

The Complete
**Elementary
Reading List**

100 Must Read Classic Books for Kids

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READ

Books for Kids

What are classic books?

It can be a challenge to define succinctly exactly what makes for classic literature. However, it is generally agreed that a classic is an excellent book that stands the test of time and is meaningfully relevant across cultures and generations. Classic books for kids have a universal appeal and make a lasting contribution to the field of children's literature.

What are living books?

Living books, a term made popular in the homeschool community by [Charlotte Mason](#), is a slightly different definition than a classic. Living books are superb children's literature that teach morality and goodness by bringing a subject to life. So, a living book can be more than just ordinary fiction, but any story that educates by expanding dry facts into narrative, whether historical or scientific.

What do the reading levels mean?

In public schools, teachers generally assess students at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to determine their reading level. There are different assessments used, but most schools report a student's level using numbers (DRA system) or letters (Fountas & Pinnell Guided Reading system). Some schools and standardized tests also reference a child's Lexile reading number, which is a score between 1-1000. If you [know your child's reading level](#), it can help you choose the right books! If you're not sure, you can easily [figure out your child's reading level](#) at home. (Click the blue links to jump to the website!)

Why does it matter what books my kids read?

Think of it this way: giving your child a diet of classics and living books is like providing the meat and vegetables of a healthy, balanced meal (assuming you're not a vegetarian, ha!). That doesn't mean kids can't read the fluffier, sillier, fly-by-night stories that are here today and gone tomorrow. However, look at those books as the desserts that are fun to read, but not terribly helpful in shaping a child's imagination, character, and comprehension.

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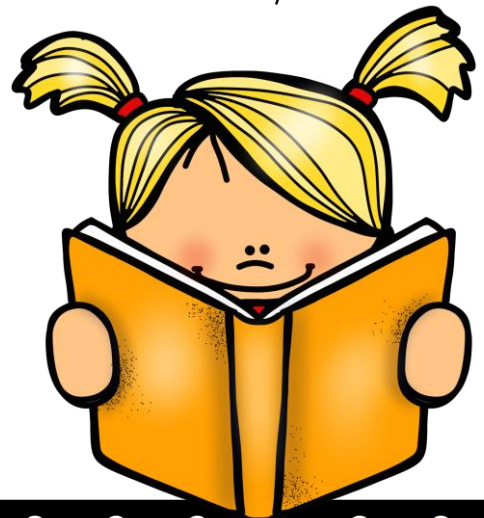
1st Grade

Classics & Living Books

1. *Dick & Jane* by William S. Gray
2. *The Foot Book* by Dr. Seuss
3. *Hop on Pop* by Dr. Seuss
4. *Bears in the Night* by Stan & Jan Berenstain
5. *Mrs. Wishy-Washy* by Joy Cowley
6. *Biscuit* books by Alyssa Satin Capucilli
7. *Elephant & Piggie* books by Mo Willems
8. *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss
9. *A Kiss for Little Bear* and *Little Bear* books by Else Holmelund Minarik
10. *Fox in Socks* by Dr. Seuss
11. *Mr. Brown Can Moo* by Dr. Seuss
12. *Wacky Wednesday* by Theo Lesieg
13. *Danny & the Dinosaur* by Syd Hoff
14. *Little Runner of the Longhouse* by Betty Baker
15. *I'll Teach My Dog 100 Words* by Michael Frith
16. *Green Eggs & Ham* by Dr. Seuss
17. *Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss
18. *Frog & Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel
19. *1 Fish, 2 Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* by Dr. Seuss
20. *Sam the Minuteman* by Nathaniel Benchley
21. *Oscar Otter* by Nathaniel Benchley
22. *Red Fox and his Canoe* by Nathaniel Benchley
23. *Mouse Tales* by Arnold Lobel

Characteristics of Grade 1 Books

- Fountas & Pinnell Levels E-J
- DRA level 6-18
- Lexile 125-400
- Longer sentences
- 3-8 lines of text on a page
- Familiar content and contexts
- Smaller illustrations
- New vocabulary



2nd Grade

Classics & Living Books

1. *One Day Everything Went Wrong* by Elizabeth Vreeken
2. *Berenstain Bears - Family Reunion* by Stan & Jan Berenstain
3. *Nate the Great* by Marjorie Sharmat
4. *The Big Balloon Race* by Eleanor Coerr
5. *Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie* by Peter Roop
6. *Famous Explorers* by Garnet Jackson
7. *The Littles* by John Peterson
8. *Amelia Bedelia* series by Herman Parish
9. *Cam Jensen* series by David Adler
10. *Magic Treehouse* series by Mary Pope Osborne
11. *The Josephina Story Quilt* by Eleanor Coerr
12. *Frog & Toad All Year* by Arnold Lobel
13. *Lyle, Lyle Crocodile* by Bernard Waber
14. *The Bears on Hemlock Mountain* by Alice Dalgliesh
15. *Molly's Pilgrim* by Barbara Cohen

Characteristics of Grade 2 Books

- Fountas & Pinnell levels K-L-M
- DRA levels 20-28
- Lexile 400-600
- Simple chapter books
- 60-100 pages
- Less picture support
- Multiple characters



3rd Grade

Classics & Living Books

1. *Chocolate Fever* by Robert Smith
2. *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* by Beverly Cleary
3. *Nancy Drew* (later editions) by Carolyn Keene
4. *The Chocolate Touch* by Patrick Catling
5. *Pompeii Buried Alive* by Edith Kunhardt
6. *The Chalk Box Kid* by Clyde Robert Bulla
7. *My Name is Maria Isabel* by Alma Flor Ada
8. *Anna Sewell's Black Beauty* by Cathy East
9. *The Year of Miss Agnes* by Kirkpatrick Hill
10. *Little Pear* by Eleanor Lattimore
11. *The Boxcar Children* by Gertrude Warner
12. *Bunnicula* by James & Deborah Howe
13. *Clementine* by Sara Pennypacker
14. *Herbie Jones* by Richard Williams
15. *Henry Huggins* by Beverly Cleary
16. *The King's Equal* by Katherine Paterson
17. *The Mouse and the Motorcycle* by Beverly Cleary
18. *The Courage of Sarah Noble* by Alice Dalgliesh
19. *Pippi Longstocking* by Astrid Lindgrén
20. *Mrs. Piggle Wiggles* by Betty MacDonald
21. *American Girl* series by various authors
22. *Hardy Boys* by Franklin W. Dixon
23. *Magic School Bus* series by Joanna Cole
24. *Tut Tut: The Time Warp Trio* by Jon Scieszka
25. *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes
26. *The Matchlock Gun* by Walter Edmonds
27. *A Lion to Guard Us* by Clyde Robert Bulla

Characteristics of Grade 3 Books

- Fountas & Pinnell N-O-P
- DRA levels 30-38
- Lexile 600-700
- Longer chapters
- Few to no pictures
- Figurative language
- Diverse cultures
- New ideas & concepts
- Draw conclusions



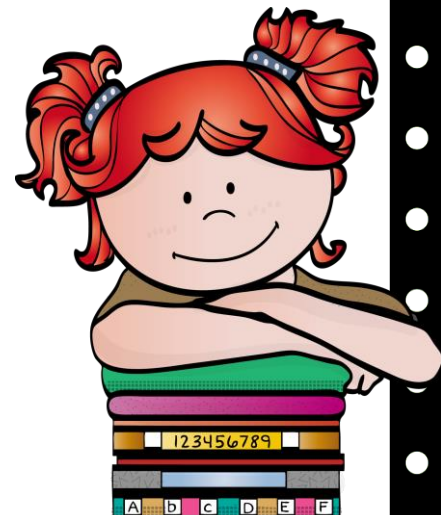
4th Grade

Classics & Living Books

1. *Little House on the Prairie* series by Laura Ingalls Wilder
2. *Homer Price* by Robert McCloskey
3. *Pedro's Journal* by Pam Conrad
4. *Mr. Popper's Penguins* by Richard & Florence Atwater
5. *Detectives in Togas* by Henry Winterfield
6. *The Wheel on the School* by Meindert de Jong
7. *Caddie Woodlawn* by Carol Ryrie Brink
8. *Pocahontas and the Strangers* by Clyde Robert Bulla
9. *Justin Morgan Had a Horse* by Marguerite Henry
10. *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White
11. *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen
12. *Shiloh* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
13. *Listening to Crickets* by Candice Ransom
14. *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan
15. *Phoebe the Spy* by Judith Berry Griffin
16. *The Cabin Faced West* by Jean Fritz
17. *Pollyanna* by Eleanor Porter
18. *The Cricket in Times Square* by Garth Williams
19. *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg
20. *I Survived the American Revolution* by Lauren Tarshis
21. *Treasure Island* - Junior Classics for Young Readers
22. *Moby Dick* - Junior Classics for Young Readers
23. *Winnie the Pooh* by A.A. Milne
24. *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo
25. *The Whipping Boy* by Sid Fleischman

Characteristics of Grade 4 Books

- Fountas & Pinnell Q-R-S
- DRA level 38-40
- Lexile 700-800
- Abstract themes
- Technical language
- Complex characters
- Intricate plots



5th Grade

Classics & Living Books

1. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S.Lewis
2. *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson
3. *Sing Down the Moon* by Scott O'Dell
4. *Wonder* by P.D. Palacio
5. *The Penderwicks* by Jeanne Birdsall
6. *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George
7. *The Sign of the Beaver* by Elizabeth George Speare
8. *The Secret Garden* by Francis Hodgson Burnett
9. *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
10. *The Watsons go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis
11. *Strawberry Girl* by Lois Lenski
12. *Julie of the Wolves* by Jean Craighead George
13. *Amos Fortune, Free Man* by Elizabeth Yates
14. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll
15. *By the Great Horn Spoon* by Sid Fleischman
16. *The Twenty-One Balloons* by William Piene du Bois
17. *Gregor the Overlander* by Suzanne Collins
18. *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell
19. *Calico Bush* by Rachel Field
20. *The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate Dicamillo
21. *Follow My Leader* by James B. Garfield

Characteristics of Grade 5 Books

- Fountas & Pinnell T-U-V
- DRA levels 40-50
- Lexile 800-900
- Pre-adolescent problems
- Conflict between good and evil
- Mature issues such as war, racism, adversity
- Complex narrative
- Symbolism
- Challenging language (old terms, dialects, foreign words)

