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Books for Summer Reading 2009

THE PLEASURES OF A GOOD SERIES

Series books have been staples of children's reading for many years. Many of us grew up reading series, becoming familiar with our favorite characters and eagerly waiting for the next installment in their adventures. We need only look at the popularity of the Harry Potter books to see how the best series fiction can still excite a child's interest, imagination and enthusiasm.

In this list – which is certainly not exhaustive – we have included some classics but have tried to include the best of the newer series books that might not be as familiar. We have limited the list to fiction, but your librarian will be glad to suggest excellent nonfiction series as well. Within each group, the titles are listed roughly in order of age and/or interest level. There is much overlap; children should not be reluctant to read up or down!



Kindergarten – Grade 4

OLIVER and AMANDA PIG by Jean Van Leeuwen. Oliver Pig and his little sister have many adventures with which little ones will identify.

LITTLE BEAR by Elsie Minarik. The classic series, with pictures by Maurice Sendak, is about a little bear and his family.

FOX by James Marshall. The funny adventures of lovable, tricky Fox, who thinks much of himself but is usually outfoxed.

ELEPHANT AND PIGGIE by Mo Willems. The delightful tales of two best friends, with a witty text, perfect for the beginning to read set.

FLY GUY by Tedd Arnold. The very funny, action-filled adventures of Buzz and his pet insect, with delightful illustrations and a minimal text.

HENRY AND MUDGE by Cynthia Rylant. A sweet series of stories about Henry, an only child, and his huge and beloved dog, Mudge.

POPPLETON by Cynthia Rylant. Poppleton the Pig and his friends have adventures related in short, manageable chapters.

FROG AND TOAD by Arnold Lobel. Two endearing friends enjoy a variety of experiences together.

MINNIE AND MOO by Denys Cazet. Hilarious tales of the adventures of two cows.

ZELDA AND IVY by Laura McGee Kvasnosky. The engaging adventures of two fox sisters, perfect for newly independent readers.

NATE THE GREAT by Marjorie Sharmat. Nate solves mysteries with the help of his faithful dog, Sludge.

GATOR GIRLS by Stephanie Calmenson and Joanna Cole. Delightful stories of two true-blue friends.

PINKY AND REX by James Howe. Gently humorous stories of Pinky, a boy named for his favorite color and Rex, a girl who loves dinosaurs.

IVY AND BEAN by Annie Barrows. Two very different girls become the best of friends and collaborators in mischief.

JUNIE B. JONES by Barbara Park. The irrepressible Junie B. always delights young chapter book readers.

EMMA by Sally Warner. Second and third grade girls, especially, will enjoy reading about Emma in these stories written with humor and warmth.

MERCY WATSON by Kate DiCamillo. The amusing adventures of an adorable pig, much loved by the family who owns her. Wonderful early chapter books with terrific illustrations.

KIDS OF THE POLK STREET SCHOOL by Patricia Reilly Giff. The experiences of a group of children through their whole second grade year.

CAM JANSEN by David Adler. Cam's photographic memory helps her and her friend Eric solve mysteries.

BETSY and EDDIE by Carolyn Haywood. Betsy and Eddie and their friends live in a small American town in the 1950s. Excellent series for children ready for a "fat" chapter book.

RUSSELL and ELISA by Johanna Hurwitz. Russell and his little sister Elisa, find themselves in situations that will be familiar to many siblings.

JULIAN and HUEY by Ann Cameron. Julian is full of ideas, which always seem to get him and his brother Huey in trouble.

ROBERT by Barbara Seuling. Short chapters mark this appealing series about a good-humored boy with whom young readers will find it easy to identify.

CLEMENTINE by Sara Pennypacker. Clementine just can't see to keep out of trouble in this very funny series.

MARTIN BRIDGE by Jessica Scott Kerrin. Engaging stories of a likable boy and his family, written with affection and humor.

MY FATHER'S DRAGON by Ruth Gannett. The adventures of a fearless young boy and the baby dragon that he rescues from captivity on a far-off island.

MAGIC TREE HOUSE by Mary Pope Osborne. Jack and Annie discover a magic tree house filled with books that take them on trips through time. Well researched, engaging adventures.

HENRY HUGGINS and RAMONA by Beverly Cleary. Two classic series, full of warmth and humor, should not to be missed by any child.

OWEN FOOTE by Stephanie Greene. Funny, insightful series about a likable boy and his friends.

CODY by Betsy Duffey. Cody faces the familiar trials of childhood in a funny and perceptive chapter book series.

BEANY by Susan Wojciechowski. Beany, a worrywart, works her way through problems in these funny, endearing and realistic books.

GOONEY BIRD GREENE by Lois Lowry. This series stars Gooney Bird Greene, a feisty and eccentric girl and a great storyteller who likes to be right smack in the middle of everything.

SPIDER STORCH by Gina Willner-Pardo. Snappy, fast-paced, humorous stories of Spider Storch and his classmates.

AMBER BROWN by Paula Danziger. Amber faces the trials of growing up in this series in which youngsters might recognize themselves and their friends.



Grades 3 – 6 and up



BABYMOUSE by Jennifer L. Holm. A graphic novel series about a very personable, smart and sassy young mouse with a lively imagination.

JUDY MOODY by Megan McDonald. Appealing, realistic and gently humorous stories about an independent, spunky young girl. The adventures of Judy's little brother Stink will appeal to the younger set.

MALLORY by Laurie B. Friedman. Light-hearted, engaging chapter books about Mallory and her friends, at school, at camp and at home.

CLARICE BEAN by Lauren Child. The irrepressible Clarice has graduated from picture books to chapter books, and is still her lively, vivacious self.

COBBLE STREET COUSINS by Cynthia Rylant. Sweet stories about three cousins and their Aunt Lucy.

THE ZACK FILES by Dan Greenburg. Ten-year-old Zack gets involved in many strange situations in a series of fast, funny books.

THE TIME WARP TRIO by Jon Scieszka. Three boys find a book which sends them back and forward in time in this very hilarious series.

MRS. PIGGLE-WIGGLE by Betty MacDonald. The classic series about Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle, who can cure any bad habit.

HANK THE COWDOG by John R. Erickson. Hank, the "Head of Ranch Security," is much given to boasting, and gets involved in many funny misadventures, usually of his own making.

BETSY-TACY by Maud Hart Lovelace. This series tells the story of Betsy and her best friends Tacy and Tib, from the time they meet as five-year-olds through young adulthood.

DINAH by Claudia Mills. A delightful series following Dinah from fifth grade through class elections, a school play and substitute teachers.

WAYSIDE SCHOOL by Louis Sachar. The story of the teachers and students at Wayside School, a definitely wacky institution, is told in short chapters.

CHESTER, TUCKER AND HARRY by George Selden. A charming series about Chester the Cricket, who travels in a picnic basket from Connecticut to New York City, and his friends Tucker the Mouse and Harry the Cat.

THE YANG FAMILY by Lensey Namioka. The warm story of a Chinese-American family, their traditions, values and the power of music in their lives.

SAM and ANASTASIA KRUPNIK by Lois Lowry. Wonderfully funny books about the Krupnik family following big sister Anastasia from the age of ten and Sam from the day he was born.

THE MAGIC SHOP by Bruce Coville. Exciting, engaging tales of youngsters caught up in magical adventures after visiting a mysterious magic shop.

ROWAN OF RIN by Emily Rodda. The engrossing exploits of Rowan, a reluctant young hero, featuring action, mystery and suspense.

TALES OF MAGIC by Edward Eager. Ordinary children find themselves in extraordinary situations, filled with magic and fantasy.

THE MOFFATS by Eleanor Estes. Warm, involving and humorous stories of a family living in a small New England town.

DIARY OF A WIMPY KID by Jeff Kinney. Short chapters and lots of very funny line drawings tell the story of the various tribulations of a middle school boy with great humor.

DEAR AMERICA and MY NAME IS AMERICA. Various authors create fictional characters who keep journals describing historical events through the eyes of young girls and boys.

STEVIE DIAMOND MYSTERIES by Linda Bailey. Stevie, a great fan of Nancy Drew, forms a detective agency and solves mysteries with her friend, Jesse.

THE BLOSSOM FAMILY by Betsy Byars. Funny, moving stories about an eccentric, exuberant family.

A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS by Lemony Snicket. The unfortunate Baudelaire orphans are always falling out of the frying pan into the fire in this series told with great humor and literary flair.

MARY POPPINS by P.L. Travers. The classic series about the Banks children and their unusual nanny.

TUCKET by Gary Paulsen. Francis Tucket heads out west on the Oregon Trail, gets separated from his family and is captured by Pawnees. An exciting series with lots of action.

ORPHAN TRAIN ADVENTURES by Joan Lowery Nixon. The six Kelly children are sent west from New York City on an orphan train in 1856. Their experiences are described, from the oldest to the youngest.

ANNE OF GREEN GABLES by Lucy Maud Montgomery. Anne, an 11-year-old orphan, is sent by mistake to the Cuthbert farm. A sweet and immensely satisfying read.

CHRONICLES OF NARNIA by C.S. Lewis. Four English schoolchildren enter a wardrobe and find themselves in the magical world of Narnia.

ENCHANTED FOREST CHRONICLES by Patricia C. Wrede. In a light-hearted and amusing fantasy series, Princess Cimorene refuses to settle down to the boring life of an obedient princess, but seeks adventure and finds herself confronting wicked wizards.

ALICE by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. Alice faces the agonies of adolescence as she progresses from sixth grade through high school. A fine series about a realistic and endearing young girl. Younger children will enjoy reading the Alice prequels.

PERCY JACKSON AND THE OLYMPIANS by Rick Riordan. Percy, who learns that he is the son of the god Poseidon, stars in this original, exciting and humorous series of adventures.

TIME FANTASY by Madeleine L'Engle. The children of the Murry family become involved in the struggle between good and evil. A complex, captivating series.

SQUIRE TALES by Gerald Morris. 14-year-old Terrence becomes a squire to Sir Gawain in these exciting tales, featuring lots of swordplay and tongue-in-cheek humor.

THE TRIPODS by John Christopher. When aliens take over the Earth, Will, Henry and Jean Paul escape to the White Mountains to join the rebels.

SAMMY KEYES by Wendelin Van Draanen. Exciting mysteries starring the feisty and funny, smart and spunky seventh-grade ace detective, Samantha Keyes.

REDWALL by Brian Jacques. The animals of Redwall Abbey fight evil in this brilliant adventure series.

THE LOGAN FAMILY by Mildred D. Taylor. The moving story of an African-American family living in Mississippi during the Great Depression, facing poverty and prejudice with courage, love and humor.

ARTEMIS FOWL by Eoin Colfer. A teenaged criminal mastermind comes up against many cunning adversaries in this series which features quirky characters, delightful humor, and lots of action.

INKHEART TRILOGY by Cornelia Funke. Good battles evil as characters literally leap off the pages of a book. An imaginative and engrossing series.

SEPTIMUS HEAP by Angie Sage. The seventh son of a seventh son, Septimus is destined to be a great wizard, but not without lots of evil schemes and plenty of action and humor. Sure to appeal to Harry Potter fans.

ALEX RIDER by Anthony Horowitz. Spy thrillers feature the adventures of young Alex, a sort of junior James Bond. Entertaining, exciting reading.

PRYDAIN CHRONICLES by Alexander Lloyd. A series full of humor and action chronicles the adventures of Taran, an Assistant Pig-Keeper, who becomes involved in an epic struggle between good and evil.

HIS DARK MATERIALS by Philip Pullman. A riveting, complex fantasy following the adventures of Lyra and Will as they travel through many worlds.

KEYS TO THE KINGDOM by Garth Nix. Everybody seems to be after Arthur Penhaligon in this suspenseful series of fantasy-adventures, each set on a different day, and each with a cliff-hanger ending.