



2025 Indiana Read Aloud Lists

Primary List



A Place for Rain by Michelle Schaub, Ill. by Blanca Gomez

A Place for Rain is a beautifully illustrated blend of fiction and nonfiction in which a school class creates a rain garden. Rhyming cadence will keep the attention of younger audiences while small details and factual back matter will engage older listeners. There are opportunities for tie-ins to lessons about pollution, native plants, native animals, and more.



Brave Miss Muffet by Dori Graham, Ill. by Kyle Beckett

Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet eating her curds and whey. Along came a spider and sat down beside her and...nothing! Little Miss Muffet isn't afraid of spiders, or tigers or crocodiles or snakes or bears or lots of other creatures. What happens when a nursery rhyme character doesn't fall in line with her nursery rhyme? With a creative new take on a classic, kids will fall in love with the story's rhyme scheme and unpredictability that keeps them guessing right to the very end.



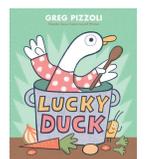
Gato Guapo (Handsome Cat) by Anika Aldamuy Denise, Ill. by Zara Gonzalez Hoang

Nine naughty gatitos, kittens, are up to trouble as the very dapper Gato Guapo, Handsome Cat, tries to capture them all. Everytime he counts, one goes missing! Children will love counting in English and Spanish and see the silliness of the kitten romp!



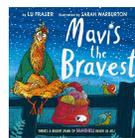
I Was Born a Baby by Meg Fleming, Ill. by Brandon James Scott

I Was Born a Baby might look like a "baby book" when judged by the cover alone, but its real appeal is in learning the juvenile names of a wide selection of animals along with the clever turns of phrase that make listeners go "aha!" A great rhyme scheme and repetition that will encourage kids to join in will keep young listeners' attention, and kids will love pouring over the endpaper groupings of animals that share a baby name, some of them surprising.



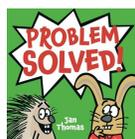
Lucky Duck by Greg Pizzoli

Susan the duck is having a very unlucky day. Everything is not going her way. Her skates are the wrong size, she's lost her favorite marble, and she's run out of pickles. Until she hears several knocks on her door from a surprise visitor. Who is it? It's Wolf. Wolf brings her several gifts that she's "won". Will her luck turn around with all these gifts, or will her luck run out?



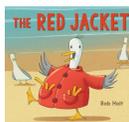
Mavis the Bravest by Lu Fraser, Ill. by Sara Warburton

Delightful story about discovering the bravery we each have within. The story begins by introducing two chickens who are good friends yet quite different. Marge is very outgoing, trying to encourage her friend, Mavis, to venture outside to join her in adventures. Mavis would rather stay safely inside the barn knitting. She told Marge, "if there was courage inside me...it's gone!" One night, Mavis must look deep inside to see how brave she can be when something terrible happens. Mavis surprises herself through a sequence of events you will enjoy reading about as you look at the beautifully done artwork.



Problem Solved! by Jan Thomas

A rabbit is having a hard time getting his room cleaned. Never fear, a problem-solving porcupine is just what you need...or is it?! Funny and timely dialogue makes this a great reader's theater title!



The Red Jacket by Bob Holt

Bob doesn't quite feel like he belongs. Then a bird gives him a red jacket that seems magical. There are fries in the pocket! He looks great in it! He feels great in it! Others are talking to him! But what happens when Bob loses his special red jacket? Will he lose all the confidence he has gained?



The Scariest Kitten in the World by Kate Messner, Ill. by MacKenzie Haley

Beware entering this haunted house. The most terrifying, adorable kitten is waiting to scare you. If that didn't work, wait until you meet the (not so) scary friends. It is the kitten and friends who really get the biggest scare by the end of the story. The cuteness overload will have children laughing at their attempts to be frightening.



Watch Out for the Lion! by Brooke Hartman, Ill. by Anna Sißbauer

Readers, beware... There's a dangerous lion in this book. Find out how to identify a lion by its tail, claws, teeth and more, but watch out! There could be a lion around the corner... or maybe it's just a sloth? Turn the pages to find out what animals hide in this book, and practice your best scream for when the lion finally appears!

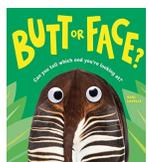


2025 Indiana Read Aloud Lists

Upper Elementary List



All the Small Wonderful Things by *Kate Foster*
Alex is neurodivergent and has trouble making friends. He's certain he can make a friend if he can just get a trophy from the local dog show by showing off the tricks of his loving and loyal cockapoo, Kevin. Told from Alex's point of view, the feelings and struggles of making friends are on full display as Alex and Kevin train for the event and interact with classmates, neighbors, and family. All the Small Wonderful Things offers a realistic view of the bond between a child and his dog and how friendship can surprise us in unexpected ways.



Butt or Face: Can You Tell Which End You're Looking At? by *Kari Lavelle*
Approach this book as you would a game played with the family, and you'll have a delightful time giggling together. The thirteen animals are presented by first showing you a part of an animal and asking, "Is this a BUTT or a FACE?" and the backside of the page reveals the answer and a picture of the animal. It is a terrific opportunity to introduce language and science together as children share their thoughts about what they are seeing. Then the readers can enjoy learning unusual facts about the animal, all the while laughing aloud.



Dogtown by *Katherine Applegate & Jennifer Choldenko*, Illustrated by *Wallace West*
What happens at a shelter for stray dogs, unruly pups, and discarded robotic dogs? Find out in this fun adventure as Chance and Metal Head set out to find their Forever Home. Full of fun and kindness, this book is sure to make you laugh and think and open up many doors for discussion.



Going Places! Victor Hugo Green and His Glorious Book by *Tonya Bolden*, Ill. by *Eric Velasquez*
As a mail carrier living in Harlem and traveling to work in New Jersey, Victor Hugo Green knew how dangerous it could be for a Black person to travel in the US. He created a book about the best, safest places to travel, hotels to stay in, places to get your haircut, or restaurants to eat a meal. He went to each place personally, keeping the review authentic. AND he did this across the entire US! Travel with Victor as he makes his way across the US, sharing the set-backs and triumphs along the way of this great, risk-taking entrepreneur.



Greeking Out by *Kenny Curtis & Jillian Hughes*, Ill. by *Javier Espila*
Based on the podcast, Greeking Out, this book is a collection of short story retellings of classic Greek myths. Follow along with popular and not as popular mythological figures as they tell their stories.

Greeking Out has playful illustrations and laugh out loud stories that every kid will enjoy.



It's Not the Three Little Pigs by *Josh Funk*, Ill. by *Edwardian Taylor*
Part of the author's "It's Not a Fairy Tale" series, this hilarious read will leave you tickled. The 3 pigs all have names and their own aspirations. They aren't about to do what the narrator tells them to do! This is a great option for a fractured fairy tale unit to compare and contrast.



Olivetti by *Alli Millington*
What if your mom disappeared and the only clues to find her come from the ramblings of an ancient typewriter? Can a typewriter communicate? What if that typewriter has been traded off to a pawn shop? How far will Ernest go to track down his mom?



One Chicken Nugget by *Tadgh Bentley*
Frank the monster loves chicken nuggets and can't get enough of them! But when he is challenged to a contest where you eat one chicken nugget and double it each day for 30 days, how many is too many? Follow along as he discovers the awesome power of exponential growth!



One Day This Tree Will Fall by *Leslie Barnard Booth*, Ill. by *Stephanie Fizer Coleman*
This is the story of a tree, how it came to be and how it will end, providing the beginning for other stories. This tree has had a good life, survived wind, rain, and droughts; but one day, this tree will fall. When it does there is more to come. With beautiful illustrations told in a storybook format, this book about the lifecycle of a tree is a must have for any library science collection. Great back matter.



The Cursed Moon by *Angela Cervantes*
Rafael is a young boy who loves telling scary tales. However, he is unnerved by the impending release of his incarcerated mother from jail. To cope with his anxiety, Rafael creates a terrifying ghost story despite warnings from his neighbor. As he tells the story, strange events begin to occur, leading him to realize that he has accidentally brought his story to life.



2025 Indiana Read Aloud Lists

Middle Grade List



Between Two Brothers by Crystal Allen

Crystal Allen weaves a heart wrenching tale of two brothers, Ice and Seth Abernathy. Ice is unsure of himself and is finding his place in middle school, while Seth is all set to leave for college as a champion cross country runner. When disaster strikes, Ice is left wondering if he can shoulder the load for Seth, his parents and more importantly, be there for his brother Seth.



Dinged by Tommy Greenwald

Caleb is thrilled to follow in his father's footsteps as starting quarterback his freshman year, but he is also concerned by the changes he sees in his dad's memory and personality. Can Caleb keep ignoring the risks of playing football when he sees the fallout everyday with his own father?



Enemies in the Orchard: A World War 2 Novel in Verse by Dana VanderLugt

Claire, an American teen with lofty goals, and Karl, a German POW, develop an uneasy friendship while working in an apple orchard. VanderLugt expertly explores a largely unknown history of German POWs working in the US during WWII in this dual perspective novel in verse. What happens when a German POW sees an alternate truth behind Hitler's propaganda? How does a rural Michigan community deal with the enemy picking fruit in their orchards?



Lines of Courage by Jennifer A. Nielsen

Join five teens from opposite ends of Europe as they navigate the trials and tribulations of World War I. Even though they may be from enemy countries, their fates are intertwined. If they want to survive, they must learn to work together if they want to survive another day.



Simon Sort of Says by Erin Bow

Simon's family has come to a new town for his mother's new job. Simon is the sole survivor of a school shooting in his old school, but in this new town there are no TVs, radios, cellphones, or computers, so he hopes that no one will know. Simon confronts his fear, anxiety and grief as he finds the strength to move forward. Despite the tragedy, this book also weaves in plenty of hope and humor along the way including funeral homes, the alpaca disaster, and a holy squirrel!



Slugfest by Gordon Korman

Yash, star athlete of middle school already playing on JV teams, is stuck in summer school. Worst of all? He is being forced to take PEE (Physical Education Equivalency) in order to graduate 8th grade. *So much for the privilege of missing gym to go to high school and play sports.* Affectionately, or not, called "Slugfest", Yash is thrown in with a ragtag group of kids. What will he do when one threatens to keep them all from graduating 8th grade?



The Night Raven by Johan Rundberg

In 1880, a baby boy appears on the doorstep of a children's home and is discovered by Mika. On the same night, someone is murdered. Detective Hoff is looking into the murder when he talks to Mika. Together, they realize the murder looks like it was done by someone called the Night Raven. But the Night Raven was caught and killed last year, so...how?



The Ruby Code by Jessica Khoury

The Ruby Code is a fast-paced and engaging SciFi adventure that takes listeners from the streets of hi-tech, near-future New York to the mountains of a virtual reality fantasy world. Can 13-year-old Ash solve the mystery of the too-real NPC in The Glass Realm saving the world from total destruction while also dealing with being a real-life middle schooler? This title will have wide appeal among the Minecraft and Roblox generation.



The Second Chance of Benjamin Waterfalls by James Bird

Stealing is how Benjamin deals with life. When he's caught one too many times, his mom asks the judge that he be sent to his father's Ojibwe reservation for Native boot camp. While there, he has to deal with a new stepmom and step-brother and the bizarre daughter of a tribal leader who was put in charge of his rehabilitation. When the father he encounters is not the father he remembered, Benny will have to choose what kind of story he wants his life to be and whether or not he can find forgiveness in his heart.



The Winterton Deception: The Final Word by Janet Sumner Johnson

Twins Hope & Gordon may have a chance at a better life – the Winterton family spelling bee. It's open to the public this year and winners will compete on the estate grounds. They recently learned their dad was a Winterton. Grandma Winterton recently passed, but she left behind clues to finding the fortune, and the twins have just as much right to be included as anyone. Let the games begin.



2025 Indiana Read Aloud Lists

High School List



A Door in the Dark by Scott Reintgen

Ren Monroe, a scholarship student at Balmerick University, has spent the last four years proving she is one of the best spell casters, hoping one of the four major houses of Kathor will notice. Then, Theo Brood pulls a stunt at a year-end party that leaves him “slumming” it in the waxways with the scholarship kids. When a waxway trip goes wrong, Ren, along with Theo, and others are transported to the middle of nowhere and must find their way back to Kathor. But something is stalking them. Can they make it home without losing their lives in the process?



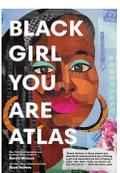
Artifice by Sharon Cameron

Isa is trying to protect her father and what's left of the family's art gallery in Nazi occupied Amsterdam, but she needs money for taxes, so she takes the risk of selling a forged Rembrandt as an original. It works, but it draws the attention of a young Nazi soldier. But when Isa learns that money can help save Jewish babies, she is willing to take that risk again.



At the End of Everything by Marieke Nijkamp

As a pandemic sweeps across the nation, a group of teenagers gets abandoned at their juvenile detention center. Who will take charge? How will they survive? Is anyone coming to save them? When the world turns its back on you, you have to decide what really matters to you and save yourself.



Black Girl You Are Atlas by Renee Watson, Ill. by Ekua Holmes

This small collection of poetry describing the black experience is written with power and emotion and beautifully illustrated! Perfect for English classes and poetry slam events!



Rez Ball by Byron Graves

Tre Brun dreams of playing in the NBA and bringing a state championship to Red Lake Reservation, playing alongside his older brother, Jaxon. When an accident takes Jaxon's life, Tre must deal with the heavy expectations, grief and sorrow that comes from this tragedy. Fast paced game action will be a slam dunk for readers who have outgrown *The Crossover*, while realistic high school relationships and dilemmas will satisfy the rest of the crowd.

**Recommended for older audiences for language and substance use.*



Rhythm and Muse by India Hill Brown

In this music infused romance, Darren is a daydreamer who loves singing but chose to step away from performing. When his crush and favorite local podcaster Delia, holds a theme song contest, Darren finds inspiration in the studio with his friends, intending to stay anonymous. He's trying to get to know Delia IRL while she's on the hunt to find the song's mystery writer. Should he step into the limelight again or stay anonymous?



Snowglobe by Soyoung Park

Earth is frozen in an eternal winter other than the oasis contained under the dome of the Snowglobe. People outside the dome barely scrape by creating fuel and energy for the dome. Those lucky enough to live in the Snowglobe live a life of luxury that is televised around the world. Is life actually perfect in the dome? Or is it just a mirage?



Strong Like You by T.L. Simpson

While everyone seems to have written off fifteen-year-old Walker Lauderdale's father as another deadbeat man who has disappeared from the Ozarks, Walker knows there is more to the story behind his disappearance. For football star Walker, his daddy has been the only example of what it means to be strong. When family drama threatens the only home he has known, he strikes out on a quest to find his father. At times a gritty thriller, this novel is a coming-of-age story of a young man learning how to unlearn the inherited lessons of toxic masculinity.



Too Scared to Sleep by Andrew Duplessie

Stories of the supernatural, medieval horror, and dystopian tales of technology addiction star in this short story collection. Duplessie has organized the book in a descent from the creepy to the horrific. Some stories may be appropriate for younger ages, but beware to those who continue reading! QR codes after each story lead to videos that contribute to the spooky tone.



What Stalks Among Us by Sarah Hollowell

Indiana corn mazes are an activity where Sadie feels like an expert. When she and her friend Logan happen upon a one during a ditch-the-school-field-trip road trip, they believe it will be the perfect diversion for the day. Only this corn maze is more than it appears. When they stumble upon a dead body that looks like Logan—down to the tattoos and scars— they realize that this corn maze has them trapped, and their only way out is to solve the mystery of the origin of the maze. This is a must-read from an Indiana author.



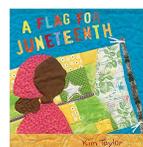
2025 Indiana Read Aloud Lists

Ageless List



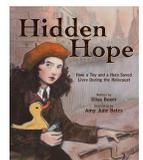
Cape by Kevin Johnson, Ill. by Kit Thomas

This powerful book is at the same time gut wrenching and beautiful. It is heartbreaking as a young boy grieves the loss of his father. It is hopeful as the young child learns that it's OK to still feel the love of someone they have lost, and that remembering is OK.



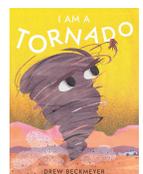
Flag for Juneteenth by Kim Taylor

One summer evening on a plantation in Texas in 1865, Huldah, a young enslaved girl, heard the loud clip-clippity-clop of heavy horses' hooves. Huldah and her family peeked out the windows and doors to see dusty soldiers crowding into the plantation. When a man held up a paper and announced with a booming voice that all slaves in Texas are free! With an anticipation of not only her 10th birthday, but also the freedom of her people on the horizon. This book shows in short detail the history of Juneteenth and the impact it had on Huldah and her family.



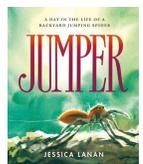
Hidden Hope: How a Toy and a Hero Saved Lives During the Holocaust by Elisa Boxer, Ill. by Amy June Bates

A toy duck, a bicycle, and a teenage girl deliver hope to Jews hiding in Nazi occupied Paris. Based on a true story. Detailed back matter.



I Am a Tornado by Drew Beckmeyer

A cow caught in the wind asks the tornado why it's so upset. As the tornado wants to throw things around the cow keeps asking why. The tornado says it's just a big, spinning column of angry wind. But the kind cow keeps talking to it, trying to understand. Even though the tornado acts tough, its big eyes show its true feelings. The tornado might not even know why it's so upset. The story teaches a lesson as everything gets quiet in the evening breeze.



Jumper: A Day in the Life of a Backyard Jumping Spider by Jessica Lanan

Set in the landscape of a community garden teeming with life, Jumper lets listeners see the world from the perspective of a jumping spider going about its day. Kids of all ages will learn how jumping spiders navigate the world with their specialized senses and anatomy while wondering if Jumper will ever snag that meal. Back matter includes multiple pages about jumping spiders as well as a glossary and resources for further study.



Luigi, the Spider Who Wanted to be a Kitten by Michelle Knudsen, Ill. by Kevin Hawkes

A spider searches for a reclusive space to call home, one with dark corners to hide in. Thinking he has found the perfect spot under a sofa, he is surprised when a case of mistaken identity creates a bond between himself and an elderly woman. Betty names him Luigi, treating him like a kitten! Luigi isn't sure he wants to be a kitten, but as time passes, he realizes he'll pretend just to be her friend. When Betty's friends come to visit, they discover Luigi isn't a kitten! Will this be the end of his friendship with Betty?



Old Friends by Margaret Aitken, Ill. by Lenny Wen

Margaret misses her grandma and all the things they used to do together like baking, knitting, and dancing. She decides to don a disguise and join a senior citizen center. This heartwarming tale is sure to illicit giggles and smiles for all.



Summer is Here by Renee Watson, Ill. by Bea Jackson

A young girl has lots of fun experiences with her friends and family over the summer. The illustrations and text are beautifully matched and will help the reader recall some of their fondest memories. What's your favorite part of summer?



Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes by Patty Cisneros Prevo, Ill. by Dion MBD

Tenacious is a beautifully worded and illustrated picture book about the trials and triumphs of athletes with disabilities, going above and beyond by including the real-life stories of fifteen disabled athletes. While reading along about perseverance and pushing the limits, you can learn about the real lives of these incredible humans. You discover who they are, how they push themselves to succeed, and what they do to encourage themselves and others amongst (not so) impossibilities they face. Tenacious is a heart-warming, inclusive, and overall positive book about fighting for your place in the world and finding the joys in each moment.



Twenty Questions by Mac Barnett, Ill. by Christian Robinson

This book is a fresh take on the Twenty Questions game. Perfect for any age and setting, this book will get you pondering. The open ended questions will have you thinking outside the box and you'd better be ready for some big opinions and lively discussions.

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