overcome disabilities to succeed, you will love Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus. If you love a great adventure tale, you will love The Swiss Family Robinson.

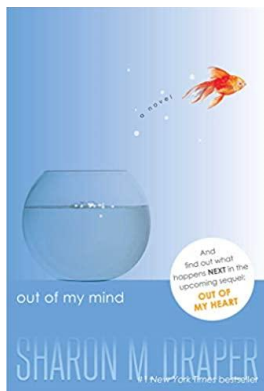
MANDATORY: INSIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF A CACTUS



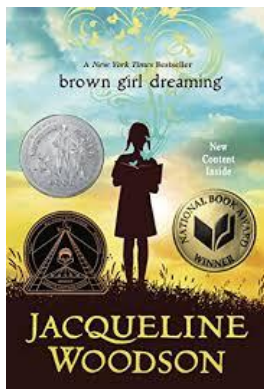
Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus by Dusti Bowling
Aven Green has just moved from Kansas to Arizona where her parents are running an Old West Theme Park. Aven is funny, kind, a great friend, and just happens to have been born without arms. Read as Aven balances being the new kid at school, her new friendships, and trying to solve the mystery of the theme park where she is making her new home...

CHOICE BOOKS

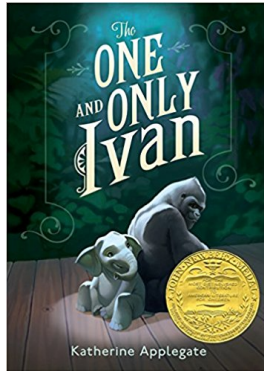
Fourth Grade Selections



Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper
Eleven-year-old Melody is not like most people. She can't walk. She can't talk. She can't write. All because she has cerebral palsy. But she also has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She's the smartest kid in her whole school, but NO ONE knows it. Most people—her teachers, her doctors, her classmates—dismiss her as mentally challenged because she can't tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by her disability. And she's determined to let everyone know it...somehow..



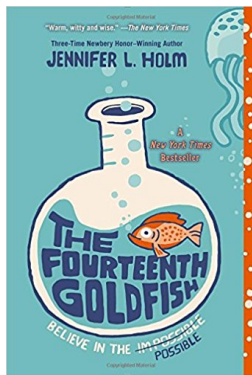
Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson
Raised in South Carolina and New York, Jacqueline Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. This autobiography is actually written as a collection of poems! One of my very favorite reads ever!



The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate

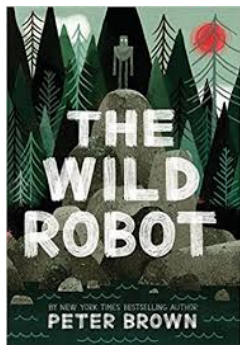
Having spent 27 years behind the glass walls of his enclosure in a shopping mall, Ivan is used to humans watching him. He hardly ever thinks about his life in the jungle. Instead, Ivan occupies himself with television, his friends Stella the elephant, Bob the dog, Julia the human, and painting. But when he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from the wild, he is forced to see their home, and his art, through new eyes. Heads up: this is different from the movie. :)

Science Fiction



The Fourteenth Goldfish by Jennifer L. Holm

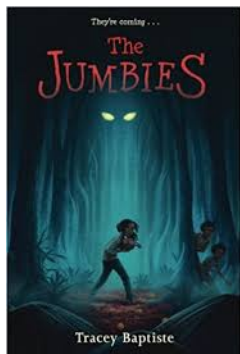
Eleven-year-old Ellie has never liked change. She misses fifth grade. She misses her old best friend. She even misses her dearly departed goldfish. Then one day a strange boy shows up. He's bossy. He's cranky. And weirdly enough . . . he looks a lot like Ellie's grandfather, a scientist who's always been slightly obsessed with immortality. Could this gawky teenager really be Grandpa Melvin? Has he finally found the secret to eternal youth?



The Wild Robot by Peter Brown

After a giant storm on the open ocean, a crate containing a robot washed up on a deserted island. ROZ must figure out how to adapt to life on an island surrounded by animals who are convinced she is a monster.

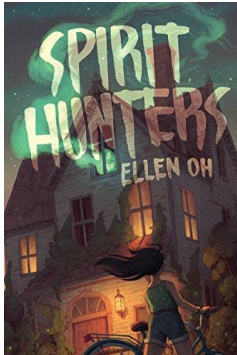
Scary Stories to Tell at Camp



The Jumbies by Tracey Baptiste

Corinne La Mer isn't afraid of anything. Not scorpions, not the boys who tease her, and certainly not jumbies. They're just tricksters made up by parents to frighten their children. Then one night Corinne chases an agouti all the way into a forest, and shining yellow eyes follow her to the edge of the trees. They couldn't belong to a jumbie. Or could they? Set on the beaches and lush forests of Haiti, *The*

Jumbies is a sure bet for readers who like adventure (and Mrs. Guthrie thinks the sequel is even better!).



Spirit Hunters by Ellen Oh

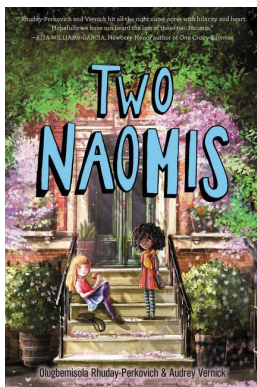
Harper Raine is having a tough summer. Now only is she the new kid in town, she must face down the dangerous ghosts haunting her younger brother! Harper doesn't trust her new home from the moment she steps inside, and the rumors are that the Raine family's new house is haunted. Harper isn't sure she believes those rumors, until her younger brother, Michael, starts acting strangely. The whole atmosphere gives Harper a sense of déjà vu, but she can't remember why. She knows that the memories she's blocking will help make sense of her brother's behavior and the strange and threatening sensations she feels in this house, but will she be able to put the pieces together in time? Warning: this one is not for the faint of heart!!

Realistic Fiction



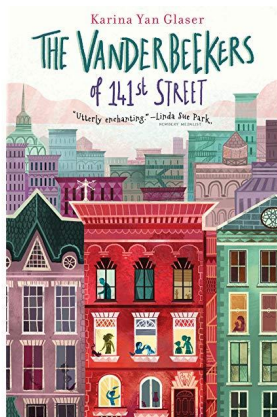
Amina's Voice by Hena Khan

Amina has never been comfortable in the spotlight. She is happy just hanging out with her best friend, Soojin. Except now that she's in middle school everything feels different. Soojin is suddenly hanging out with Emily, one of the "cool" girls in the class. Does Amina need to start changing too? Or hiding who she is to fit in? And will she ever get up the courage to try out for a solo in her school's chorus concert? Good for people who want to read a book about friendships.



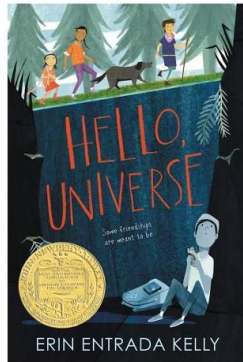
Two Naomis by Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich & Audrey Vernick

Other than their first names, Naomi Marie and Naomi Edith are sure they have nothing in common, and they wouldn't mind keeping it that way. So when Naomi Marie's mom and Naomi Edith's dad get serious about dating, each girl tries to cling to the life she knows and loves. Then their parents push them into attending a class together, where they might just have to find a way to work with each other—and maybe even join forces to find new ways to define family.



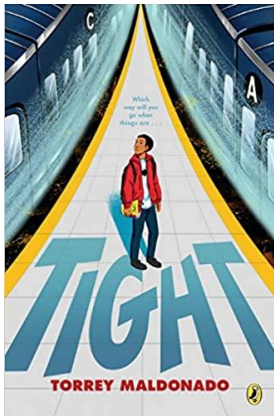
The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street by Karina Yan Glaser

The Vanderbeekers have always lived in the brownstone on 141st Street. It's practically another member of the family. So when their reclusive, curmudgeonly landlord decides not to renew their lease, the five siblings have eleven days to do whatever it takes to stay in their beloved home and convince the dreaded Beiderman just how wonderful they are. And all is fair in love and war when it comes to keeping their home!



Hello, Universe by Erin Entrada Kelly

Virgil is shy and feels out of place in his loud and boisterous family. Valencia, who is deaf, is smart, brave, and loves everything about nature. Kaori is a self-proclaimed psychic, whose little sister Gen is always following her around. And Chet is a bully who wishes the “weird” kids would just act normal. They aren’t friends -- at least not until Chet pulls a prank that traps Virgil and his pet guinea pig at the bottom of a well. This disaster leads Kaori, Gen, and Valencia on an epic quest to find the missing Virgil.



Tight by Torrey Maldonado

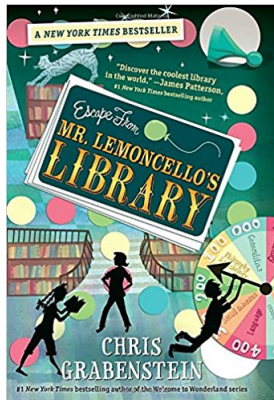
Lately Bryan's been feeling it in all kinds of ways. He knows what's tight for him in a good way--reading comics, drawing superheroes, and hanging out with no drama. But drama's hard to escape where he's from, and that gets him wound up tight. And now Bryan's new friend Mike is challenging him to have fun in ways that are crazy risky. At first, it's a rush following Mike, hopping turnstiles, subway surfing, and getting into all kinds of trouble. But Bryan never feels right acting wrong. So which way will he go when he understands that drama is so not his style?

Great Scott! Mysteries



Smart Cookie by Ellie Schwartz

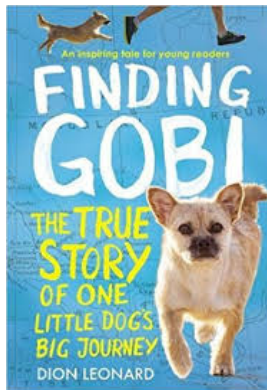
Smart Cookie tells the story of Frankie, a girl living in a Bed and Breakfast with her dad, her grandma, her beagle, and her porcupine. While Frankie is busy playing matchmaker for her dad, something mysterious is going on with the Bed & Breakfast. Is it haunted? Or is someone trying to sabotage them? Read Smart Cookie and find out!



Mr. Lemoncello's Library by Chris Grabenstein

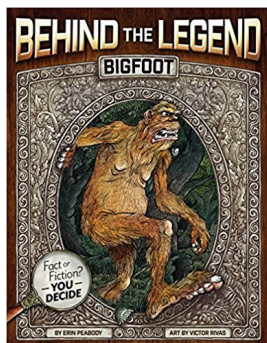
Did you like Charlie and the Chocolate Factory? Do you like puzzles? Then this book is for you! When Kyle learns that the world's most famous game maker, Luigi Lemoncello, has designed the town's new library and is having an invitation-only lock-in on opening night, he's determined to be there! But the tricky part isn't getting into the library—it's getting out. Because when morning comes, the doors stay locked. Kyle and the other kids must solve every clue and figure out every secret puzzle to find the hidden escape route! Part of a series if you wind up liking it.

Nonfiction



Finding Gobi: Young Reader's Edition: The True Story of One Little Dog's Big Journey by Aaron Rosenberg and Dion Leonard

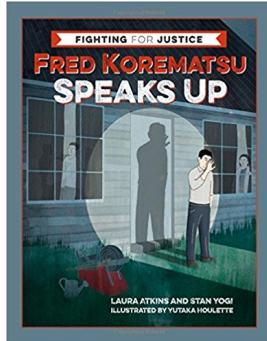
Dion Leonard is a 41 year old Australian who has competed in some of the world's toughest ultra marathons across the planet's toughest landscapes. When Dion enters a race in the Gobi Desert, his life changes when he falls in love with a stray dog (later named Gobi) who follows him as he runs. Dion wants to take him back home, but complications immediately start. Soon, it looks like Gobi is lost forever. Will Dion and Gobi ever find each other?



Behind the Legend series by Erin Peabody

If you are into legendary creatures like Bigfoot, the Loch Ness Monster, Unicorns, Werewolves, and Zombies, consider picking a book from the Behind the Legend series this summer. Author Erin

Peabody presents the facts about these creatures and YOU decide whether or not they really exist based on the evidence!



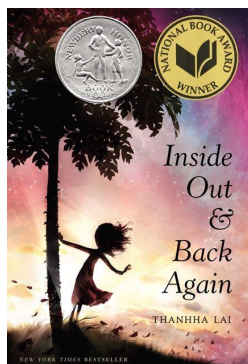
Fred Korematsu Speaks Up by Laura Atkins and Stan Yogi
Fred Korematsu liked listening to music on the radio, playing tennis, and hanging around with his friends—just like lots of other Americans. But everything changed when the United States went to war with Japan in 1941 and the government forced all people of Japanese ancestry to leave their homes and move to prison camps. But Fred refused to go. He knew that what the government was doing was unfair. And when he got put in jail for resisting, he knew he couldn't give up.



Historical Fiction

SeeSaw Girl by Linda Sue Park

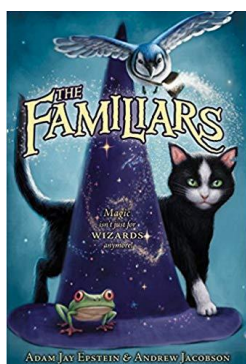
In 17th century Korea, a girl from a good family does not leave home until she marries. But Jade loves hearing her older brother's stories about trips to the market and to the ancestral grave sites in the mountains, about reading and painting, about business and politics and adventures only boys can have. Jade accepts her destiny, and yet she is endlessly curious about what lies beyond the walls. *SeeSaw Girl* Jade Blossom's daring attempts to enlarge her world.



Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai

Hà has only ever known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, and the warmth of her friends close by. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. Hà and her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope—toward America. Written in verse (that means poems!).

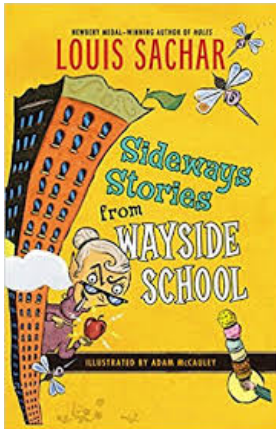
Fantasy



The Familiars by Adam Jay Epstein, Andrew Jacobson

When Aldwyn, a young alley cat on the run, ducks into a mysterious pet shop, he doesn't expect his life to change. But that's exactly what happens when Jack, a young wizard in training, picks Aldwyn to be his magical familiar. Finally off the tough streets, Aldwyn thinks he's

got it made. He just has to convince the other familiars that he's the telekinetic cat he claims to be. But when Jack and two other wizards in training are captured by the evil queen, Aldwyn will have to use all of his street smarts, a few good friends, and a nose for adventure to save the day!



Sideways Stories From Wayside School by Louis Sachar

Do you like funny books? Try *Sideways Stories From Wayside School*. There was a terrible mistake-Wayside School was built with one classroom on top of another, thirty stories high! (The builder said he was sorry.) Maybe that's why all kinds of funny and unbelievable things happened at Wayside-especially on the thirteenth floor. The first book I ever really loved as a kid. Comes with sequels if you wind up liking it!

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