

Summer Reading for Kids 2021

Produced in partnership with **vermont**  **nea**
THE UNION OF VERMONT EDUCATORS

These books have been selected by VSLA (Vermont School Library Association) Teacher Librarians and are recommended for summer reading for children and young adults. For more recommendations, see your school or public librarian.

2021 Award Winners

Caldecott Medal—for most distinguished American picture book:

We Are Water Protectors illustrated by Michaela Goade, written by Carole Lindstrom.
Roaring Brook Press

Newbery Medal—for most outstanding contribution to children's literature: **When You Trap a Tiger** by Tae Keller. Random House Children's Books

Robert F. Sibert Award—for most distinguished informational book: **Honeybee: The Busy Life of Apis Mellifera** by Candace Fleming. Neal Porter Books/Holiday House

Coretta Scott King Author Award—recognizing an African American author of outstanding books: **Before the Ever After** by Jacqueline Woodson. Nancy Paulsen Books

Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award—recognizing an African American illustrator of outstanding books: **R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul** illustrated by Frank Morrison; written by Carole Boston Weatherford. Atheneum Books for Young Readers

Theodor Seuss Geisel Award—for most distinguished beginning reader: **See the Cat: Three Stories About a Dog** by David LaRochelle; illustrated by Mike Wohnoutka.
Candlewick Press

Michael L. Printz Award—for excellence in literature written for young adults: **Everything Sad Is Untrue (a true story)** by Daniel Nayeri. Arthur A. Levine

Margaret A. Edwards Award—for lifetime achievement in writing for young adults: The 2021 winner is Vermont author Kekla Magoon. Her books include: **X: A Novel**, co-written by Ilyasah Shabazz; **How It Went Down**; **The Rock and the River**; **Fire in the Streets**, and **The Season of Styx Malone**.

Vermont Red Clover Award Books:

The Red Clover Award promotes the reading and discussion of the best of contemporary picture books. 2021-22 Master list available at: tinyurl.com/redcloveraward21

Vermont Golden Dome Award:

The Golden Dome Book Award honors excellence in children's literature targeted for readers grades 4-8. 2021-22 Master list available at: [tinyurl.com/goldendome2021](https://www.tinyurl.com/goldendome2021)

Green Mountain Book Award:

A Vermont reader's choice award for students in grades 9-12. 2021-22 Master list available at: [tinyurl.com/gmba2021](https://www.tinyurl.com/gmba2021)

Kindergarten - 4th Grade Picture Books and Emergent Readers

Lizzie Demands a Seat!: Elizabeth Jennings Fights for Streetcar Rights by Beth Anderson. Calkins Creek

In 1854, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Jennings, an African American schoolteacher, fought back when she was unjustly denied entry to a New York City streetcar, sparking the beginnings of the long struggle to gain equal rights on public transportation.

Chick and Brain: Smell My Foot! by Cece Bell. Candlewick Press

A comical graphic format primer on good manners gone awry. Simple, silly, and perfectly suited for its audience, this tale of constant misunderstandings and miscommunications proves once again that Cece Bell is a master at meeting kids where they are.

Frankie Sparks and the Class Pet by Megan Frazer Blakemore

Frankie Sparks, the "best inventor in the third grade," uses her love for science and math to try to persuade her classmates that a rat would make the best class pet. But her best friend, Maya, doesn't think a rat would be great at all. They are kind of gross and not as cool as a hermit crab, which is Maya's top choice.

The Powwow Thief by Joseph Bruchac. Reycraft Books

Jamie and Marie Longbow are excited about summer with their grandparents, traveling from powwow to powwow selling goods they helped make. When their grandmother's most beautiful necklace goes missing, it's up to the twins to solve the mystery.

Your Place in the Universe by Jason Chin. Holiday House

Most eight-year-olds are about five times as tall as this book . . . but only half as tall as an ostrich, which is half as tall as a giraffe . . . twenty times smaller than a California Redwood! How do they compare to the tallest buildings? To Mt. Everest? To stars, galaxy clusters, and . . . the universe? Another sure fire hit from Vermont author/illustrator Jason Chin. Curious readers will love the extensive supplementary material included.

Flower Talk: How Plants Use Color to Communicate by Sara Levine. Millbrook Press

Featuring a cantankerous talking cactus as a narrator, Flower Talk reveals to readers the significance of different colors of flowers in terms of which pollinators (bees, bats, birds, etc.) different colors "talk" to. A fun nonfiction presentation of science info that may be new to many kids—and adults!

Over and Under the Pond by Kate Messner. Chronicle Books

Discover the plants and animals that make up the rich, interconnected ecosystem of a mountain pond. Over the pond, the water is a mirror, reflecting the sky. But under the water is a hidden world of minnows darting, beavers diving, and tadpoles growing. These secrets and many others are waiting to be discovered. A secret underwater world brought to life.

Popcorn Country: The Story of America's Favorite Snack by Chris Peterson. Boyds Mills Press

Every year, we devour four and a half billion gallons of popcorn -- which is enough to fill the Empire State Building from top to bottom EIGHTEEN times! With photographs illustrating every stage, readers get a behind-the-scenes view of how popcorn is planted, grown, harvested, processed, tested, and finally shipped to stores and movie theaters all over the world.

Hey, Water! By Antoinette Portis. Neal Porter Books

Join a young girl as she explores her surroundings and sees that water is everywhere. But water doesn't always look the same, it doesn't always feel the same, and it shows up in lots of different shapes. Water can be a lake, it can be steam, it can be a tear, or it can even be a snowman. Ideal for budding scientists on a hot summer day.

Everyone Counts by Judy Sierra. Random House Children's Books

*When Takoda the tiger cub happens upon a tumbledown mall, the lone cub imagines a zoo. All Takoda needs is a capable crew to lend a paw or two—or three, four, or more. It seems everyone's got something to do—everyone, that is, except for ten eager bugs. Will they be underestimated for their size or will this be a new kind of zoo where **everyone** counts?*

Octopus Stew by Eric Velasquez. Holiday House

The octopus Grandma is cooking has grown to titanic proportions. "¡Tenga cuidado!" Ramsey shouts. "Be careful!" But it's too late. The octopus traps Grandma! Ramsey must use both art and intellect to free his beloved abuela. Then the story takes a surprising twist. And it can be read two ways. Open the fold-out pages to find Ramsey telling a story to his family. Keep the pages folded, and Ramsey's octopus adventure is real.

Stop! Bot! by James Yang. Viking, Penguin Young Readers.

When a little boy stops to show a building doorman his new "bot," it floats up out of his hands and the kind doorman runs up to each floor of the building to try and catch it, with help from the building's zany residents. Emerging readers will love to read along.

Middle Grades

All of Me by Chris Baron. Feiwel & Friends

Ari has body-image issues. After a move across the country, his parents work selling and promoting his mother's paintings and sculptures. Ari's bohemian mother needs space to create, and his father is gone for long stretches of time on "sales" trips. Meanwhile, Ari makes new friends: Pick, the gamer; the artsy Jorge, and the troubled Lisa. He is also relentlessly bullied because he's overweight, but he can't tell his parents-- they're simply not around enough to listen.

Island Book by Evan Dahm. First Second

*The day the Monster came to the island Sola stood before the creature, alone and unafraid. Since then she's been treated like an outcast. Shamed and feared for an event she doesn't understand, Sola sets out to sea looking for answers. In uncharted waters far from home, she discovers that her island isn't alone in the endless ocean—and the Monster isn't the only life to be found there. Set sail with *Island Book*, an epic graphic novel about friendship, teamwork, and the wisdom we gain when we face the unknown with bravery and an open heart.*

Best Friends by Shannon Hale. First Second

*Sixth grade is supposed to be perfect. Shannon's got a sure spot in the in-crowd called *The Group*, and her best friend is their leader, Jen, the most popular girl in school. But the rules are always changing, and Shannon has to scramble to keep up. She never knows which TV shows are cool, what songs to listen to, and who she's allowed to talk to. Who makes these rules, anyway? And does Shannon have to follow them?*

The Nocturnals: The Mysterious Abductions by Tracey Hecht. Fabled Films Press

*Animals are disappearing without a trace—and it's up to three unlikely friends—Dawn, a serious fox, Tobin, a sweet pangolin, and Bismark, a pint-sized sugar glider, to find out why. With the help of a gentle wombat, a jittery jerboa, a band of coyotes, and some kooky bats, the *Nocturnals* journey to the depths of the earth where they find themselves in a wacky, high stakes game that will determine all of their survival!*

Nick and Tesla's Solar-Powered Showdown: A Mystery with Sun-Powered Gadgets You Can Build Yourself by Bob Pflugfelder. Quirk Books.

Kid inventors Nick and Tesla Holt have to crack their biggest mystery yet: Where the heck are their parents? To outwit the criminal mastermind who's holding their parents hostage, the twins will need all their brainpower and an assortment of homemade solar gadgets. Will the Holt family be reunited at last? Or will a hijacked solar satellite beam down doom from the skies? The adventure includes instructions for creating a solar-powered hot-dog cooker, alarm, secret listening device, and model car, plus a nighttime signal cannon that fires illuminated ping-pong balls.

Pippa Park Raises Her Game by Erin Yun.

Life is full of great expectations for Pippa Park. It seems like everyone, from her family to the other kids at school, has a plan for how her life should look. Readers will cheer on Pippa in this wonderful middle school book about friendships, bullying, crushes, and family (and basketball!).

Grades 5-8

Beverly, Right Here by Kate DiCamillo. Candlewick Press

Beverly Tapinski has run away from home plenty of times, but that was when she was just a kid. By now, she figures, it's not running away. It's leaving. Determined to make it on her own, Beverly tries to forget about her dog, Buddy; her friend Raymie, whom she left without a word; and her mom, Rhonda, who has never cared about anyone but herself. Beverly doesn't want to depend on anyone, but sometimes you find friends where you least expect them.

Lalani of the Distant Sea by Erin Entrada Kelly. Greenwillow Books.

When Lalani Sarita's mother falls gravely ill, twelve-year-old Lalani faces an impossible task—she must leave Sanlagita and find the riches of the legendary Mount Isa, which towers on an island to the north. But generations of men and boys have died on the same quest—how can an ordinary girl survive the epic tests of the archipelago? Inspired by Filipino folklore.

The Mysterious Disappearance of Aidan S. (As told to his brother) by David Levithan.

Knopf Books for Young Readers

When Adian suddenly disappears, his family and neighbors pull together to search for him. Under fantastically odd and mysterious circumstances he reappears. His brother Lucas discovers where he has been. But is what Aidan telling him really possible? How can you believe in the impossible when everything and everybody is telling you not to?

Go With the Flow by Lily Williams & Karen Schneemann. First Second.

This graphic novel is a bold and thoroughly entertaining look at feminine health issues and an affirmation of the power of female friendship. "Good friends help you go with the flow. Best friends help you start a revolution."

Flying Over Water by N. H. Senzai and Shannon Hitchcock. Scholastic

N.H. Senzai and Shannon Hitchcock expertly craft this #ownvoices novel about the intersection of the lives of two girls—one, a Muslim fleeing civil war, the other, an American from the South—as they are forced to examine their beliefs and the true meaning of friendship in the midst of the president's 2017 Muslim ban.

Legacy: Women Poets of the Harlem Renaissance by Nikki Grimes. Bloomsbury

*Children's Books Beautifully illustrated throughout, **Legacy** is a collection of poems uniquely created by Nikki Grimes blending stanzas from women poets of the Renaissance era into the final lines of her poetry. A fun book to explore!*

The Barren Grounds: The Misewa Saga by David A. Robertson. Puffin

Narnia meets traditional Indigenous stories of the sky and constellations in an epic middle grade fantasy. Morgan and Eli, forced away from their families and communities, are brought together in a foster home in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They each feel disconnected, from their culture and each other, and struggle to fit in at school and at their new home -- until they find a secret portal to another reality where they must struggle to survive.

Before the Ever After by Jacqueline Woodson. Nancy Paulsen Books

For as long as ZJ can remember, his dad, a charming, talented pro football star, has been everyone's hero. But lately life at ZJ's house is anything but charming. His dad is having trouble remembering things and seems to be angry all the time. ZJ's mom explains it's because of all the head injuries his dad sustained during his career. ZJ can understand that—but it doesn't make the sting any less real when his own father forgets his name. A compelling novel in verse.

Grades 9-12

1789: Twelve Authors Explore a Year of Rebellion, Revolution, and Change

by Marc Aronson and Susan Campbell Bartoletti. Candlewick Press

Explores a tumultuous year when rights and freedoms collided with enslavement and domination, and the future of humanity seemed to be at stake. Every chapter brings fresh perspectives on the debates of the time, inviting readers to experience the passions of the past and ask new questions of today.

Realm Breaker by Victoria Aveyard. HarperTeen

A strange darkness grows in Allward. Even Corayne can feel it, tucked away in her small town at the edge of the sea. She soon discovers the truth: She is the last of an ancient lineage—and the last hope to save the world from destruction. Joined by a band of unlikely companions, they stand together against a vicious opponent, invincible and determined to burn all kingdoms to ash, and an army unlike anything the realm has ever witnessed.

The Firekeeper's Daughter by Angeline Boulley. Henry Holt and Co.

Debut author Angeline Boulley has crafted an immersive and heart-stopping thriller told through the eyes of 18-year-old Daunis, a biracial, unenrolled member of the Ojibwe tribe. With crystal meth abuse on the rise in her community, Daunis uses her knowledge of science and native medicine to go undercover as a confidential informant with the FBI, but what she uncovers makes her question everything she's ever known.

The Voting Booth by Brandy Colbert. Disney Hyperion

Marva Sheridan was born ready for this day. She's always been driven to make a difference in the world, and what better way than to vote in her first election? Duke Crenshaw just wants to get voting over with so he can prepare for his band's first paying gig tonight. When Marva sees Duke turned away from their polling place, she takes it upon herself to make sure his vote is counted. And that's how their whirlwind day begins...

This is My America by Kim Johnson. Random House

While writing letters to Innocence X, a justice-seeking project, asking them to help her father, an innocent black man on death row, teenaged Tracy takes on another case when her brother is accused of killing his white girlfriend. Will Tracy and her family survive the uncovering of the skeletons of their Texas town's racist history that still haunt the present?

Imaginary Borders by Xiuhtezcatl Martinez.

Environmental activist (Earth Guardians Youth Director) and hip-hop artist Xiuhtezcatl Martinez uses his art and his activism to show that climate change is a human issue that can't be ignored. Martinez visualizes a future that allows us to direct our anger, fear, and passion toward creating change.

The Loop by Ben Oliver. Scholastic

Life inside "The Loop"--the futuristic death row for teens under eighteen--is one long repetitive purgatory. But when news of the encroaching chaos in the outside world reaches the inmates

and disorder begins to strike, the prison becomes the least of their worries. Perfect for fans of The Fifth Wave and The Maze Runner.

Surrender Your Sons by Adam Sass. North Star Editions

Connor Major's summer break is turning into a nightmare. His SAT scores bombed, the old man he delivers meals to died, and when he came out to his religious zealot mother, she had him kidnapped and shipped off to a conversion therapy camp that will be his new home until he "changes." But Connor's troubles are only beginning.

Throwaway Girls by Andrea Contos. Kids Can Press

Caroline Lawson is three months away from freedom, otherwise known as graduation day. That's when she'll finally escape her rigid prep school and her controlling parents. Until then, Caroline is keeping her head down, pretending to be the perfect student even though she is crushed by her family and heartbroken over the girlfriend who left for California. But when her best friend Madison disappears, Caroline is compelled to get involved in the investigation.

Kent State by Deborah Wiles. Scholastic

May 4, 1970. Kent State University. As protests roil the campus, National Guardsmen are called in. In the chaos of what happens next, shots are fired and four students are killed. To this day, there is still argument of what happened. Two-time National Book Award finalist Deborah Wiles presents a masterpiece exploration of one of the darkest moments in our history, when American troops killed four American students protesting the Vietnam War.

Super Fake Love Song by David Yoon. Penguin

When Sunny meets Cirrus, he can't believe how cool and confident she is. So when Cirrus mistakenly thinks Sunny plays guitar, he accidentally winds up telling her he's the front man of a rock band. A contemporary rom-com where a case of mistaken identity kicks off a string of (fake) events that just may lead to (real) love.

