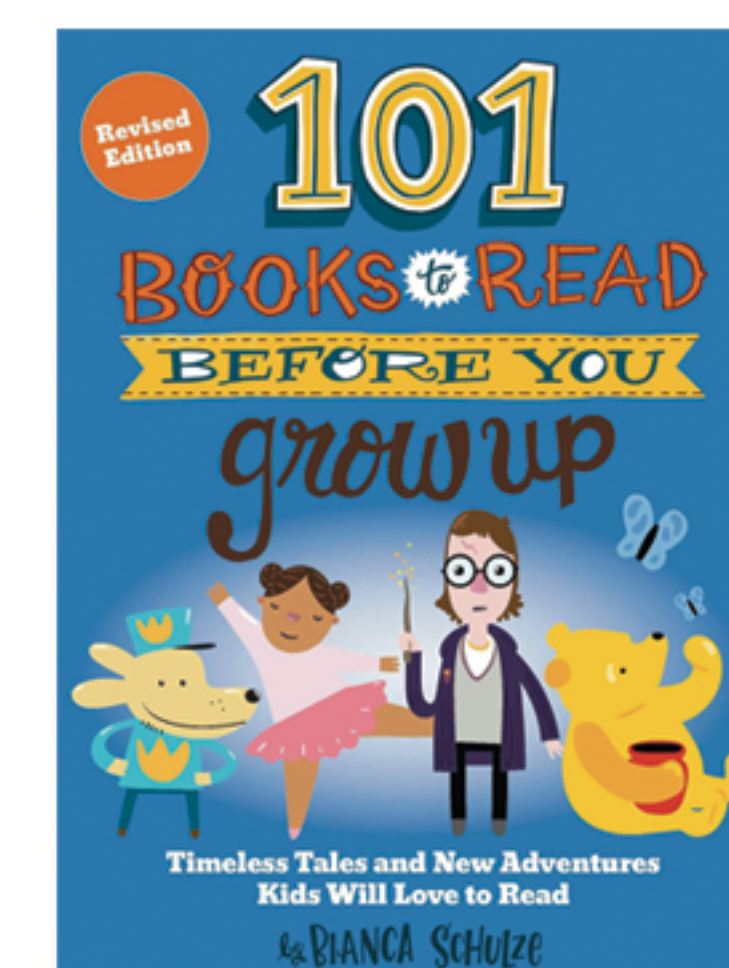




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101

Books to Read Before You Grow Up

A companion packet for the classroom, library & home

by Bianca Schulze • Walter Foster Jr.

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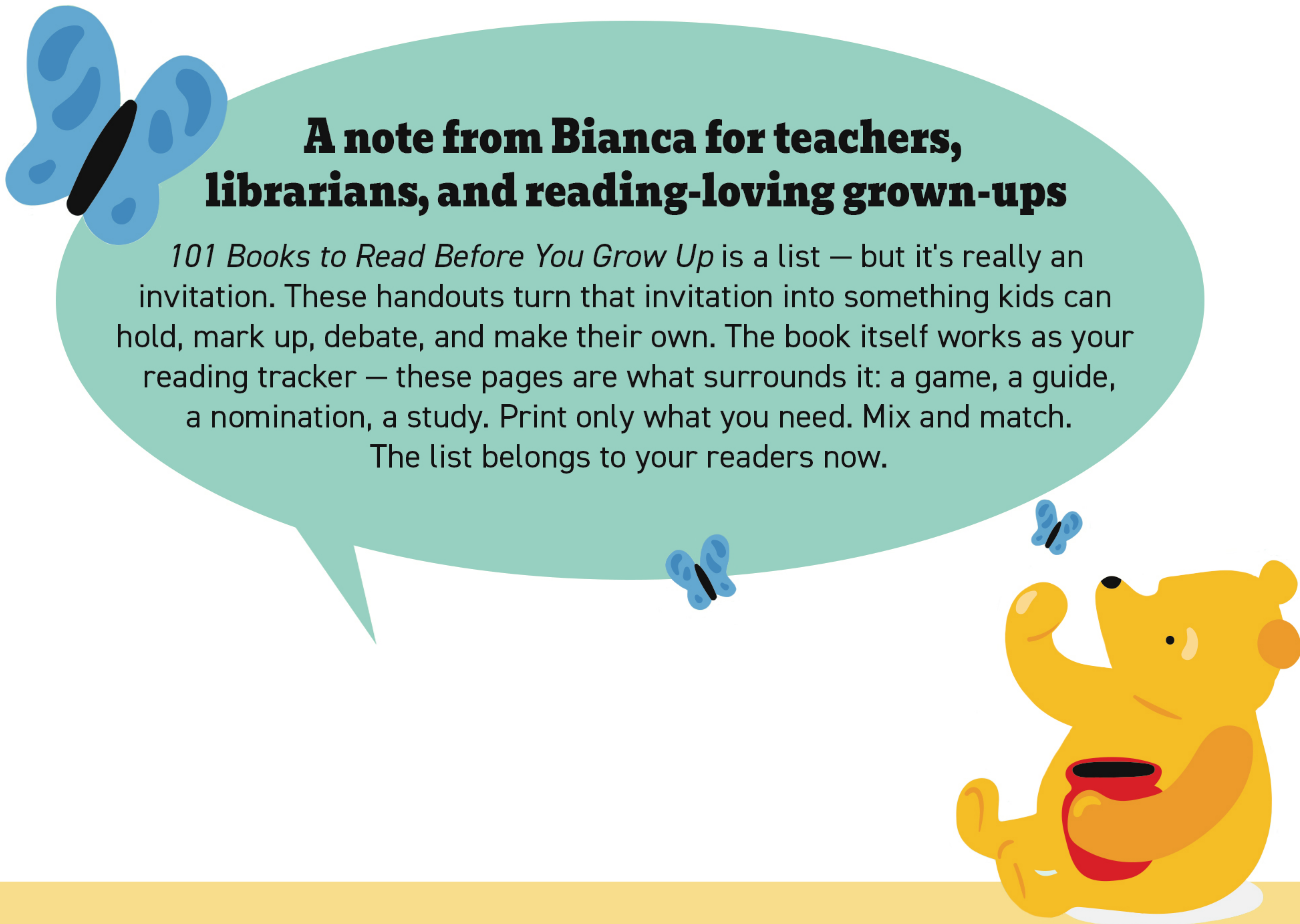
Six one-page guides to authors who shaped the list



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How to use this packet



A note from Bianca for teachers, librarians, and reading-loving grown-ups

101 Books to Read Before You Grow Up is a list — but it's really an invitation. These handouts turn that invitation into something kids can hold, mark up, debate, and make their own. The book itself works as your reading tracker — these pages are what surrounds it: a game, a guide, a nomination, a study. Print only what you need. Mix and match. The list belongs to your readers now.

In a classroom

Run the bingo card as a quarterly reading challenge. Pull out one author study a month for a mini unit. The 102nd Book prompt works beautifully as a bulletin board display — every nominated book becomes a recommendation for the next reader who walks by.

In a library

The bingo card pairs well with a summer reading program. The 102nd Book pages are a quiet way to gather book recommendations from the kids who use the space most. The Reading Buddy journal is a sweet take-home for sibling pairs.

At home

The Reading Buddy guide is built for siblings, cousins, or grandparent-grandchild reading time. The author studies make a complete week of homeschool ELA with no extra planning. The bingo is great for road trips and rainy weekends.

One small request: when you share photos of your kids using these pages (with permission), tag @thechildrensbookreview or @biancaschulzewriter so I can cheer you on.

Reading Bingo — Classic

Five-in-a-row challenge. Works any time of year.



Read a book that fits the square. Mark it off. Get five in a row.

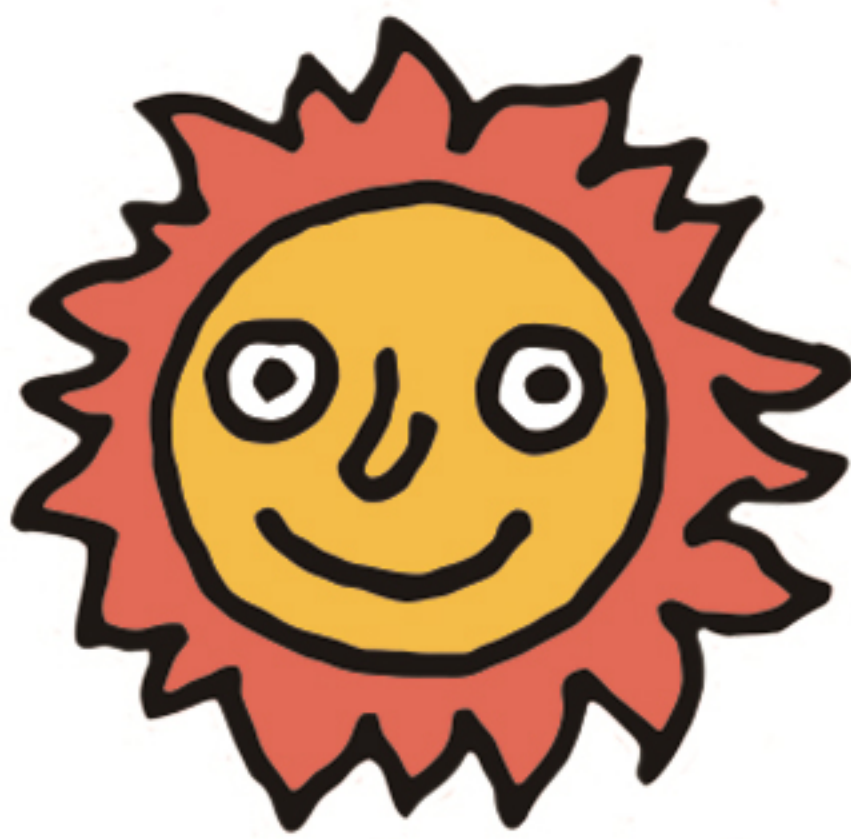
A book with an animal main character _____ title	A book older than you _____ title	A Newbery winner or honor book _____ title	A book that made you laugh out loud _____ title	A book illustrated in black and white _____ title
A book with fewer than 100 pages _____ title	A book that became a movie _____ title	A book set somewhere you've never been _____ title	A picture book you loved as a little kid _____ title	A book in verse or poetry _____ title
A graphic novel _____ title	A book by an author you've never read _____ title	FREE SPACE 	A book a grown-up read at your age _____ title	A book with a one-word title _____ title
A book that won an award _____ title	A nonfiction book _____ title	A book set long ago _____ title	A book that made you cry _____ title	A book recommended by a friend _____ title
A book with a kid who feels like you _____ title	A book read aloud by someone _____ title	A book with magic in it _____ title	A book about a real person _____ title	A book with a sequel you want to read _____ title

Name: _____

Date started: _____ Date finished: _____

Reading Bingo – Summer Edition

A read-anywhere, read-anytime version for summer or vacation reading.



Read a book that fits the square. Mark it off. Get five in a row.

Read outside under a tree _____ <i>title</i>	A book set at the beach or in water _____ <i>title</i>	A book about a journey _____ <i>title</i>	Read in pajamas at noon _____ <i>title</i>	A book with a treehouse, fort, or hideout _____ <i>title</i>
A book that takes one day to finish _____ <i>title</i>	Read by flashlight _____ <i>title</i>	A book about a family _____ <i>title</i>	Read aloud to a younger reader _____ <i>title</i>	A book set in summer _____ <i>title</i>
A book older than your grown-up _____ <i>title</i>	A book with an animal sidekick _____ <i>title</i>	FREE SPACE 	Read on a road trip or in a car _____ <i>title</i>	A book about something brave _____ <i>title</i>
Read in a library _____ <i>title</i>	A book with food on the cover _____ <i>title</i>	A scary book (but not too scary) _____ <i>title</i>	A book recommended by your teacher _____ <i>title</i>	A book about a sibling _____ <i>title</i>
Read three nights in a row _____ <i>title</i>	A book with a friendship in it _____ <i>title</i>	A book set in a country you'd visit _____ <i>title</i>	A book that made you wonder _____ <i>title</i>	A book with a kid as the hero _____ <i>title</i>

Name: _____

Date started: _____ Date finished: _____

Reading Buddy & Family Read-Aloud Guide

For older-younger pairs: siblings, classroom buddies, grandparent-grandchild reading time

A good read-aloud is more than just reading the words. It's the pause before the page turn, the voice you give the wolf, the question you ask when the story takes a sharp turn. Use this guide to help an older reader share a book with a younger one. The conversation matters as much as the book itself.

Great pairs from the 101

For ages 3–5 + an older reader (8+): *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Last Stop on Market Street*, *Julián Is a Mermaid*, *The Story of Ferdinand*, *Strictly No Elephants*

For ages 6–8 + an older reader (10+): *Frog and Toad stories* (read a chapter each), *The Princess in Black*, *The 13-Story Treehouse* (take turns with the silly bits), *Dory Fantasmagory*, *The Boxcar Children*

For ages 8–10 + a grown-up: *Charlotte's Web*, *Matilda*, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, *The One and Only Ivan*

Before you read

- 1. Look at the cover together.** What do you see? What do you think this book is about?
- 2. Read the title and author.** Older reader: explain what an author does.
- 3. Make one prediction.** Younger reader picks. No wrong answers.

While you read

Older reader: try a different voice for each character. Slow down. Let the younger reader point at things on the page. If they ask a question, stop and answer it — the story will wait.

After you read — conversation starters

Pick 2–3, not all of them. Let one good question be enough.

- What was your favorite part? Why that one?
- Was there a part that surprised you?
- If you could change one thing about this book, what would it be?
- Which character would you want as a friend? Which one would be hard to be around?
- Did this book remind you of anything in your own life?
- If the story kept going for one more page, what would happen?



Reading Buddy Shared Journal

Fill in together. One page per book. Save them — you'll love looking back.

BOOK TITLE

AUTHOR

OLDER READER

YOUNGER READER

DATE

OUR RATING



color in the stars together

WHAT THE YOUNGER READER SAYS

Older reader can write it down word-for-word

WHAT THE OLDER READER SAYS

Your honest take — even if you outgrew the book

DRAW YOUR FAVORITE SCENE TOGETHER

Younger reader draws. Older reader labels what's happening

Build Your Own 102nd Book

Make the case for one more title. Your nomination could be the book that changes a reader's life.

The 101 list ends — but reading doesn't. Your job: pick one book you love that isn't on the list, and write the case for why it should be. This page is your worksheet. The next page is your final draft, ready to display on the bulletin board, share at book club, or post in the school library.

1. The Book

Title, author, illustrator, publication year. Get the basics right.

2. The Logline (one sentence)

What's this book about, in 25 words or fewer? This is the hardest part. Try it twice.

3. Why it belongs on the list

What does this book do that no other book on the list does?

4. Who needs this book on the list

Picture a kid you know. What about them makes this the right book?

5. The pull quote

Find one sentence from the book you can't stop thinking about. Write it down

Book #102

Nominated by a reader who knows

1. The Book
title, author & illustrator

2. The Logline
the whole book in one sentence

3. Why it belongs on the list
your real argument – what this book does that nothing else does

NOMINATED BY: _____ AGE / GRADE: _____

Beverly Cleary

1916–2021



ABOUT

A children's librarian turned author, Beverly Cleary believed kids deserved stories about kids like them — kids who got in trouble, had little brothers, lost their tempers, and tried again. She built an entire neighborhood (Klickitat Street) one book at a time, and changed what realistic fiction for kids could be.

FEATURED FROM THE 101

Beezus and Ramona

Nine-year-old Beezus is trying her best to be patient with her little sister Ramona, who is four and has a very big imagination. It's the kind of book where nothing huge happens and everything happens at the same time — sibling fights, ruined cakes, and the slow realization that family is family.

FIVE TO READ

1. *The Mouse and the Motorcycle* (1965)
2. *Ramona the Pest* (1968)
3. *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* (1981)
4. *Ramona and Her Father* (1977)
5. *Ramona Forever* (1984)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Ramona makes a lot of mistakes. Do you like her more or less because of them?
2. Beverly Cleary said she wrote the kinds of books she wished she could find as a kid. What's a book you wish existed?
3. What does Ramona's family teach you about your own?
4. Pick one chapter. Why did the author put it there? What would the book be missing without it?



TRY THIS — A WRITING ACTIVITY

Write a one-chapter story about a normal day where one small thing goes wrong. No magic, no monsters. Just real life, like Cleary did it.



Kate DiCamillo

b. 1964

ABOUT

Kate DiCamillo writes books about love and loss and hope — for kids who can handle hard things, because she trusts them. Two-time Newbery Medalist and former National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, she has written that the writer's job is “to see and to let ourselves be seen.”

FEATURED FROM THE 101

Because of Winn-Dixie

India Opal Buloni is new in town and lonely until she meets a big, scruffy dog she names Winn-Dixie. The dog leads her to people she would never have met — and slowly, to the truth about her own family.

FIVE TO READ

1. *Because of Winn-Dixie* (2000)
2. *The Tale of Despereaux* (2003) — Newbery Medal
3. *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* (2006)
4. *Raymie Nightingale* (2016)
5. *Mercy Watson series* (2005–) — early chapter

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Opal collects ten things about her mother. What ten things would someone need to know to understand you?
2. Winn-Dixie keeps bringing Opal new friends. What does the author want us to learn about loneliness?
3. DiCamillo is famous for sad-funny endings. How would you describe the ending of this book?
4. Pick a sentence from the book that surprised you. Why that one?



TRY THIS — A WRITING ACTIVITY

Write a list of ten things about someone you love — the way Opal does. Then turn one of the ten into a short story



Mary Norton

1903–1992

ABOUT

Mary Norton was a British actress who turned to writing when wartime evacuation took her family to Connecticut. She had famously poor eyesight as a child, and once said it gave her a knack for noticing the small world close to the ground — the world that became the Borrowers. Her stories about tiny people living quiet, resourceful lives under the floorboards of ordinary houses helped invent a whole genre of small-scale fantasy.

FEATURED FROM THE 101

The Borrowers

Arrietty Clock is a teenage Borrower — one of the tiny people who live under the floorboards and quietly “borrow” what they need from “human beans.” She is curious, lonely, and ready to be seen, even though her parents know what being seen has cost their kind. A short, suspenseful, deeply imagined book that makes the ordinary world feel enormous.

FIVE TO READ

1. *The Borrowers* (1952)
2. *The Borrowers Afield* (1955)
3. *The Borrowers Afloat* (1959)
4. *The Borrowers Aloft* (1961)
5. *Bed-Knob and Broomstick* (1957)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Norton imagines a whole hidden world “borrowing” from ours. What in your house do you think might belong to a Borrower — and what would they use it for?
2. Arrietty’s parents have a rule: don’t let yourself be seen by humans. Is that a rule made out of fear, or out of love — or both?
3. The Borrower world is told mostly through one character’s memory. How does that change the way you trust the story? Could any of it be made up?
4. Norton said her poor childhood eyesight helped her notice the small world close to the ground. What do you notice that other people miss?



TRY THIS — A WRITING ACTIVITY

Pick five ordinary objects from your kitchen drawer. For each, write what a Borrower might call it and what they would use it for. Then write a short scene where they go “borrowing” for one of them.



Jacqueline Woodson

b. 1963

ABOUT

Jacqueline Woodson writes across picture books, middle grade, and YA, often in verse. A National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, MacArthur Fellow, and Newbery Honor winner, she writes with the kind of quiet, exact language that makes you stop reading just to sit with it.

FEATURED FROM THE 101

Brown Girl Dreaming

A memoir in verse about growing up Black in the 1960s and 70s, split between South Carolina and New York. Each poem is a small window. Together they make a life.

FIVE TO READ

1. *Brown Girl Dreaming* (2014) — Newbery Honor, National Book Award
2. *Feathers* (2007)
3. *Before the Ever After* (2020)
4. *A Good Kind of Trouble* by Lisa Moore Ramée
5. *Piecing Me Together* by Renée Watson

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Brown Girl Dreaming* is told in poems. How does that change the way you read it?
2. Woodson writes about being a Black girl in a particular time in America. What did you learn that you didn't know before?
3. Pick one poem. What's it really about — beyond what it says on the surface?
4. If you wrote your own memoir in poems, what would the first poem be about?



TRY THIS — A WRITING ACTIVITY

Write three short poems about three small moments from your own life — the way Woodson did. Don't worry about rhyming. Worry about being true.



Rick Riordan

b. 1964

ABOUT

Rick Riordan was a middle-school English and history teacher before he wrote the Percy Jackson books — stories he first invented out loud for his own son, who has dyslexia and ADHD. He set out to write the kind of fast, funny, brave fantasy he wished his struggling readers could find, and ended up sending millions of kids back into the world of Greek, Egyptian, and Norse myth.

FEATURED FROM THE 101

The Lightning Thief

Twelve-year-old Percy Jackson has been kicked out of six schools in six years. Then he discovers his ADHD and dyslexia are actually clues to who he really is — the son of a Greek god — and he's pulled into a dangerous quest across America to stop a war between the gods. Funny, fast, and full of heart.

FIVE TO READ

1. *The Lightning Thief* (2005)
2. *The Sea of Monsters* (2006)
3. *The Lost Hero* (2010)
4. *Percy Jackson's Greek Gods* (2014)
5. *Percy Jackson's Greek Heroes* (2015)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Percy's ADHD and dyslexia turn out to be strengths in his world. Has anything ever felt like a problem for you that might also be a strength?
2. Riordan drops Greek gods into modern-day America. Which mash-up did you find funniest? Which felt the most real?
3. Percy, Annabeth, and Grover each bring something different to the quest. Which one are you the most like, and why?
4. Riordan first told these stories out loud to his son. Can you tell that the book started as a story spoken aloud? What lines sound like they came from a real bedtime story?



TRY THIS — A WRITING ACTIVITY

Pick one Greek god, goddess, or monster from a myth you know. Drop them into your school, your kitchen, or your soccer practice. Write a scene where they try to act normal — and fail.



Madeleine L'Engle

1918–2007

ABOUT

Madeleine L'Engle wrote across fiction, poetry, memoir, and theology — but she's best known for bringing science and wonder together for young readers. *A Wrinkle in Time* was rejected by 26 publishers before it won the Newbery Medal.

FEATURED FROM THE 101

A Wrinkle in Time

Meg Murry's scientist father has vanished. With her brother Charles Wallace and a friend named Calvin, she travels through space and time — and into a darkness that takes everything she has to face down.

FIVE TO READ

1. *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962) — Newbery Medal
2. *A Wind in the Door* (1973)
3. *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* (1978)
4. *Many Waters* (1986)
5. *An Acceptable Time* (1989)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Meg's biggest power is her stubbornness. What's something about you that adults sometimes call a problem — but might be a strength?
2. L'Engle was told her book was 'too difficult for children.' Was it too difficult for you? Why or why not?
3. What is Mrs Whatsit really? Pick one of the three Mrs Ws and describe them.
4. If you could tesseract anywhere, where would you go?



TRY THIS — A WRITING ACTIVITY

Write a scene where a character has to do the bravest thing they've ever done — but in their own ordinary way, the way Meg does. No swords. Just stubbornness.



Happy reading.

Thank you for sharing books with the young readers in your life. The work you do in classrooms, libraries, and at kitchen tables matters more than you know.

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101

Books to Read Before You Grow Up



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Kids Will Love to Read*

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