



Books as Gifts

It's the time of year when we think of sharing with others. What's better to share than a bit of time? And what better way to share your time than by reading a book together! This list includes books for all ages and interests, so we invite you to browse ...

Happy Holidays from Reading Rockets!

Books for children 0-3 years old

Baby's Firsts

by Nancy R. Day

From first cry to first meal all the way to the first birthday, there are many firsts when a baby is born. Share the fun in the brief, rhyming text and illustrations depicting diverse, slightly frumpy and totally real families.

Five Flying Penguins

by Barbara B. McGrath

Five penguins await snow while avoiding a seal that is chasing them. When the seal catches up with the penguins, it shouts "you're it!" so the game of chase continues. Expressive illustrations and a familiar rhyme make an appealing tale.

A Good Day for Ducks

by Jane Whittingham

Why is it a good day for ducks? "Rain is falling... Drip drop, drip drop..." A boy and a girl put on their rain gear to splash around and watch ducks play in puddles. Gentle watercolors illustrate the alliterative, repeating text to capture the fun of a rainy day.

Hop Up! Wriggle Over!

by Elizabeth Honey

Young energetic animals play, picnic and cavort until it's time to go home and get ready for bed. Lively language swirls among the humorously illustrated Australian animals that are identified by name on the final spread (almost a visual glossary).

Heads and Tails

by John Canty

With the turn of a page, the description and illustration of the back end turn into the animal's front along with its name to finish the sentence, "I am..." Translucent illustrations on open pages create an informative, playful guessing game.

Hip-Hop Lollipop

by Susan McElroy Montanari

Jaunty words swirl and whirl along with vivacious illustrations across the pages as readers watch a little girl named Lollipop dance and play. Her parents and even her pets are tired as Lollipop ultimately slows down for bed, "Dreaming hip-hop!"

A Home in the Barn

by Margaret Wise Brown

As the season changes, farm animals make their home and find warmth in the barn where a calf is born. Handsome, realistic illustrations in the artist's signature style depict the animals in a cozy barn with an attentive farmer.

I Just Like You

by Suzanne Bloom

A group of friends tell each other how they are alike and how they differ. The one thing that is always the same, however, is that, "I just like you! Yes I do!" Gentle, detailed watercolors illustrate the gathering and activities of a motley group of animals.

Rapid Responders (Finn's Fun Trucks series)

by Finn Coyle

Fire fighters, police offices, medical staff and others are all rapid responders. Here, each introduces their special emergency vehicle. Lift the flap on sturdy pages for additional information about what it does.

Rosa Rides Her Scooter

by Jessica Spanyol

Bespectacled Rosa dons her helmet for a scooter ride with her friend Marcel. They share an everyday adventure that includes a healthful snack. Colorful, child-like illustrations and straight-forward language are appealing and playful.

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Reading Rockets

2018 Holiday Buying Guide

Books for children 0-3 years old (continued)

So Many Sounds

by Tim McCanna

Listen! From wakeup to bedtime, there are sounds all around. Sounds that may be heard in familiar places while doing familiar things are presented in lively language and bright illustrations.

Step by Step

by Loreen Leedy

Whose footprints are those? Even if you don't know, turn the page to find out or who likes to play in water and more. Animals and insects – and even a young child – have footprints that provide clues and a touch of information. Realistic illustrations add fun and fact.

Time for Bed

by Thierry Bedouet

Young animals are tucked into bed by a caring adult. Pull the tab, and see them asleep in their cozy warm beds. Heavy duty tabs slide across to create a simple but magical scene change, sure to delight.

Winter Babies and Autumn Babies

by Kathryn Galbraith

Basic signs of two seasons are presented in brightly colored illustrations and staccato rhymes. The small size and sturdy pages are just right to introduce the youngest children to seasonal emblems.

Books for children 3-6 years old

Archie and the Bear

by Zanni Louise and David Mackintosh

Archie says he's a bear in spite of people telling him he is a boy. A huge, brown, furry creature corrects Archie: he is a boy. Whether real or fantasy, this imaginative story of unlikely roles conveys a unique friendship in striking illustrations and understated text.

Carmela Full of Wishes

by Matt de la Peña,

On her birthday Carmela is finally old enough to go with her brother as he runs errands throughout the community. Although her brother can be annoyed by Carmela, he shows her a field of wishes when most needed. Childlike illustrations extend and enhance the warm story which is also available in Spanish, *Los Deseos de Carmela*.

Door

by JiHyoon Lee

What happens when a boy finds a key? Does it fit the nearby door? If opened, what adventures will be found on the other side? Delicate drawings on large, open pages bloom into color and activity as the fantasy grows until the boy returns by the same door and color recedes.

Dreamers

by Yuyi Morales

Lyrical prose and vivid mixed media illustrations describe one woman's journey to a new country, the difficulties, and the power of libraries to transform: "We are stories. We are two languages. We are lucha... We are hope." In a concluding piece, the author/illustrator describes her story and provides a list of the influential books she read during this period of her life. The gorgeous book is also available in a Spanish edition: *Soñadores*.

First Star: A Bear and Mole Story

by Will Hillenbrand

Bear and Mole go camping so that Mole can "see the stars turn on." When Mole becomes afraid in the dark, Bear tells his a story of how the First Bear family created the moon and stars. The gentle tone and charming illustration create a soothing story.

Fox and Chick: The Party and Other Stories

by Sergio Ruzzier

Fox and Chick are friends although they are quite different in many ways. Three short stories highlight the warmth of their friendship in spite of their differences. Told in graphic format, this will appeal to newly independent readers as well as comic book fans.

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Books for children 3-6 years old (continued)

Giraffe Problems

by Jory John

Edward, a giraffe, is ashamed of his long neck until he meets Cyrus, a tortoise who laments he has no neck. This hilarious tale of animals unhappy with their features (and very relatable!) is cleverly told through formal language coupled with well placed, textured illustrations.

Grow Up, David!

by David Shannon

Everything an older child can do to a younger child, David's big brother does to him. And David does all the familiar things that younger kids do to annoy older siblings, The irrepressible, pointy toothed David is back, here sharing familiar, irreverent, funny siblings tinged with brotherly affection.

Hedgehog Needs a Hug

by Jen Betton

Which animal is brave enough to give poor, prickly Hedgehog a hug? Rabbit and Raccoon make excuses; Fox wants to munch Hedgehog. But Skunk who also needs a hug gently shares one with Hedgehog and they both feel much better. Sweet, dramatic illustrations combine with sensitive text in this tale of friendship and feelings.

I Want to Be a Veterinarian

by Laura Driscoll

The young narrator tells his dog's veterinarian that his interest in becoming a vet may not be possible because his allergy to cats. Happily, there are many different kinds of veterinary practices as the boy and readers learn in this easy to read, informative book.

I Saw an Anaconda

by Jane Clarke

A boy observes an anaconda swallow an assortment of critters, each to catch the one that preceded it. He wonders aloud "Will she be sick?" When he's the last in the snake's tummy, all pop out quite literally as "Then she was sick-ick!" Comic illustration and rhyming text in familiar cadence with flaps to life make this silly story very appealing.

Interrupting Chicken and the Elephant of Surprise

by David Ezra Stein

Little Red Chicken tells his father about what he learned in school; unexpected occurrences in stories or "the Elephant of Surprise"! Of course, when the parent and child read traditional tales, young Red must add that blue elephant of surprise. The pair was introduced in *Interrupting Chicken*, but stands alone and is equally funny.

Mapping Sam

by Joyce Hesselberth

Join Sam, the cat, after she puts her family to bed to begin her nightly journey. From a map of Sam to a layout of the neighborhood, readers can follow Sam and find out about maps and mapping along the way. Rich illustrations and clever format provide different ways to enjoy this book, as information or a story.

Night Box

by Louise Greig

Lyrical language and evocative images combine for a gentle portrait of evening as "Darkness tumbles into the air." After all, "Night is mischievous! It chases blue, white, pink, and green away..." But only until "day breathes into the leaves...and yellow rises..."

Night Job

by Karen Hesse

The young narrator joins his father as he works as Friday night custodian in a school. The boy packs lunch before they ride off to work. Gentle text and soft illustrations evoke the bond between them and the boy's imaginative musings during the night job.

Octopus Escapes

by Nathaniel Lachenmeyer

Octopuses are canny characters in real life. In this adventure when Octopus escapes, he creates chaos at the aquarium and chuckles for readers. Short rhyming sentences and cartoon illustrations add to the fun and play.

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Books for children 3-6 years old (continued)

A Parade of Elephants

by Kevin Henkes

Five elephants, each a different pastel color parade across and through the pages introducing numbers from one to five, over and under, and more until it's time to sleep. Simple forms, gentle hues, and comfortable language are sure to create an enduring classic.

The Perfect Siesta

by Pato Mena

The jaguar asks the coati to wake him up after a brief nap. When the coati wants to nap, too, it asks a cockatiel. One by one, each animal falls asleep until the last one, the sloth, falls asleep and suddenly his enormous snore startles everyone awake! Bold illustrations and clever use of typeface combine to tell a humorous tale reminiscent of a folktale.

Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes and Stinkers

by Melissa Steward

The animals introduced here are not large and famous. Instead they are animal too small, too peculiar or even too smelly to command much positive attention. But they are fascinating, presented here in lighthearted but accurate image and brief text.

Play

by Jez Alborough

Bobo (first introduced in *Hug*) is back. Here, he is doing his best to avoid bedtime, instead cavorting with other animals until he is lost and needs his mom. Comic illustrations and few words tell a recognizable, good-natured tale with pathos.

Saffron Ice Cream

by Rashin Kheiriyeh

Rashin's story of her first trip to a beach in her new New York home is juxtaposed with her experiences in the Caspian Sea while living in Iran. She misses much from her former home; but she discovers a new flavor ice cream and a friend with whom to have fun without the Islamic beach guards who kept male and female beachgoers separate. Vivid illustration and straightforward narration reveal the author's own story.

Thank You, Omu!

by Oge Mora

The delectable smell of Omu's thick red stew wafts through the neighborhood. She shares it with neighbor after neighbor until she has none left for her own dinner. But her generosity is returned when the community brings a potluck supper to thank Omu. Semi-abstract illustrations in muted tones and an engaging telling create a warm story.

There's a Hole in the Log at the Bottom of the Lake

by Loren Long

The hole in the log in the lake holds a frog with a hair on its head, a fly on top of that, with a gnat on the fly. Shared as a call-and-response or as a song (the music is included), readers will appreciate the humor of the oblivious frog and what becomes of it.

Vivid: Poems and Notes about Color

by Julie Paschkis

What does pink call to mind? Something feminine? Something in nature? How about blue? Or black, white? Short poems and brief notes about what a color evokes are presented on illustrated double page spreads sure to generate thought, discussion, and perhaps art.

We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands

by Rafael Lopez

What connects people? Weather, animals, each other, of course! The familiar song is made fresh in jewel-toned, lively, and detailed illustrations that start with a girl and a huge ball of yarn. That yarn is shared by myriad children in various places and climates until the final double page spread with Earth depicted from afar as a yarn-tethered balloon.

Zoogie Boogie Fever

by Sujean Rim

"Have you ever wondered why all the animals at the zoo seem so tired?" It's because soon after the zoo closes to visitors, they all dance and boogie all night! Join the fun with the vivacious translucent illustrations and lively language.



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Books for children 6-9 years old

3x4

by Ivan Brunetti

The class homework assignment is to draw “12 things, but in sets.” How the kids do it is up to them. Annamarie decides to present 3 types of music represented by 4 instruments each while classmates do it in different, creative ways. This clever presentation is both reading and math (and maybe music) made clear in easy graphic format.

Barkus: Dog Dreams

by Patricia MacLachlan

Short, episodic chapters are narrated by Barkus’ friend. She and her family take good care of the Barkus and his feline friend, Baby. Humorous illustrations and uncomplicated narration continue the familiar adventures of a girl and her animal friends first introduced in *Barkus*.

Cute as an Axolotl

by Jess Keating

“Think you know cute?” Think again if you haven’t met a quokka, pom-pom crab, or a minute leaf chameleon. Actual photographs of a range of critters are presented with solid information with a light touch added. Additional information and glossary are included.

Fergus and Zeke at the Science Fair

by Kate Messner

Do classroom pets hear, see, and do what the children do in Ms. Maxwell’s class? You bet they do! And they even can help students out with a science project. Recognizable school activities and easy text make this just right for recently independent readers.

Freddie Mole Lion Tamer

by Alexander McCall Smith

Poor but worthy Freddie Mole winds up with a circus job in an effort to help his struggling family. The story is fast and funny sprinkled with black/white drawings adding to the absurdity. The humor is likely to appeal to sophisticated readers.

Freddie Ramos Hears It All

by Jacqueline Jules

In addition to his super speedy sneakers, Freddie now has acquired super hearing powers! But what you do with super hearing can have both good and bad results. The latest installment in the series is equally gentle and satisfying.

Hansel and Gretel

by Bethan Woollvin

Meet Hansel and Gretel again! This, however, is not the typical telling. Here Willow the witch is a kindly good witch who finally has had enough of a rude duo. Strong lines, limited color, and understated text turn the traditional tale into a fresh, funny, and satisfying story. Readers may also enjoy Woollvin’s recasting of *Rapunzel* and *Little Red* (Riding Hood).

Hurricane Heroes in Texas (Magic Tree House)

by Mary Pope Osborne

Jack and Annie are transported back in time to 1900. No one in Galveston, Texas, believes that a devastating hurricane is about to hit. What can be done to save the residents? This satisfying addition to the series may be enhanced with the *Magic Tree House Fact Checker: Texas*.

If Polar Bears Disappeared

by Lily Williams

If polar bears just disappeared, the world would be very different indeed. But what can young people do? They can change some behaviors, study, learn, write. Similar to the approach in *If Sharks Disappeared*, this book informs as well as inspires action.

Kitten Construction Company

by John Patrick Green

Marmalade is not only a trained architect with terrific plans to build a house, but she’s cute on top of it. But are cute kittens taken seriously? This – and more – are explored in a graphic novel just right for emerging readers.

Knock Knock

by Tammi Sauer

Bear is in bed when he hears the first knock. The parade of animal friends begins and soon everyone has gathered to wish Bear a Happy Hibernation! Comic illustrations and dialogue in conversation bubbles combine to tell a funny tale with lots of wordplay and friendship.

Look at Me!

by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page

Most of the time animals want to be discreet. But sometimes they want to be noticed. In their signature use of collage, this team presents handsome portraits of a range of animals and information about each.

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Books for children 6-9 years old (continued)

Lovely Beasts: The Surprising Truth

by Kate Gardner

The gorilla is fierce but a loving father. A porcupine is prickly but gentle. This handsome portrait of animals describes the most familiar trait and then relates behaviors that are very different. Soft monochromatic illustrations are juxtaposed to text that encourages readers to learn more about the animals presented and question common assumptions.

Noodleheads Find Something Fishy

by Tedd Arnold

Are fish bright just because they travel in schools? Mac and Mac are not called noodleheads for nothing! The pair is back for another silly adventure presented in easy graphic format.

Our Celebración!

by Susan Middleton Elya

Join the celebration from morning until evening. It's presented in rhyming English with Spanish seamlessly incorporated. "No one's working, closed tiendas./ Bright balloons and meriendas." Unfamiliar words can be found in the cheerful illustrations (but there's a glossary just in case!).

Polly Diamond and the Magic Book

by Alice Kuipers

Polly is a list-maker, a word lover, and soon to be a big sister again. When she gets a magic book that not only writes back but makes things become real, well, she finds that magic can be unexpected. This is an engaging early chapter book and the first in a new series.

The Secret Life of the Little Brown Bat

by Laurence Pringle,

Fact and fiction combine in this handsomely illustrated, informative, and readable story of a small brown bat. We follow Otis over a period of time until the small brown bats hibernate. Additional information about bats, threats to them and a glossary are included.

Snails Are Just My Speed

by Kevin McCloskey

Are snails really as slow as their reputation? Yes! And they are absolutely fascinating. This presentation by the author who gave us *The Real Poop on Pigeons* and reminded us that *We Dig Worms* again informs and introduces readers to an unlikely but intriguing subject.

The Truth About Dolphins

by Maxwell Eton III

Factual information about dolphins – they "come in all sizes, shapes, and colors" and even whistle – combines with cartoon illustrations complete with conversation bubbles. An engaging addition to an informative series.

Ultimate Spotlight: Dinosaurs

by Sandra Laboucarie

Get ready for an archaeological dig then go on to find out more about dinosaurs and how they lived. There are flaps to pull, pop-ups to surprise and lots of interesting detail in this browsing book that may inspire further research.

Vernon Is on His Way: Small Stories

by Philip C. Stead

Vernon, the frog, shares small everyday adventures with his friends Skunk, and Porcupine (first introduced in *A Home for Bird*). Quietly told and delicately illustrated these charming tales are reminiscent of Arnold Lobel's Frog and Toad stories.

What's the Difference? 40+ Pairs of the Seemingly Similar

by Emma Strack

They may appear similar but can really be different. Think noodles and pasta are the same? What about a clementine and a mandarin? They're similar but different. Readers will encounter seemingly same pairs and discover what makes them unique in this handsomely illustrated and fact-filled volume.

The Wolf Who Visited the Land of Fairy Tales

by Orienne Lallemand

One sunny afternoon, Wolf decides to make an apple cake. But when he goes out to collect all of the ingredients, it becomes more difficult than expected. Along the way he meets other fairy tale characters with whom he shares the cake! A recipe for Aunt Rosie's apple cake concludes this comic take on traditional tales.

The Yin-Yang Sisters and the Dragon Frightful

by Nancy Tupper Ling

The people of Woo cannot get to market easily as the bridge has been taken over by a dragon named Frightful. When twins Wei and Mei are born, a wise aunt knows that it will take both girls to confront the dragon. Highly detailed illustrations and fast-paced storytelling evokes eastern art, sure to enthrall adventure and dragon aficionados.



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Books for children 9-12 years old

Absolutely Everything! A History of Earth, Dinosaurs, Rulers, Robots and Other Things Too Numerous to Mention

by Christopher Lloyd

Go ahead, dip in. There is something for everyone in this fascinating compendium of information. Organized by general topic, brief, illustrated essays are accessibly written to provide a taste of the topic. A glossary and complete index conclude the volume.

Be Prepared

by Vera Brosgol

Like other kids, Vera just wants to fit in. But going to a Russian camp is not what Vera thought it would be at all. Readers will recognize feeling like an outsider (and get a taste of Russian culture) in this fresh and engaging graphic novel.

Bob

by Wendy Mass and Rebecca Stead

Only Livy sees the greenish creature when she and her family visit Gran in Australia. They see her talking to a chicken. But Bob is not only not a chicken, he's quite special. Told from both Livy and Bob's point of view, this handsomely illustrated and well told tale is fresh and intriguing.

The Boy, the Bird, and the Coffin Maker

by Matilda Woods

Alberto lives in a remote town called Allora. After his family is gone, Alberto is lonely until he rescues a desperate boy. They share a folktale and see it come true in this evocative story with elements of magic realism.

Crossing Niagara: The Death-Defying Tightrope Adventures of the Great Blondin

by Matt Tavares

Striking illustrations and short chapters capture the drama of the man who walked from the United States to Canada – on a tightrope – over Niagara Falls. This little known event took place in the mid-19th century. Additional information is included.

Finding Langston: A Novel

by Lesa Cline-Ransom

When Langston and his father move from Alabama to Chicago, he discovers the poet after whom his mother named him. And unlike the segregated library back home, he can freely use the library. Set during the Great Migration, the boy's emotions, successes, and challenges remain contemporary.

Girls Think of Everything

by Catherine Thimmesh

It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. And the women readers meet here certainly seem to support that notion. Have you ever seen a baby in a "snuggli"? It was invented by a woman who wanted to keep her baby calm. How about "Scotchgard"? This woman came up with it to help wipe away stains. Meet these inventors and others who had good ideas, skill, and stick-to-it-ness.

Johnny Tremain

by Esther Forbes with an introduction by Nathan Hale

The classic tale of the Revolutionary War is now 75 years old. An introduction by Nathan Hale in his signature graphic history style is likely to bring this to a new audience.

Louisiana's Way Home

by Kate DiCamillo

Louisiana Elefante lives with her peripatetic grandmother, moving frequently. But at long last, Louisiana finds family, friends, and home in this touching, eccentric novel. Readers may remember Louisiana from *Raymie Nightingale*, but this is Louisiana's own story told in her unique and memorable voice.

Merci Suarez Changes Gears

by Meg Medina

Merci Suarez lives with her parents and older brother and her grandparents, Abuela and Lolo. She's a hardworking, good kid who cares about her family and her community. How she navigates the changes that she and her family confront is both touching and plausible.

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Reading Rockets

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Books for children 9-12 years old (continued)

Saving Winslow

by Sharon Creech

When Louie's father brings home a sickly, premature baby miniature donkey, he's not sure he can do anything for it. But Louie falls for the small animal and Winslow not only survives but thrives as does a friendship with a new and quirky girl. How Winslow helps both Louie and Nora is told with heart.

Sing a Song of Seasons: A Nature Poem for Each Day of the Year

edited by Fiona Waters

Poetry should be shared every day just as nature should be viewed with appreciation each day. This hefty, handsome collection provides a way to combine both. The selection of poems and poets is broad both in background and style. The result is a memorable collection that not only shares well but is certain to become a family favorite.

So Tall Within: Sojourner Truth's Long Walk toward Freedom

by Gary Schmidt

Sophisticated art portrays a haunting, elongated Sojourner Truth. When combined with a moving narrative, the result is a unique portrait of Sojourner Truth's life. A biographical note and sources are included.

Squirm

by Carl Hiaasen

Billy loves snakes and since he lives with in Florida with his sister and eagle-obsessed mom, he has ready access to them. Then Billy tracks down his father and his new family in Montana. Set between the two distinct locations, the latest environmental adventure is fast-paced with broad appeal (and a few snakes).

Thundercluck!

by Paul Tillery IV

Absolute silliness results when a chicken is caught up in a struggle with a Norse god. The result is a superhero chicken. The hybrid clucker (half god, half fowl) is sure to cause readers to chuckle as well as groan with its heroic absurdity.

The Vanderbeekers and the Hidden Garden

by Karina Van Glaser

The Vanderbeekers are back in this standalone companion (*The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street*). Here they help create a community garden to help a neighbor and to avoid losing parts if their neighborhood to even more development.

Voyage of the Dogs

by Greg Van Eekhout

When the human crew goes missing, the trained space dogs – the Barkonauts – must survive on the ship, Laika. Will they find the astronauts? Can they complete the mission? This space saga moves along at a quick clip.

We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices

edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson

A large and diverse group of writers and visual artists present a range of art and writing to encourage young people to use their voices. From essays to poems, from collage to photographs, this handsome volume is sure to inspire as it introduces readers to different forms of expression.

Zora and Me: The Cursed Ground

by T. R. Simon

Meet a young Zora Neale Huston through the eyes of her best friend Carrie Brown. They are in the African American town of Eatonville, Florida, in 1903. Two time periods converge when the Westin of 1855 results in an old mystery solved and a town saved in this fast-paced novel.



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