

Summer Reading Requirements/Suggestions for Students Entering GRADE FOUR 2026 – 2027

Although we recognize and hope that *many* books may be read over the summer, **students are required to read a minimum of four books** to fulfill the SJA Summer Reading Program, including the **Fourth Grade Required Read: *The Water Horse* by Dick King-Smith.** (**Please Note: If students choose to read graphic novels as part of this requirement, only one of the four required reads may be from this genre.*) Students need to list all book titles read, including the author's name. Parents must sign this list. The list of books read must be submitted to your classroom teacher on the first day of classes in September. These books may be used as the basis for discussion and writing during the first weeks of school.

We encourage families to make reading a regular part of their summer schedule; in this current era of increased exposure to electronics and digital content, daily reading offers a break from screens, provides a time for parents and children to bond and relax together, and boosts students' attention span, comprehension, and language/vocabulary development – key tools for academic achievement and success.

Reading resources abound. The American Library Association provides a complete online list of Award Books at www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia. Baltimore County Public Library (www.bcpl.info), Harford County Public Library (www.hcplonline.org), and the York County Public Library (www.yorklibraries.org) offer additional resources and programs for students. Their websites include suggested reading lists by age, information on youth reading programs and events, including this year's Maryland State Library Summer Reading Program, "*Unearth a Story*," and a large selection of e-books and audio books available for direct download. In addition, we encourage you to link to the Baltimore County or Harford County Public Libraries' Research Databases to access NoveList K-8 Plus. This database is an excellent source for book recommendations based on age, fiction/non-fiction, interest, and genre.

We are asking that ***every* Fourth Grade student have a current public library card for the upcoming school year.** Library cards may be obtained in person or online from your local library branch. A public library card gives students access to the available resources detailed above, as well as to academic databases that may be used during the year for class assignments and/or projects.

REQUIRED READ

All students entering Fourth Grade must read: *The Water Horse* by Dick King-Smith.

SUGGESTED READING

Listed below are selections from the 2026 – 2027 Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Book Award nominees in the Grades 4-5 Novel Category and Graphic Novel Category. *All selections are listed as suggestions only.*

2026 – 2027 Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Award Nominee Selections: Novels

- *The Experiment* Rebecca Stead
- *Growing Home* Beth Ferry
- *The House Next Door* Ellen Oh
- *Pocket Bear* Katherine Applegate
- *The Secret of Moonrise Manor (A Raven Gallows Mystery, Book 1)* Stephanie Bearce
- *Severe and Unusual Weather* Jessie Ann Foley
- *The Trouble with Heroes* Kate Messner
- *Vanya and the Wild Hunt* Sangu Mandanna
- *Will's Race for Home* Jewel Parker Rhodes

2026 – 2027 Maryland Black-Eyed Susan Award Nominee Selections: Graphic Novels

- *Creaky Acres* Calista Brill
- *Creature Clinic* Gavin Aung Than
- *Diary of a Nature Nerd* Tiffany Everett
- *Good Boy* Andy Hirsch
- *I'm a Dumbo Octopus! A Graphic Guide to Cephalopods* Anne Lambelet
- *Jupiter Nettle and the Seven Schools of Magic* Sangu Mandanna
- *Millie of the Manor* Karina Evans
- *Mr. Muffins: Defender of the Stars* Ben Kahn
- *Speak Up, Santiago! A Hillside Valley Graphic Novel* Julio Anta
- *Story Spinners: A Sisterly Tale of Danger, A Princess, and Her Crew of Lady Pirates* Cassandra Federman

2026 Newbery Medal

All the Blues in the Sky

Renee Watson

FOURTH GRADE UNITS OF STUDY

Reading fiction and non-fiction titles related to the Fourth Grade curriculum provides excellent enrichment and support for subjects studied during the year.

Map Skills

Central Nervous System

Explorers

Weather

Colonial America

Slavery

Maryland

Native Maryland Plants and Animals