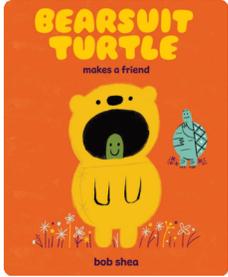


# 2026 Read Aloud Indiana Primary List



## Bearsuit Turtle Makes a Friend by Bob Shea



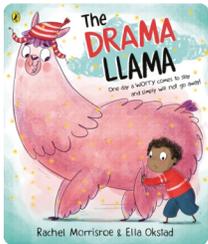
Bearsuit Turtle attempts to make friends with Turtle while trying to convince Turtle that he is a REAL bear. Turtle claims to be a REAL bear expert. Hilarity ensues as the two try to get to know each other and learn how to make friends. Picture book.

## Papilio by Ben Clanton, Corey R. Tabor, & Andy Chou Musser



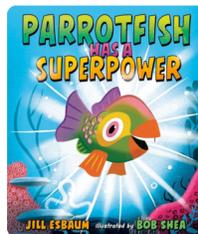
Follow Papilio's journey from egg to butterfly in this unique introduction to the life cycle of a butterfly told in parts by three wonderful authors/illustrators. Readers will root for Papilio's success as she discovers her new world with joy and faces struggles with optimism and hope. Picture book.

## The Drama Llama by Rachel Morrisroe Illustrated by Ella Okstad



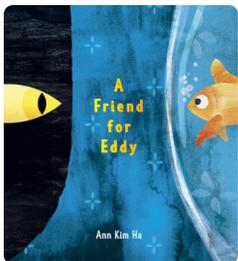
Alex's worries turn into a real llama that grows bigger with every fear. As the mischievous llama causes chaos, Alex learns that talking about his feelings makes the llama—and his worries—shrink. A fun, heartwarming story about managing stress and anxiety. Picture book.

## Parrotfish Has a Superpower by Jill Esbaum Illustrated by Bob Shea



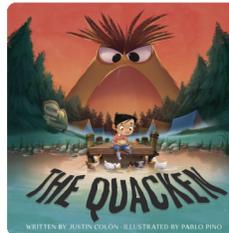
Parrotfish has a superpower, but the other fish ain't buying it. Parrotfish spends most of the book trying to convince a hammerhead shark that he has superpowers, dropping parrotfish fact after parrotfish fact as evidence. Each fact could be a superpower, but Parrotfish waits until the end for his big reveal: it's his poop! Kids will love learning that sand is parrotfish poop! Picture book.

## A Friend for Eddy by Ann Kim Ha



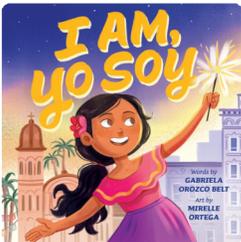
Eddy is a lonely goldfish and would love to make a friend, but it's hard when you're stuck in a fish bowl. One day a yellow fish shows up outside his bowl, then two yellow fish. Eddy and the yellow fish become fast friends, until one day when Eddy decides to leave his bowl and discovers their true identity. Can Eddy survive this story of quirky mistaken identity? Picture book.

## The Quacken by Justin Colón Illustrated by Pablo Pino



Hector and his family are camping at idyllic Cucumonga Campground when he begins to notice that things are starting to disappear. Campers swear that a terrifying monster is lurking in the lake and whatever you do—don't feed the ducks! Join Hector as he uncovers the mystery of the Quacken! Picture book.

## I Am, Yo Soy by Gabriela Orozco Belt Illustrated by Mirelle Ortega



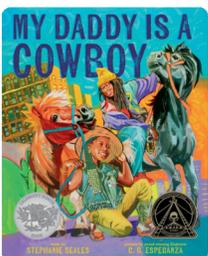
This bilingual picture book (English & Spanish) celebrates the beauty of belonging to two cultures. Its core message is that being part of two cultures doesn't mean being "half" of each, but fully of both, and by embracing both you can be more fully yourself. Picture book.

## We Are Definitely Human by X. Fang



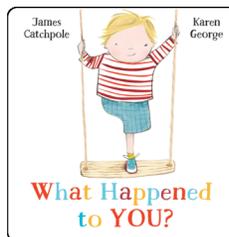
When their ship crash lands in a rural setting, three colorful aliens meet humans and insist that they too are DEFINITELY human. With ample opportunities for different voices among the humans and the aliens, readers will discover all the ways the trio from the spacecraft work to blend in and see what it means to be a kind human. Picture book.

## My Daddy Is a Cowboy by Stephanie Seales Illustrated by C. G. Esperanza



A beautiful celebration of a little girl's early morning horseback ride with her father through their city. This story feels both original and familiar, contemporary and classic and will appeal to any young listener who treasures time with that special adult in their life. Esperanza's beautiful illustrations will fully capture listeners' imaginations. Picture Book.

## What Happened to You? by James Catchpole Illustrated by Karen George

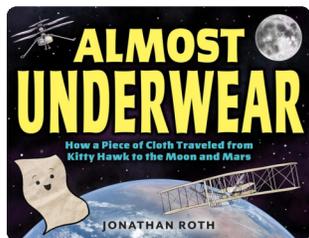


A wonderful book about acceptance, both of yourself and of others. A young boy with a disability navigates the questions of his fellow students. It is a humorous and heartwarming take on a true challenge that young students may face. It also embraces the innocence of young children. This is a great book to stimulate discussion! Picture book.

# 2026 Read Aloud Indiana Upper Elementary List

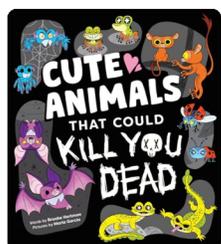


## Almost Underwear by Jonathan Roth



In *Almost Underwear*, readers discover how a simple bolt of fabric bought by the Wright brothers in 1903 became part of aviation—and space—history. From the first flight at Kitty Hawk to journeys to the Moon and Mars, this fascinating nonfiction picture book traces one piece of cloth's incredible adventure through time, innovation, and exploration. Picture book.

## Cute Animals That Could Kill You Dead by Brooke Hartman Illustrated by María García



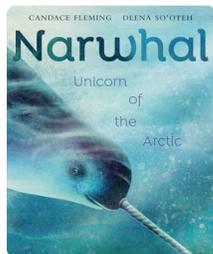
A hilariously informative nonfiction book about terrifying, deadly creatures such as ... drum roll ... ladybugs and pygmy owls! Easy to read page by page or in full, this book will have kids laughing so much that they barely notice they're learning. Warning: Aww-Dorable Level and Aaaaah!-Some Level ratings for each animal may cause heated classroom debate! 48 pages.

## Murder at the Museum (Montgomery Bonbon #1) by Alasdair Beckett-King, Illustrated by Claire Powell



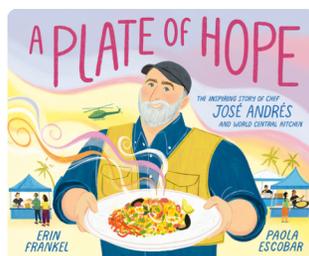
If you have a mystery to solve, Bonnie Montgomery is the detective you need, but you may not know it; however, you may be familiar with Montgomery Bonbon. With his mustache, beret, and European accent, he and Grandpa Banks can get to the bottom of any caper. 288 pages.

## Narwhal: Unicorn of the Arctic by Candace Fleming Illustrated by Deena So'Oteh



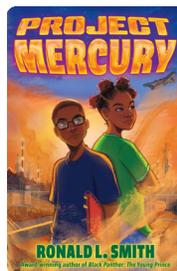
Dive into the depths of the Arctic as you experience life through the eyes of a narwhal. Beautifully descriptive language and gorgeous illustrations enhance the fear of being caught by an orca or a polar bear or of being trapped under the ice as well as the relief and joy of escape. Back pages provide even more facts about these fascinating animals. Picture book.

## A Plate of Hope by Erin Frankel, Illustrated by Paola Escobar



*A Plate of Hope* tells the true story of Chef José Andrés and his mission to feed people in need through World Central Kitchen. This inspiring picture book shows how a simple plate of food can bring kindness, connection, and hope to others. Perfect for upper elementary readers, it teaches powerful lessons about empathy, resilience, and the importance of helping others. Picture book.

## Project Mercury by Ronald L. Smith



When Ike's former friend, Eesha, moves to the same Army base, they decide to find out more about the UFOs that have been rumored to be in the area. Together they discover aliens, a time traveler from the year 3000, and a secret Army mission that involves Ike's mom. They travel in time to try and save Ike's mom from danger in the future. 288 pages.

## Safe Harbor by Padma Venkatraman



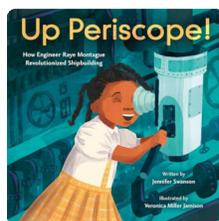
Geetha, who has recently moved to Rhode Island from India, resents having to leave her home and is having a hard time adjusting. When she spots an injured baby seal on the beach, a new friend and his mom help her rescue it and send it to a rehab center. But questions remain: will the seal survive, and can she navigate all of her feelings and be happy once again? 176 pages.

## The Secret of Moonrise Manor by Stephanie Bearce



A group of kids in the Ozarks are in a haunted hotel when they crash through a wall and discover a mummy. Let the mystery begin! Edgar Allan Poe references throughout enhance this story of an art heist, secret society, discovering a killer and information about a mom's mysterious death. All the adventure wrapped into this tension filled story will keep you wanting more. 256 pages.

## Up Periscope! How Engineer Raye Montague Revolutionized Shipbuilding by Jennifer Swanson, Illustrated by Veronica Miller Jamison



The story of Raye Montague, the first person ever to create a computer program to design a naval ship. Raye's journey begins in 1943 when her grandfather takes seven-year-old Raye to see a WWII sub - sparking her interest in engineering - and leads to her building the ships she found so fascinating. A truly captivating picture book biography that teaches that anything is possible!

## Will's Race for Home by Jewell Parker Rhodes



Will's dad desperately wants to own his own land after spending his life as a slave and a sharecropper. When a land rush in Oklahoma presents the opportunity, he and Will make the treacherous journey encountering cruel competitors, enduring life-threatening injuries, and fighting harsh natural elements. Can Will and his dad make it in time and finally have their own home? 196 pages.

# 2026 Read Aloud Indiana Middle Grade List



## All the Blues in the Sky by Renée Watson



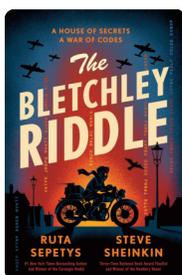
Grief comes in many shades of blue. It ebbs and flows. Sage knows, because on her 13th birthday, her best friend was killed on her way to Sage's house. Sage feels anger, sadness, laughter, guilt. Sometimes separately. Sometimes all at once. She finds support in a group with four other girls who know loss, but each of their journeys is unique. 179 pages.

## Popcorn by Rob Harrell



In the course of a single day, Andrew does his best to manage his OCD and anxiety while things spiral out of control. What started as a kernel of worry might turn into a full-blown panic attack. When his grandma with Alzheimer's goes missing, it might send him over the edge. This book is both poignant and laugh out loud funny while accurately portraying anxiety and OCD. 288 pages.

## The Bletchley Riddle by Ruta Sepetys & Steve Sheinkin



This exciting page turner, told in two perspectives, takes place in England during World War II. A brother and sister work for the code breakers and are helping to stop the Nazis, but they are also trying to solve the mystery of their mom. Did she really die, or is she a spy and really alive somewhere? This is a fast-paced read that will keep you guessing! 400 pages.

## Quagmire Tiarello Couldn't Be Better by Mylisa Larsen



Quag can't wait for summer break—no one to boss him around or ask him questions he doesn't want to answer about his family. But after Quag's mom leaves him on the side of the road in the middle of nowhere, Quag begins to question everything. Join Quag and his quick sense of humor as he learns the true power of family. 226 pages.

## Bye Forever, I Guess by Jodi Meadows



Adorably awkward 13-year-olds find friendship in unlikely places. Ingrid anonymously runs a popular blog but is on the opposite side of popular in real life. When she gets a text meant for someone else, she starts to learn what it really means to connect with someone and say what she needs to for the friends who are with her no matter what. 284 pages.

## And Then, Boom! by Lisa Fipps



Joe faces grown-up problems. His mom leaves home whenever she gets an "itch." He stays with his grandmother, but eventually they begin living without a home. Joe faces one "Boom!" moment after another, always coming up on his feet. Then he finds himself completely on his own. When things seem to reach their very worst, one last "Boom!" takes a turn he never expected. 244 pages.

## The Last Dragon on Mars by Scott Reintgen



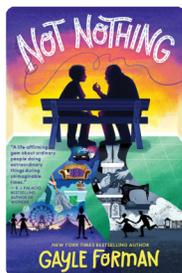
Lunar is a scrapper in the dying settlement on Mars. While living on Mars, settlers learn that each celestial body has its own dragon avatar. Lunar finds that Mars has been secretly raising a dragon named Dread. Dread chooses Lunar as his dragoon. Together they create a team that will save Mars and Dread. This book is fast-paced with dragon flights and mid-space fights. 384 pages.

## Virtually Me by Chad Morris & Shelly Brown



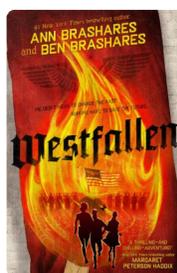
Five middle school students enroll in virtual school for different reasons, and are allowed to design their own avatars, based on how they want to look. What could go wrong? A stunning and honest look into virtual identity and the myriad of complexities facing young people in society. 256 pages.

## Not Nothing by Gayle Forman



Alex and Josey don't get to control a lot of things in their lives. One is a 12-year-old facing the consequences of his actions and the other, a 107-year-old waiting for his end, which he has been confronted with before many times while living through the Holocaust. A powerful look at intergenerational relationships, redemption and human connection. 288 pages.

## Westfallen by Ann Brashares & Ben Brashares

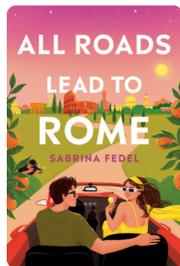


Speculative fiction at its best! Westfallen mixes history with tantalizing suspense and what ifs that will keep the pages turning. A present day group of former friends reunite and communicate with a group of friends from 1944 in the same town. In an attempt to help the kids from 1944, a chain of events is started that may alter the outcome of WWII. 384 pages.

# 2026 Read Aloud Indiana High School List

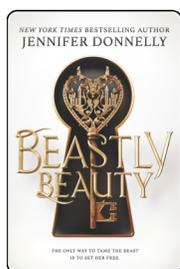


## All Roads Lead to Rome by Sabrina Fedel



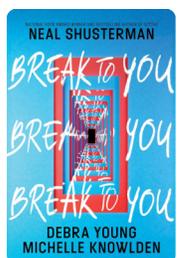
In this light-hearted romance, Sabrina Fedel creates lovable characters in both Story and Luca so that readers will root for their fake relationship to become something real. Fedel also brings to life the charm of Rome and the Scottish Highlands as she captures the sights, sounds, and smells of these locations. Readers will be charmed and enchanted. 326 pages.

## Beastly Beauty by Jennifer Donnelly



A new twist on a classic fairy tale. Beau, the beauty, stumbles up on the enchanted castle. That night Arabella, the beast, nearly tears him apart. The clock is ticking as Arabella's beastly ladies in waiting try to discourage the Faith, Hope, and Love needed to overcome the curse. Will the Beauty and the Beast find a way to work together? 336 pages.

## Break to You by Neal Shusterman, Debra Young, & Michelle Knowlden



An account of life in a juvenile detention center as told in two voices by Adrianna and Jon. This story tells of injustice and abuse in our criminal justice system for young people. Two teens meet accidentally through journal writing and end up willing to risk everything for love. This fast paced story brings a very unexpected ending that may break hearts! 407 pages.

## Looking for Smoke by K. A. Cobell



On the Blackfeet Reservation, four teens were the last to see Samantha alive after a giveaway ceremony meant to honor a missing woman. When Samantha is found murdered, the suspects must untangle family secrets, hidden trauma, and community mistrust to clear their names and find the killer. 416 pages.

## On the Wings of La Noche by Vanessa L. Torres



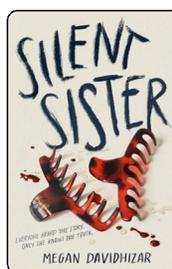
Fantasy, love, best friendship, and family both nuclear and found, this teen novel has it all! Noche is a Lechuza who guides the souls of the dead to whatever comes next, but who will guide her when the soul she's supposed to be carrying is that of her own girlfriend? Can Noche let go, and what will happen if she can't? 352 pages.

## The Queen's Cook by Tessa Afshar



The story of Queen Esther through the eyes of an unlikely servant, a female cook, a role traditionally held by men in ancient Persia. Of Persian nobility herself, Roxannah has a gift with food; a gift she should never have discovered; a gift that could save her and her mother when her father becomes involved in an ill-fated plot to kill the Jews in Persia. 400 pages.

## Silent Sister by Megan Davidhizar



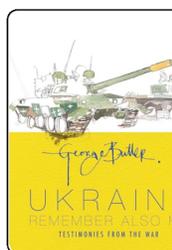
High-school sisters Grace and Maddy disappear on a class trip: Grace turns up injured and without memory, while Maddy is missing. There's blood on Grace's clothes and suspicion all around. Grace tries to use Maddy's journal and some unsettling clues to piece together what happened, but it's not until she examines her own secrets that she finally uncovers the truth. 352 pages.

## Sky's End by Marc J. Gregson



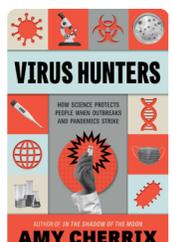
Sixteen-year-old Conrad has been relegated to Low status on the floating island of Holmstead in the Skylands. When he enters the Selection of the Twelve Trades and becomes a Hunter, he learns that there is a larger threat to the Skylands than the sky serpents. Can he navigate the treachery on his own skyship while trying to save the Skylands from this larger threat? 403 pages.

## Ukraine: Remember Also Me: Testimonies from the War by George Butler



In this nonfiction work, George Butler illustrates and recounts the stories of 29 individuals who lived through the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. With spare and thoughtful writing, Butler helps readers understand the devastation that everyday Ukrainians face and their persistence as they live in a country at war. 163 pages.

## Virus Hunters: How Sciences Protects People When Outbreaks and Pandemics Strike by Amy Cherrix



With true stories told in short chapters, Amy Cherrix gives readers an idea of how scientists fight on the frontline of disease. Cherrix's narrative tone makes even the scientific side of the tales very readable and relatable. From smallpox to hantavirus to COVID-19, six sections take readers from identification to solutions in this nonfiction read-aloud. 328 pages.

# 2026 Read Aloud Indiana Ageless List

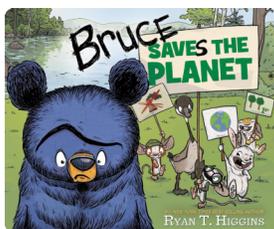


**The Book That Almost Rhymed** by Omar Abed  
Illustrated by Hatem Aly



After a young boy has written a story that rhymes, his little sister comes along and rewrites his story. Has she made the story absurd or did she follow in rhyme? Author Omar Abed has created a fun story that rhymes or does it? Picture book.

**Bruce Saves the Planet** by Ryan T. Higgins



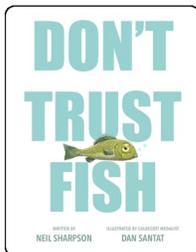
Bruce the bear wants to go fishing, breathe the quiet, clean air, and have some solitary time to himself. That isn't going to happen on this day. Bruce is driven away from his fishing spot by the rare and possibly non-existent cobblestone tiger beetle, only to then end up saving the annoying bug's habitat during an environmental protest, hilariously by accident as always! Picture book.

**The Dictionary Story** by Oliver Jeffers & Sam Winston



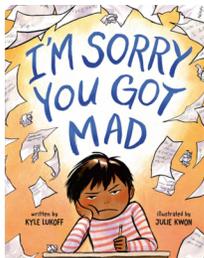
Dictionary is tired of not being like the other books; she wants to tell a story, too, so she decides to make her words come to life. Alligator, ghost, tornado, and a mix of other characters create quite the turmoil in Dictionary's pages. Can Dictionary find a way to calm the chaos and create order once again? Picture book.

**Don't Trust Fish** by Neil Sharpson  
Illustrated by Dan Santat



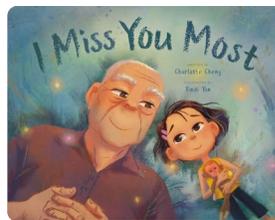
Cleverly absurd and truly hilarious for all ages, this picture book will make sure you never trust any fish ever again. Even better, it begs the question, "Who can you trust, and in whose interest is it to slander our fishy friends?" Whether just for fun or used in the context of unreliable narration and critical thinking, this one is a winner! Picture book.

**I'm Sorry You Got Mad** by Kyle Lukoff  
Illustrated by Julie Kwon



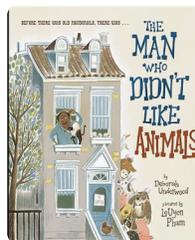
How often do children, and even adults, give an apology that is "less than sincere?" Apologies often come with excuses or caveats. In this story Jack wants to apologize to Zoe, or at least is told he should apologize but has a hard time finding the right words. We can all learn a lesson from this sweet story told in letters with fun illustrations and plenty of humor! Picture book.

**I Miss You Most** by Charlotte Cheng  
Illustrated by Xindi Yan



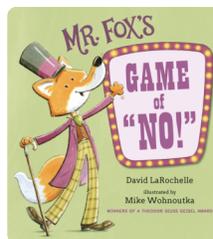
A simple, rhyming picture book about a child remembering their grandfather who has passed away in small moments such as the games they used to play together and the smile they share. Universal themes of grief along with beautiful, wistful illustrations will resonate with listeners of all ages who have lost a loved one. Picture book.

**The Man Who Didn't Like Animals** by Deborah Underwood  
Illustrated by LeUyen Pham



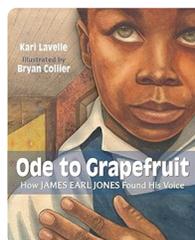
A city-dwelling man lives alone in his apartment and likes everything just so. One day a stray cat appears at his door and wins him over with her charm. Then more animals seek him out. See what happens as his peaceful and tidy living space gets out of control! Picture book.

**Mr. Fox's Game of No!** by David LaRochelle  
Illustrated by Mike Wohnoutka



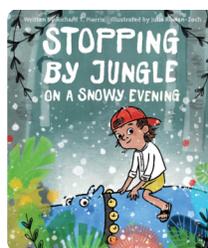
Step right up and get ready to have some fun with your host Mr. Fox! You have to pay attention and have good listening skills, otherwise you will be sent back to the beginning of the book! This is a fun read aloud, as Mr. Fox asks questions that are meant to trick you. See if you can get to the end of the book without saying "Yes"! Picture book.

**Ode to Grapefruit: How James Earl Jones Found His Voice**  
by Kari Lavelle, Illustrated by Bryan Collier



James Earl Jones's voice is known around the world, but when he was young he struggled with a stutter that kept him quiet. Through a love of words and the rhythm of poetry, James finds his voice in this true story about the famous actor. Picture book.

**Stopping by Jungle on a Snowy Evening**  
by Richard T. Morris, Illustrated by Julie Rowan-Zoch



Join Robert Frost as he tries to write his famous poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" and keeps getting interrupted by a boy with big, silly ideas. This story is a fun, innovative, and irreverent way to get people of all ages to think about poetry in a new way. Picture book.