



Summer of Reading



El Deafo

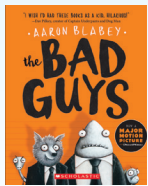


Chunky

The 50 Books KIDS LOVE MOST

The Week Junior asked children across the country what books they enjoyed so much that they would recommend them to other kids. We turned their suggestions into this one-of-a-kind list of spectacular titles in all the categories you love. Happy summer reading!

FAVORITE MYSTERIES



THE BAD GUYS
By Aaron Blabey
(Scholastic Press)
The characters make this illustrated

15-book series so appealing, our kid panelists said. "It's about animals, including a shark, that can solve crimes. And they can walk and talk like humans," said Logan, a 3rd grader. Thomas, a 4th grader, liked that "one person in the book is trying to convince another person to do something every time." Ages 7-10



FROM THE DESK OF ZOE WASHINGTON
By Janae Marks
(Katherine Tegen Books)

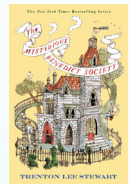
A 12-year-old girl sets out to prove that her father is innocent of a crime that he was convicted of committing. "It's suspenseful," said 7th grader Micayla. Although some of the subject matter

is serious, there are many lighthearted elements, including a cupcake recipe. Ages 8-12



THE MAGIC MISFITS
By Neil Patrick Harris, illustrated by Lissy Marlin and Kyle Hilton

(Little, Brown Books for Young Readers) Carter and five other teenage magicians try to save a town from a carnival owner who wants to steal the largest diamond in the world. Packed with jokes, magic tricks, and "fun mysteries," according to 3rd grader Malia, this first book in a series keeps the twists coming. Ages 8-12



THE MYSTERIOUS BENEDICT SOCIETY
By Trenton Lee Stewart, illustrated by Carson Ellis

(Little, Brown Books for Young Readers) A group of super-smart orphans go undercover in the first book of a series. They spy on the school's evil headmaster, who wants to take over the world. "The book has a lot of riddles snuck in," said Augustus, a 4th grader. Garrett, a 6th grader, recommends it because of its "action, mystery, and surprise ending." Ages 8-12



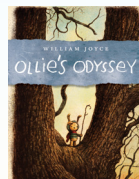
NANCY DREW AND THE CLUE CREW
By Carolyn Keene, illustrated by Macky Pamintuan (Aladdin)

Nancy is 8 years old in this modern spin-off of the Nancy Drew series from the 1930s. In the first of a series, a friend's dolls go missing at a sleepover. It's up to Nancy and her friends to find the dolls. "It was the first mystery series I read," said Hannah, a 5th grader. Ages 6-9



THE OLD WILLIS PLACE
By Mary Downing Hahn
(HMH Books for Young Readers)

Both a mystery and a ghost story, this 2004 novel about a brother and sister who secretly live in an old mansion is intriguing. "I got to know the characters very well in the book," said 5th grader Andrea. Heart-pounding and suspenseful, the story is told partially through diary entries. Ages 10 and up



OLLIE'S ODYSSEY
By William Joyce
(Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books)

Ollie, a stuffed animal, gets captured by a wooden clown in this charming book that may remind you of the movie *Toy Story*. Carrying a lightsaber and

snacks, Ollie's owner, Billy, sets out to rescue Ollie and the other captive toys. Dannaia, a 7th grader, liked the suspense: "Billy and Ollie are trying to find their way back to each other." Ages 7-11

FAVORITE FANTASIES



AMARI AND THE NIGHT BROTHERS
By B.B. Alston
(Balzar + Bray)
Amari's older brother is missing,

and she's convinced that the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs knows where he is. So Amari competes for a spot in the organization's training camp so she can find him. "It's a magical book," said Xander, a 4th grader. The second book in the series will be released in August. Ages 8-12

Symbol key

Graphic novel

Series

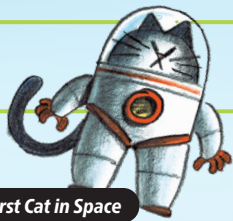
Notable classic

Newbery Medal or Newbery Honor



Born to Fly

Take our challenge!
This summer, we challenge you to read three books. They can be from this list but don't have to be. Once you read them, fill out the form on p17. Have an adult upload the form to tinyurl.com/TWJUS-readingsweeps. You'll be entered for a chance to win books and a personal video call with an Author Ambassador (see p15). Five winners will be drawn at random. The deadline to enter is August 19.



Summer of Reading



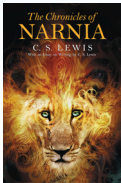
The First Cat in Space



CECE RIOS AND THE DESERT OF SOULS

By Kaela Rivera
(HarperCollins)

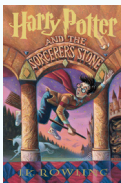
When Cece's older sister is kidnapped by a powerful desert spirit, the 12-year-old pretends to be a witch to get her back. A coyote becomes her unexpected friend. "The story has the right balance of adventure and magic," said Leslie, a 7th grader. You may enjoy the references to Aztec mythology sprinkled throughout. A sequel is coming out in September. Ages 8–12



THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

By C.S. Lewis
(HarperCollins)

Published in 1950, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is the most famous story in this classic series. Lucy and her siblings travel through a magical piece of furniture to get to the land of Narnia. They help a talking lion fight an evil witch who causes winter to never end. "It's fun and full of adventure," said Hudson, a 3rd grader. Ages 8–12



HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE

By J.K. Rowling
(Scholastic Press)

This story about a boy who accepts an invitation to attend a school for wizards got the most nominations of any book by our kid panelists. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is the first of the series. "It's an amazing and entertaining series that spans years and has mythical creatures, magic powers, wands, and characters that you really get attached to," said Isaiah, a 5th grader, who read all of the books. Ages 8 and up



THE LAND OF STORIES

By Chris Colfer,
illustrated by
Brandon Dorman
(Little, Brown Books

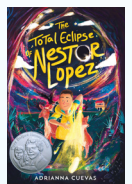
for Young Readers)
The Wishing Spell, the first of six books in a series, transports twins Alex and Conner into a world where multiple fairy tales exist. To return home, they need to find several magical items. "It shows you how to improvise and be grateful for what you have," said Srishti, a 5th grader. "Its plot twist will keep you up at night." Ages 8–12



PERCY JACKSON AND THE OLYMPIANS

By Rick Riordan
(Disney-Hyperion)

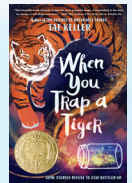
The series opener, *The Lightning Thief*, follows Percy around the country as he tries to recover Zeus's lightning bolt. Kids credit the blend of fantasy and mythology for hooking them on the series. "It keeps you up late at night reading because the books are so good!" said Christian, a 4th grader. Ages 10–14



THE TOTAL ECLIPSE OF NESTOR LOPEZ

By Adrianna Cuevas
(Square Fish)

Nestor has a big secret: He can talk to animals—and they can talk back to him! When the animals in his new hometown in Texas start disappearing, Nestor will need to come to terms with his magical powers in order to save them and save his grandmother. "The chapters have a lot of cliff-hangers," said Jace, a 5th grader. Ages 8–12



WHEN YOU TRAP A TIGER

By Tae Keller
(Random House
Books for Young
Readers)

When Lily explores a secret family history, a magical tiger offers to strike a deal with her so she can save her sick grandmother. But is the deal what it seems? "I love it for all the Korean folktales and drama," said Olivia, a 4th grader. This book won the Newbery Medal in 2021. Ages 8–12



WINGS OF FIRE

By Tui T. Sutherland
(Scholastic Press)

Young dragons from different tribes are being raised in secret to fulfill a mysterious prophecy at the start of this series with 14 books. The books are told from the perspective of different dragons. Said 4th grader Florence, "The author really makes you feel you are going through the same struggles as the main character." Ages 9–12

FAVORITE ADVENTURES



ALL THIRTEEN: THE INCREDIBLE CAVE RESCUE OF THE THAI BOYS' SOCCER TEAM

By Christina Soontornvat
(Candlewick)

This nonfiction book tells the story of how 12 young athletes and the coach of a soccer team in Thailand were trapped in a flooded cave and rescued. It describes the volunteers who made the mission a success. "It was really interesting to learn how the boys managed to survive," said Eliana, a 5th grader. Ages 8–12



The Bad Guys



ALONE

By Megan E. Freeman
(Aladdin)

Beautifully written in verse, this novel follows a 12-year-old girl who is mistakenly left behind when all the residents flee her small Colorado town. Her neighbor's dog is her only companion. She faces many challenges, including a tornado. "It teaches you to believe in yourself when times get hard," said Kent, a 5th grader. Ages 10 and up



THE HUNGER GAMES

By Suzanne Collins
(Scholastic Press)

This popular trilogy is about a corrupt government that forces children to battle one another to the death in contests. In the first book, Katniss, 16, volunteers to compete in place of her younger sister. "The series has a good storyline, theme, and writing style," said Aarav, an 8th grader. Said Lulu, an 8th grader, "I love the characters." Ages 12 and up



I SURVIVED THE SINKING OF THE TITANIC, 1912

By Lauren Tarshis,
illustrated by Haus Studio
(Graphix)

The first six books of the popular I Survived series have been made into graphic novels. A mix of fact and fiction, this one is about made-up characters on the Titanic, a ship that really sank in the ocean. "This series makes learning about history interesting," said 4th grader Olivia. Ages 8–12

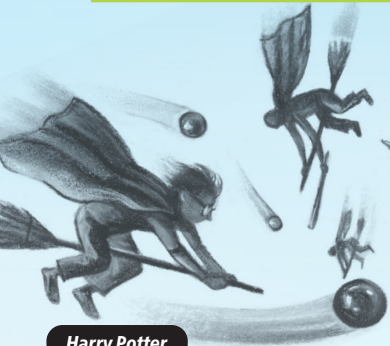


Twins



Summer of Reading

Fish in a Tree



Harry Potter

FAVORITE FUNNY STORIES



BEDHEAD TED

By Scott SanGiacomo
(Quill Tree Books)

For Ted, age 10, every day is a bad hair day.

He gets bullied about his red hair, which stands straight up. But it turns out that his hair actually has superpowers and could help solve a longtime mystery in his town. "It's an interesting story with funny characters," said Mason, a 5th grader. Ages 8–12

body of a human. With sippy cup monsters, kitten clones, and tools like "obey spray," the wackiness pours off the pages. "Sometimes new characters join, and they're hilarious too," said Alex, a 5th grader. Ages 7–10



JUNIE B. JONES

By Barbara Park, illustrated by Denise Brunkus

(Random House Books for Young Readers)

A feisty kindergartner stars in this 28-book series that's been making kids laugh since 1992. In the first book, *Junie B. Jones and the Stupid Smelly Bus*, Junie hides at school when it's time to go home so she doesn't have to take the stinky bus. "Junie B. is funny and kind of sassy like me," said Belvia, a 3rd grader. Ages 6–9



THE FIRST CAT IN SPACE ATE PIZZA

By Mac Barnett, illustrated by Shawn Harris

(Katherine Tegen Books)
With a zany premise—rats from another galaxy are eating the moon, and a pizza-loving cat has to save the day—this new graphic novel is uproarious. The bold, easy-to-follow comic panels are as gleeful as the story. "It made me laugh so hard that I was about to cry legitimately," said Savanna, a 5th grader. Ages 8–12



THE POET'S DOG

By Patricia MacLachlan
(Katherine Tegen Books)

During a blizzard, a talking Irish wolfhound brings two kids to safety in a cabin he once shared with a poet. "It was very heartwarming, and I love how the dog protected and took care of the kids," said Sophia, a 5th grader. At less than 100 pages, the book is a fast read too. Ages 6–10



DIARY OF A WIMPY KID

By Jeff Kinney
(Harry N. Abrams)

This blockbuster 16-book series records

the antics of Greg, an imperfect middle schooler, and his pals. "It's a classic that kids my age can relate to," said Ben, a 6th grader. Since you don't have to read the books in order, 5th grader Jace recommends kids start with the ninth book, *The Long Haul*, about a road trip. Ages 8–12



THE UNWANTEDS

By Lisa McMann
(Aladdin)

Growing up in Quill is scary: Smart kids go to the university while artistic ones are supposedly sent to their death. In the first book in a series, one child discovers that artistic types have a different fate. The book is full of "creativity, adventures, and basically everything you could ask for in a series," said Nissa, a 5th grader. Ages 8–12



DOG MAN

By Dav Pilkey
(Graphix)

Everything's funny in this wildly popular graphic novel series, starting with the fact that the crime-fighting main character has the head of a dog and the

Ollie



How the book list came together

To compile this list of 50 books, we asked children in classrooms in California, Maryland, Michigan, and Texas to tell us what their all-time favorite books are and why. We also asked our current and former Junior Council members to tell us the books they love most. The books that got the most votes made this amazing list. It's full of award-winning reads with diverse characters, magical plots, and suspenseful moments—and proof that kids make the best book critics!



I Dissent



THE LAST KIDS ON EARTH

By Max Brallier, illustrated by Douglas Holgate

(Viking Books for Young Readers)

Kids agree about what makes this action-packed series epic: "It takes place during a zombie apocalypse," said 3rd grader Logan. From their treehouse headquarters, a 13-year-old and his friends have to fight off zombies and other creatures who have invaded their town. The next book comes out in September. Ages 8–12

FAVORITE FAMILY DRAMAS



AFTER ELI

By Rebecca Rupp
(Candlewick)

After Daniel's brother, Eli, is killed at war, Daniel is grieving and decides to create a book filled with details about how famous people died. "This story teaches you about how to overcome problems from your past and to treasure every moment," said Srishti, a 5th grader. "It keeps you gripped until the end." Ages 10–14



BLENDED

By Sharon M. Draper
(Atheneum Books for Young Readers)

Isabella, who loves to play the piano, has long felt judged by her racial identity—her mom is white and her dad is Black. But now that her parents are divorced, she feels even more split in two. "She's being pulled in different directions by her parents," said Christian, a 4th grader. "This book helped me understand how to step into someone else's shoes and be an ally." Ages 8–12

Summer of Reading

Cece Rios



Sisters

Meet our five Author Ambassadors

These award-winning creators each have an exciting new book launching this summer. In the coming issues, look for our exclusive interviews with them in Book Club on p23.

SOMAN CHAINANI

Chainani, a big fan of fairy tales, has a new book called *Rise of the School for Good and Evil*, which takes place before his *School for Good and Evil* series. The first book will be released as a Netflix movie this fall.

JAMIE LEE CURTIS

You may recognize this famous actor from the 2003 movie *Freaky Friday*, in which she plays the mom. Curtis just released season 3 of *Letters from Camp*.

It's an Audible original audiobook podcast about the mysterious and hilarious adventures of a group of kids at summer camp.

CHRIS GRABENSTEIN

The new book by Grabenstein, the author of favorites like *Dog Squad* and *The Smartest Kid in the Universe*, is *Mr. Lemoncello's Very First Game*. It is the prequel to his riddle-filled *Mr. Lemoncello's Library* series.

DWAYNE REED

When he is not writing books, Reed is a teacher and talented musician. In his latest title, *Simon B. Rhyming Takes a Stand*, a group of students start a community petition to save the school's debate team.

JO RIOUX

Cat's Cradle: The Golden Twine, the new graphic novel from Rioux, a Canadian writer and illustrator, is a monster-filled fantasy adventure. It is the first book in a planned trilogy.



TWINS
By Varian Johnson,
illustrated by
Shannon Wright
(Graphix)

Until 6th grade began, twin sisters Maureen and Francine did everything together. But as Francine tries to become more independent, Maureen worries that she's losing her best friend. "I like it because the twins are competitive, but they also love each other," said Addison, a 3rd grader. Ages 8–12



THE VANDERBEEKERS
By Karina Yan
Glaser
(Clarion Books)

This series about the adventures of five siblings is "funny and heartwarming," said Florence, a 4th grader. *The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street*, the series' first book, takes place before Christmas. The siblings try to change the mind of a landlord who doesn't want to renew the lease for the family's apartment. Ages 8–12

FAVORITE REAL-LIFE STORIES



THE BELOVED WORLD OF SONIA SOTOMAYOR
By Sonia
Sotomayor
(Yearling)

In a memoir adapted for young readers, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor talks about her childhood, college search, and early years working as a lawyer. "It teaches you the struggles she went through to become who she is now," said Christian, a 4th grader. You will see how she was determined to recover from mistakes and always asked questions. Ages 10 and up



BORN TO FLY: THE FIRST WOMEN'S AIR RACE ACROSS AMERICA
By Steve Sheinkin,
illustrated by Bijou Karman
(Roaring Brook Press)

In 1929, fearless female pilots competed in a nine-day race flying across America. This book captures the excitement and suspense of their groundbreaking competition with photos, illustrations, and dialogue. "This book makes history interesting," said Nissa, a 5th grader. Ages 10–14



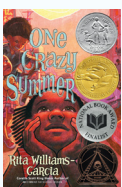
I DISSENT: RUTH BADER GINSBURG MAKES HER MARK
By Debbie Levy,
illustrated by Elizabeth Baddeley
(Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers)

This illustrated book shows how Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933–2020) voiced her opinion. From telling her teacher she preferred writing with her left hand to speaking up for the rights of women and immigrants, she stayed strong. "This book shows girl power," said Caitlyn-Isabel, a 3rd grader. Ages 6–10



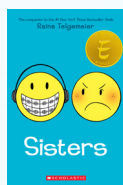
INSIDE OUT AND BACK AGAIN
By Thanhà Lai
(HarperCollins)

Based on the author's personal experience as a refugee, this emotional novel in verse tells the story of a 10-year-old girl who leaves Vietnam in 1975. "She settles in America after fleeing her homeland," said Garrett, a 6th grader. Living in a new country isn't easy, and some situations bring unexpected humor. Ages 8–12



ONE CRAZY SUMMER
By Rita Williams-Garcia
(Quill Tree Books)

"This page-turning book opens your eyes to three African American girls' lives in 1968," said Noor, a 6th grader. "The siblings travel to California to meet their mom who abandoned them seven years ago. But summer with her is not what they expected." Ages 8–12



SISTERS
By Raina
Telgemeier
(Graphix)

In this graphic novel memoir that is a follow-up to *Smile*, the author honestly and amusingly recounts the ups and downs of life with her own little sister. While much of the story takes place on a road trip from California to Colorado, some of it is told in flashbacks. "The story never gets boring," said Diya, a 5th grader. Ages 8–12

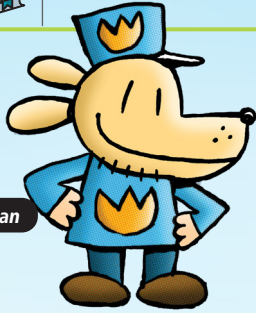
BOOKS: COURTESY THE PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR PHOTOS: ERIC IRELAND; COURTESY GREG VAN ECKHOUD; LAURENCE KESTERSON; COURTESY REBECCA LAY; COURTESY PETER BROWN



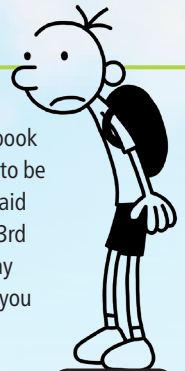
Jada Jones



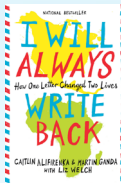
Summer of Reading



Dog Man



Wimpy Kid



I WILL ALWAYS WRITE BACK: HOW ONE LETTER CHANGED TWO LIVES

By Caitlin

Alifrenka and Martin Ganda with Liz Welch

(Little, Brown Books for Young Readers) Martin, a boy from Zimbabwe, and 12-year-old Caitlin, who is from Pennsylvania, became pen pals for a school project. It's turned into a lifelong friendship. The story "makes you think about what life is like in other countries that aren't as prosperous as America," said Nissa, a 5th grader. "Sometimes it only takes one person to help." Ages 12 and up



A LONG WALK TO WATER

By Linda Sue Park
(HMH Books for Young Readers)

Based on a true story, this short book alternates between the perspectives of two 11-year-olds who live in Sudan, a country in Africa. Twice a day, one of the characters walks two hours each way to a pond to bring home water. "This book reminds us that many people struggle for basics, such as water," said Srishti, a 5th grader. Ages 10-14



NEVER CAUGHT: THE STORY OF ONA JUDGE

By Erica Armstrong Dunbar
(Aladdin)

The opening chapter is nail-biting. Ona Judge (1773-1848) was a slave in the household of President

George Washington. When she was 22, she escaped on a ship bound for New Hampshire. "The book tells you about her adventure as a free citizen," said Leslie, a 7th grader. Ages 9-13



WHO WAS? SERIES

By multiple authors
(Penguin Workshop) This series of biographies of

famous people, such as athletes, inventors, and artists, includes many enticing details. "The author describes people's lives and how they became well known," said Thomas, a 4th grader. One of the most recent books is about *Peanuts* comic-strip creator Charles Schulz (1922-2000). Ages 8-12

FAVORITE CHARACTERS



ALL THE ANSWERS
By Kate Messner
(Bloomsbury USA Children's)

When Ava uses an old blue pencil on her math quiz, she discovers that it has the magic power to provide her with the right answers. But isn't that cheating? This riveting story is about "truth, mystery, and honesty," said Kaelyn, a 5th grader. Ages 8-12



CHUNKY
By Yehudi Mercado
(Katherine Tegen Books)

Hudi's doctors tell him that he needs to be more active because of a medical condition.

His parents encourage him to try a sport, but it's Hudi's imaginary friend, named

Chunky, who protects him when a coach tries to take advantage of his size. You'll be rooting for Hudi. "It shows how you can change your life around," said Wyatt, a 5th grader. Ages 8-12



EL DEAFO
By Cece Bell
(Harry N. Abrams)

A hearing aid isn't usually a friend magnet, but Cece's Phonic Ear might be. Not only can it hear what's happening in the classroom, it can pick up chatter from the hallway, teacher's lounge, and bathroom. Suddenly, the device is a superpower and Cece is popular. "I love this story because it is based on the author's real-life experience," said Florence, a 4th grader. Ages 8-12



FISH IN A TREE
By Lynda Mullaly Hunt
(Nancy Paulsen Books)

Ally has been able to hide her dyslexia, a reading disorder, in every school until now. Mr. Daniels, her teacher, recognizes her struggles and helps her triumph over them. This story about "friendship, hard work, and courage will make your heart pound with happiness and hope," said Savanna, a 5th grader. Ages 10 and up



JADA JONES
By Kelly Starling Lyons, illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton
(Penguin Workshop)

In *Rock Star*, the first book in this series, Jada feels blue because her best friend has moved away.

She hopes to make new friends while working on a school project, but her classmates don't like her

ideas. "The book teaches you to be confident," said Malaysia, a 3rd grader. It may also remind you of the Ivy + Bean series. Ages 6-9



NEW KID
By Jerry Craft
(Quill Tree Books)

This graphic novel centers around a middle schooler, Jordan, who feels like he doesn't fit in because he is Black. The story is "funny and inspirational," said 5th grader Eliana. *New Kid* is the only graphic novel that has ever won a Newbery Medal. Ages 8-12



STAND UP, YUMI CHUNG!

By Jessica Kim
(Puffin Books)

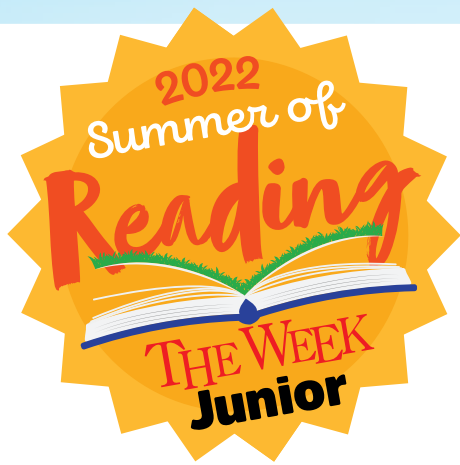
Yumi goes to a comedy camp run by one of her favorite YouTubers. Trouble is, her teacher and the class think she's someone else, and she doesn't correct them. Her lie turns into a double life. But how long can that last? "It's a funny and relatable story," said Amy, a 7th grader. Ages 9-12



STICKS & STONES
By Abby Cooper
(Square Fish)

The premise of this 2016 book is original: Elyse suffers from a genetic disorder in which words that others say about her stick to her arms and legs like tattoos. Through mysterious letters, she gets her confidence back. "This book shows that you don't have to believe what anyone says about you," said Madeline, a 5th grader. Ages 10-14





Join *The Week Junior's* Summer of Reading challenge!

Just read three books this summer (any books you like!) and tell us what you think of them.

First name _____

Age _____ State _____

Parent/guardian's email _____

Book #1

Title _____

Author _____

Rating  (one is the lowest, three is the highest)

Your review in three words _____

Your longer review if you wish _____

Book #2

Title _____

Author _____

Rating  (one is the lowest, three is the highest)

Your review in three words _____

Your longer review if you wish _____

Book #3

Title _____

Author _____

Rating  (one is the lowest, three is the highest)

Your review in three words _____

Your longer review if you wish _____

Take our challenge!

Fill out this form and have an adult upload it to tinyurl.com/TWJUS-readingsweeps. When you do, you will be entered in our sweepstakes for a chance to win books and a personal video call with one of our Author Ambassadors. Five winners will be drawn at random. The deadline is Friday, August 19. For complete rules, go to theweekjunior.com/terms.



Parent/guardian's name _____

I am the parent/legal guardian of _____

I have read *The Week Junior* privacy policy and consent to allow my child to enter the Summer of Reading Sweepstakes.

Parent/guardian's signature _____

Find out more and get extra forms at theweekjunior.com/summerofreading.