

## Read-Alouds for the Whole Family

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Shared family reading plays an important role in growing lifelong readers. Cozying up with a book allows parents and children to bond, introduces complex vocabulary and layered plots, and opens up new avenues of conversation. Here are some titles to engage readers of all ages.

**Breadcrumbs** by Anne Ursu. **Gr. 4-6.** Hazel is different from most girls in fifth grade. She prefers to play kickball with the boys at recess and spend her time with her best friend, Jack. When an icy shard pierces Jack's eye, he begins to change. To win him back, Hazel uses knowledge of fairy tales to face off against evil woodcutters, bewitched flowers, and an icy snow queen. Great for fans of *Frozen*.

**Ella Enchanted** by Gail Carson Levine. **Gr. 4-6.** A funny, powerful retelling of *Cinderella*. Lucinda the fairy "gifts" baby Ella with obedience, making it impossible for her to disobey a direct order. With a future of drudgery and the heart of a handsome prince on the line, it takes all of Ella's will to defy the curse.

**From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler** by E.L. Konigsburg. **Gr. 4-6.** Claudia Kincaid feels unappreciated by her parents, so she decides to run away to the most interesting place she knows—the Metropolitan Museum of Art. With her younger brother Jamie (and his piggy bank), she embarks on an adventure in the famous art museum.

**The Midnight War of Mateo Martinez** by Robin Yardi. **Gr. 3-5.** Fourth grade is off to a bad start for Mateo. His little sister, Mila, is annoying, his best friend ditched him, and talking skunks have invaded his neighborhood. The new kid at school, Ashwin, shares Mateo's love of silly animal jokes and the code of knights—to do good and fight for those in need. The boys and Mila devise a battle plan to defend their neighborhood.

## Read-Alouds for the Whole Family (cont.)

**The Mouse and the Motorcycle** by Beverly Cleary. **Gr. 3-5.** When Ralph S. Mouse, a resident of an old hotel, meets Keith, a young visitor with a toy motorcycle, adventures begin. Ralph begins tearing around the hotel at night, making daring escapes from vacuum cleaners and bedding. But when Keith gets sick, Ralph must save the day. Action mixes with a heaping dose of heart in this kid-friendly classic.

**Mr. and Mrs. Bunny, Detectives Extraordinaire!** by Polly Horvath. **Gr. 3-5.** Hornby Island is a peaceful hippie commune off the coast of Canada, until the day foxes kidnap Madeline's parents. When foxes steal your family, there's only one place to turn: a husband-and-wife rabbit detective team. Humor and warmth radiate from this charming tale.

**Mr. Popper's Penguins** by Richard Atwater. **Gr. 3-5.** A huge fan of polar explorations, house painter Mr. Popper finds himself with a crate of penguins after writing a letter to Admiral Drake. Mr. Popper turns his basement into an icy wonderland and takes a penguin show on the road. Penguin antics, gentle humor, and charming illustrations make this a classic.

**The Phantom Tollbooth** by Norton Juster. **Gr. 4-6.** Milo is always bored, until the day a tollbooth and a boy-size car appear in his bedroom. He finds himself on a strange road in the Lands Beyond. This epic adventure through a witty, wacky world will bring a smile to all listeners.

**P.S. Be Eleven** by Rita Williams-Garcia. **Gr. 5-7.** Delphine's mother signs all her letters the same way: "P.S.: Be eleven." But Delphine is 12, and life in Brooklyn in the late 1960s is changing fast—shouldn't she change too? With her mother in California and her father and grandmother minding Delphine and her sisters at home, growing up is all Delphine can look forward to. A classic story of family, friendship, and a changing world.

**The Year of the Book** by Andrea Cheng. **Gr. 3-5.** Sometimes it seems easier to find a best friend in a book, or so fourth-grader Anna Wang thinks. A book will never ditch you for new friends or make you feel strange about taking Chinese lessons on the weekends. When her old friend, Laura, reappears in her life, Anna must decide if taking a risk is worth it for a friend. A charming, meaningful story.