



Reading consists of a constantly evolving set of skills. Teachers use a number of standardized tests to assess reading levels and vocabulary. While all of this data can help to make decisions on what is best for your student, nothing beats their interest in a particular subject, series, or book. An undoubtable rule of thumb is if a student is reading on their own, never discourage them. Whether they are reading a magazine, a picture book, or an encyclopedia that is way above their understanding. They chose that for a reason and will find out on their own if it is too difficult or not interesting. When introducing a new book to a student it is best to suggest it, maybe even read a few chapters with them to get them started, but never force a book on a student, that is the quickest way to turn them off from reading entirely. Here is a list compiled by average reading levels for elementary school grades that you can use to guide your suggestions, as well as [reading worksheets](#) to fortify kid's reading skills. To prevent [summer reading loss](#), just pick up a book and get reading!

Emerging readers: The Pigeon Series by Mo Willems

The Pigeon books have become a staple for children's literature. The artistic stylings of Mo Willems are easy to pick out and the books can be enjoyed by readers and non-readers alike. One of the great aspects of these books is predictability. Early readers tend to memorize how the book was read to them and "pretend read" using pictures as clues to the words. The pigeon books use dialogue, expression, and changes in font size to emphasize parts of the book and even non-readers can pick up on these to decode the words. If you want your little learner to be successful on their journey to the world of reading, explore our [alphabet worksheets](#) for the smallest ones!

Once students learn to start reading, the books contain lots of very simple words and even pepper in some complex words that will challenge students all while they laugh themselves silly to the pigeon's ridiculous hijinx.

Grade 1: Henry and Mudge Series by Cynthia Rylant

Getting a student hooked on a series is the greatest achievement for a young reader. After reading a few books in a series students become comfortable with the format and the characters. As long as the series has plenty of entries they will also always have a new one to read. Henry and Mudge introduce young readers to a chapter book style layout and is long enough to occupy them for a few days. This helps students move what they read into long-term memory and recall it before they start reading the next time. They will also build good habits of bookmarking their pages, stopping at the end of a chapter, and build the excitement of wanting to keep reading even as their eyes close.

Grade 2: Cam Jansen Series by David Miller

Everyone loves a good mystery and readers who are now solidifying their basic reading skills are ready to mix up genres. The Cam Jansen series allows readers to make their own predictions and use the clues given by our title character along with the few pictures provided to make their own predictions. As the story unfolds readers will strengthen the evidence for their prediction or change it entirely. The story's format always leads to a satisfying conclusion building back on the bits of evidence collected by the young sleuths.

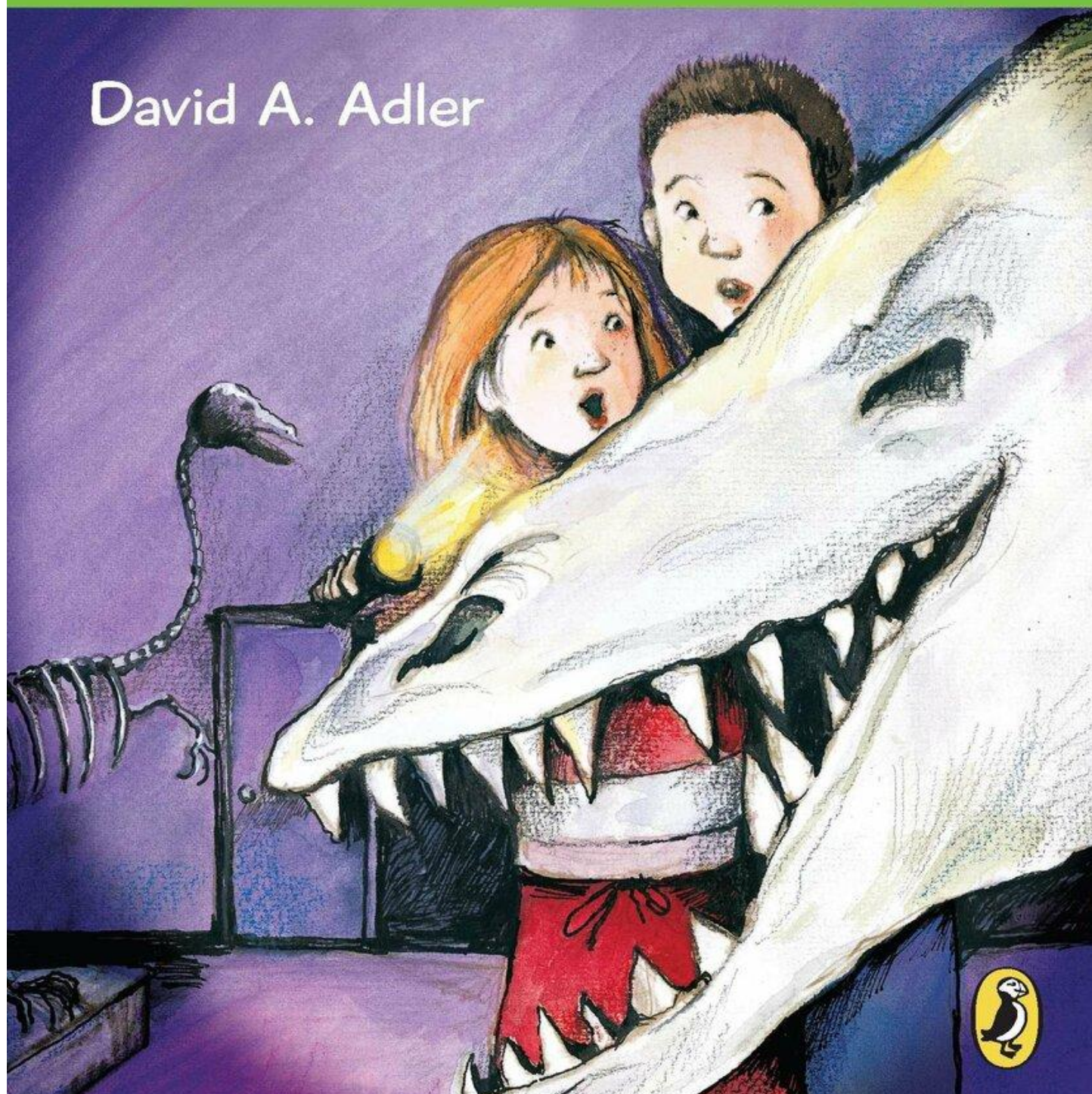
CAM JANSSEN



CASE #3

The Mystery of the Dinosaur Bones

David A. Adler



Grade 3: The Boxcar Children Series by Gertrude Warner

The Boxcar Children is an older series, originally published in 1924, and the books can show some obvious signs of being dated especially when it comes to telephones and automobiles. However, these books have spiked in popularity in recent years thanks to newer books being added to the series as well as a cartoon being produced about the characters. The Boxcar Children are amateur sleuths who consistently end up in the middle of a mystery no matter where their travels take them. Very similar to novels like The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew, their adventures often have them running into smugglers and thieves, a small step up from the mystery novels aimed at younger readers.

Grade 4: Goosebumps Series by R.L. Stine

The Goosebumps series has spanned the test of time. While most books aim to teach a lesson about friendship or the power of love, Goosebumps was written to be entertaining and scary. The series breaks a lot of the norms of literature, the typical story arc, solving the problem and the happy ending are often nowhere to be found in these stories. This purely-for-entertainment writing and reading style is a great entry point for hesitant readers and a logical next step for those who have grown accustomed to normal story progression.

Grade 5: I Survived Series by Lauren Tarshis

Without a doubt the newest addition to every elementary classroom the I Survived series covers historical moments like Hurricane Katrina, The Great Chicago Fire, and the invasion of Normandy beaches on D-Day. These books use a child protagonist who witnesses or is a part of these incredible time periods. Lauren Tarshis grabs readers with a cold opening, diving straight into the action, and never let go as you follow the characters through some of the most defining moments in history. The I Survived series does a fantastic job of introducing developing students to more advanced topics like war, social injustice, poverty, and death. While not the major focus of the books, Lauren Tarshis does not shy away from some of the harsh realities of our history.

I SURVIVED

THE SINKING OF
THE *TITANIC*, 1912

by Lauren
Tarshis

 SCHOLASTIC

Grade 6: Holes by Louis Sachar

A boy is sent to a camp to dig holes every day because he was accused of stealing shoes. The plot seems ridiculous and a terrible idea for a book, however, Louis Sachar weaves a mystery, a curse, and bandits of the wild west into this young man's story in such a way that students can not put this one down. This book separates into three distinct stories which slowly drop clues about one another and then all culminate in one of the most satisfying conclusions in juvenile fiction. This book is also one of the rare cases where the movie sticks very true to the book and is a pleasure and possibly a reward to watch after finishing the book.

Grade 7: Hatchet by Gary Paulsen

Everyone thinks they have what it takes to survive on their own, left to the elements and wild animals. Hatchet tests readers emotionally and physically. When our protagonist finds himself crash-landed in the Canadian wilderness his only option is survival. This book emphasizes the rewards of hard work and self-reliance. It is also a hard turn from the screen-dominated lifestyles we are inundated with. Hatchet is a must-read for anyone who enjoys the outdoors or maybe spends a little too much time indoors.

Grade 8: A Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snicket

A Series of Unfortunate Events took the lessons of R.L. Stine and threw all traditional writing conventions out the window. While the stories are great and the characters well developed the true draw for older readers is the fact that the narrator regularly tells you how they are breaking the rules of writing. They speak to the reader explaining what a good writer might do and why they are not going to do that. This breaking of the fourth wall not only reinforces what students have learned as readers and writers but also shows the possibilities of breaking down the normal conventions and creating something truly unique. The adventures of the Baudelaires truly is a series of unfortunate events and each unfortunate ending sends students eagerly toward the next book in this culminating series.

LEMONY SNICKET

A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS No.3

THE WIDE WINDOW or, Disappearance!



"Where can we get help in the middle of a lake?"

INSIDE: EXTRA stories & EXTRA art for NO EXTRA cents!

The grades outlined in this list are by no means set in stone. They are organized simply by the average ages the material was written for. The key for any reader is to have a vested interest in the story and the characters. If your third grader loves the Titanic and can't put down the I Survived series let them enjoy it at their current level of understanding. Hopefully, that interest will persevere and they will pick up the book in the future and enjoy it on a whole other level. And if your high schooler (or you) are perusing the juvenile fiction section, seize the day! Not every book read has to be a literary classic, reading for the sake of reading is a wonder of its own.

