

June 2010



Dear Rising Third Grade Families,

We are pleased to provide you with the Swain Lower School Summer Reading assignment. Third grade students will read three chapter books. We have provided a recommended reading list, but students are welcome to read any “Just Right” chapter book. For each book, students must complete a *Reader’s Journal* according to the guidelines listed below. In addition, students should choose their favorite of the three books and create a *Postcard to a Character*; everything will be turned in and discussed during Language Arts classes in September.

Of course, we encourage students to read more than the minimum requirement.

Educators consider summer reading very important in developing life-long reading habits, in maintaining literacy skills and in promoting reading for pleasure. Studies have repeatedly shown that children who continue to read during the summer months perform better when school resumes in the fall (Jim Cornish, *Classroom Connect*, May 2003).

The Swain School library will again be open this summer on Wednesday mornings from June 16 – August 18 from 11:00 a.m.-noon, with a story time program at 11:15 a.m. We will have several copies of our “all-community read”, *Listen to the Wind* and *Three Cups of Tea*, available for check out. Please feel free to stop in and pick out a good book. In addition, all of the local public libraries have summer reading programs for school age students that allow students to earn prizes for reading. We highly recommend that you take advantage of this tremendous community resource.

Students are also encouraged to participate in Scholastic’s “Read for the World Record!” challenge.

Students track their reading by recording the number of minutes they read each day at

<http://www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/record/>. We created usernames in library class, so they are ready to start reading. If we exceed our school goal of 18,000 minutes read from June 10-August 31, then we will all be **Star Readers** next year!

If you have any questions or need help finding appropriate books, feel free to contact your current teacher or Ms. Armstrong for a recommendation. Don’t forget to check out the library blog for book reviews and other library news: <http://www.swainlibrary.blogspot.com/>

We hope you have a great summer! Happy Reading!

Sincerely,

The Third Grade Teachers and Ms. Armstrong

Rising Third Graders:

Please choose three chapter books. For each book, students must complete a *Reader's Journal* according to the guidelines listed below. In addition, please choose your favorite of the three books and create a *Postcard to a Character*.

Reader's Journal

This needs to be done as you are reading, so you can accurately note your changing feelings throughout the story. The journal should be at least one page long, completed on 3-ring notebook paper, and written in your best print. Start the journal by listing the title, author, and main characters of the book. Then use sentences to answer these questions.

1. What were your feelings:
 - After reading the opening chapter(s) of this book? Why?
 - After reading half of the book? Why?
 - After finishing the book? Why?
2. Did the book make you laugh? Cry? Cringe? Smile? Cheer? Explain your reaction.
3. What connections are there between the book and your own life? Explain.
4. What parts in the book seem most believable? Why? What parts seem unbelievable? Why?
5. Do you like the way the book ended? Why or why not? Do you think there is more to tell?
6. What do you think might happen next or what else would you like to learn?

Postcard to a Character

Create a postcard for the chapter book following the directions below:

- The postcard is written **from you** to a character in the chapter book.
- The stamp represents the **setting**, so draw a picture of there the story takes place.
- The address is to a **specific character** in the novel.
- Message includes **one very important event** and **three details about that event**, and
- At least one specific opinion sentence to tell whether or not you enjoyed the book.
- The picture side has an attractive drawing that includes the title of the book and the author's name.

Choosing “Just Right” Books

Tips for Parents

Selecting a “just right” book is important for improving the reading ability of students. Below are a series of steps you can take to help select an appropriate book for your child.

Part I

Children need books that are good for their learning. We call these books “just right” books. The following is a description of books that would be too easy, just right, and too hard for children. It is okay to sometimes read a book that you know is too easy; adults do this all the time. But children are developing as readers and need to be challenged a bit in order to become better readers. Books that are too hard just cause frustration and may even foster a poor attitude towards reading.

Too Easy

- Can read all the words
- Can understand and retell the story
- Reads with complete fluency - reads like talking and with expression

Just Right

- Can read most of the words - students should not struggle with more than five words on one page
- Should be able to use strategies to figure out most of the tricky words
- Can understand and retell the story
- Reads mostly with fluency except when attempting to figure out a tricky word

Too Hard

- Cannot read many words - 5 words or more on a full page in a chapter book
- Does not have fluency
- Cannot retell much of the story
- Note: Even if a book is read with fluency, if a child cannot retell the story, the text is probably too difficult.

Part II

Children should be selecting books that they find interesting. Before selecting a book, these steps may help them become more familiar with the contents:

1. Talk to someone who has read the book.
2. Look at the cover and ask: “What do you think this book is about?”
3. Read the back cover to get an idea of the story’s contents.
4. Read the first full page to see if it is a “just right book.”
5. Look at the table of contents or chapter titles.
6. Flip through and look at the pictures.

Source: M. Rancourt, Ed.D., Methuen, MA

Suggested Reading List for Students Entering Third Grade- Fall 2010

**Indicates that series book or other books by the same author are available.*

Abbott- *The Secrets of Droon*
Adler, David*-*Cam Jansen*
Auch-*One Handed Catch*
Baglio, Ben*-*The Guinea Pig in the Garage* (Animal Ark series)
Barretta-*Now and Ben*
Bauer-*The Blue Ghost*
Blume, Judy*-*Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing; Freckle Juice*
Brandt, Keith*-*Baby Ruth*
Brown, Jeff-*Stanley in Space*
Bruchac, Joseph—*The Great Ball Game*
Cameron, Ann-*Julian's Glorious Summer*
Catling, Patrick-*The Chocolate Touch*
Childhood of Famous Americans series
Christopher, Matt*-*The Dog Who Stole the Football Plays*
Cleary, Beverly*-*Henry and Ribsy*
Conaway, Judith*-*King Kong* (Step Up Classics)
Delton, Judy*-*The Pee Wee Scouts*
Diterlizzi, Tony*-*The Spiderwick Chronicles*
Duffey, Betsy-*The Gadget War*
Duke, Kate-*Archaeologists Dig for Clues*
Erickson, John-*The Original Adventures of Hank the Cowdog*
Fitzhugh, Louise*-*Harriet the Spy*
Giff, Patricia*-*New Kids at the Polk Street School*
Howe, Deborah*-*Bunnacula*
Howe, James*-*Pinky and Rex* series
Hurwitz, Joanna-*The Adventures of Ali Baba Bernstein*
Kellogg, Steven-*Paul Bunyan*
Kline, Suzy*-*Horrible Harry Moves Up to Third Grade*
Landon, Lucinda-*Meg Mackintosh and the Case of the Missing Babe Ruth Baseball*
Maccarone, Grace-*Soccer Game!*
MacDonald, Betty*-*Mrs. Piggle Wiggle*
Marshall, Edward*-*Fox At School; Rats on the Roof*
Milton, Joyce-*Marching to Freedom: Martin Luther King, Jr.*
Osborne, Mary Pope*-*The Magic Tree House* series
Parish, Peggy*-*Amelia Bedelia Goes Camping*
Park, Barbara*-*Skinnybones*
Polacco-*Rotten Richie and the Ultimate Dare*
Roy, Ron*-*A-Z Mysteries* series
Sachar-*Marvin Redpost* series
Say, Allen*-*Tree of Cranes; Emma's Rug*
Scieszka, John*-*Time Warp Trio: Summer Reading is Killing Me!; Baloney (Henry P.)*
Sharmat, Marjorie*-*Nate the Great and the Lost List*
Shub, Elizabeth-*The White Stallion*
Silverstein, Shel*-*A Light in the Attic; Lafacdio, the Lion Who Shot Back*
Slote, Alfred-*Make Believe Ball Player*
Sobol, Donald*-*Encyclopedia Brown Shows the Way*
Stevenson, Robert Louis-*A Child's Garden of Verses*
Thaler, Mike-*Black Lagoon Adventures*
Titus, Eve*-*Anatole and the Cat* series
White, E.B.*-*Stuart Little; Charlotte's Web*