

A Short Summary of Available Book Club Books:

Easy books:

Anastasia Krupnik-a book about a precocious 11 year old whose mother is pregnant. Anastasia is full of personality.

Chocolate Fever-super easy book about a boy who eats too much chocolate and gets sick. Funny. We mostly used it with the fourth grade boys but if you have a group where the girls are struggling, it might be a good one.

Frindle-about a boy who decides to change the name of PEN to FRINDLE. Entertaining, easy but lots to talk about. Many schools read this in fourth grade.

Nothing Wrong With a Three Legged Dog-a little longer, it deals with racism, physical bullying, disability, but with a very light touch.

The Hundred Dresses - short, deals with bullying. Many times we use it as a first book. Some schools read it in third grade.

Toys Go Out-told from the point of view of three toys. Funny and touching.

Who Was Dr. Seuss?-biography of Dr. Seuss. When we assign this book, we usually bring in some Dr. Seuss books to read aloud. Again, this was bought for the boys but has been used successfully with the girls.

Who Was Steve Jobs? -biography of Steve Jobs.

Who Was Helen Keller? -biography of Helen Keller

Who Was Harriet Tubman? -biography of Harriet Tubman

Who Was Walt Disney? - biography of Walt Disney

Medium books:

Bluish-About a girl going through chemotherapy and her relationship with two other girls in her class. It's a short book with much to talk about.

Bridge to Terabithia-About a friendship between a boy and a girl from different walks of life. Tragedy occurs and the aftermath is what ends the book.

Dog Whisperer Rescue - 12-year old Emily has dreams of drowning. Night after night, she's being sucked under -- until the third night. She realizes it's not just a dream. It's really happening to someone -- or something. On the rocky shore outside her house, Emily finds a large dog. He's barely alive, but she's determined to save him. She can feel his pain—and his determination to live. The dog is brought to the vet. And with Emily's help, he starts to improve. But is the bond between the girl and her dog something more? She can see what he sees, feel what he feels. And Zack seems to be able to read her mind, too. Is it possible that together, Emily and Zack

can do more than read each other's minds? Can they turn their powers to helping other people?

The Homework Machine - Meet the D Squad, a foursome of fifth graders at the Grand Canyon School made up of a geek, a class clown, a teacher's pet, and a slacker. They are bound together by one very big secret: the homework machine. Because the machine, code-named Belch, is doing their homework for them, they start spending a lot of time together, attracting a lot of attention. And attention is exactly what you don't want when you are keeping a secret.

Before long, things start to get out of control, and Belch becomes much more powerful than they ever imagined. Now the kids are in a race against their own creation, and the loser could end up in jail...or worse!

Keeper of the Doves-a historical book about a family of girls. Quaint.

The Liberation of Gabriel King-Set in 1976, this is about a relationship between Gabriel, a white boy with lots of fears, and Frita, the only African American in their school with some fears of her own. Deals with the KKK, but we have found that most students don't know what that is, so we don't focus on it.

No Talking - The fifth-grade girls and the fifth-grade boys at Laketon Elementary don't get along very well. But the *real* problem is that these kids are loud and disorderly. That's why the principal uses her red plastic bullhorn. A lot.

Then one day Dave Packer, a certified loudmouth, bumps into an idea - There should be a contest! Which team can say *the fewest words* during two whole days? And it's the boys against the girls.

How do the teachers react to the silence? What happens when the principal feels she's losing control? And will Dave and Lynsey plunge the whole school into chaos?

Planet Middle School -Told through free-verse poems, this story captures the craziness of adolescence and first love. A tomboy begins to like being a girl. Suddenly, all Joylin can think about is boys — especially Santiago. She's doing things she never thought she'd do, like wearing makeup and trying on dresses. And her best friend and basketball buddy Jake doesn't like it. Is Joylin trying to be something she's not, or is she just growing up?

Rules-about a girl whose brother has autism and how she deals with that. She meets a disabled boy who becomes her friend, but she is somewhat embarrassed about it. She has quite a journey to accept what is.

Vet Volunteers: A Fight for Life - Maggie's grandmother runs an animal clinic, Dr. Mac's Place, so Maggie knows her way around animals who are in danger. When she learns that the abused and sick puppies flooding the clinic are from an illegal puppy mill, she knows that she has to find out who's running it, where it is—and save the rest of the dogs.

Waiting for the Magic – a mother brings home 4 pets when her husband leaves the family. The pets talk. The book is about loss and forgiveness and about being a family. A favorite.

We Can't All Be Rattlesnakes - told from the point of view of a garden snake who is captured by a not very nice boy. Kindness to animals is a big lesson with this one. Very funny.

Harder books:

Bless This Mouse - new, about a church mouse who protects the other mice. Advanced vocabulary may be off-putting for some groups. Not an advanced theme though.

From The Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler - When suburban Claudia Kincaid decides to run away, she knows she doesn't just want to run *from* somewhere, she wants to run *to* somewhere -- to a place that is comfortable, beautiful, and, preferably, elegant. She chooses the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Knowing that her younger brother Jamie has money and thus can help her with a serious cash-flow problem, she invites him along. Once settled into the museum, Claudia and Jamie find themselves caught up in the mystery of an angel statue that the museum purchased at auction for a bargain price of \$225. The statue is possibly an early work of the Renaissance master, Michelangelo, and therefore worth millions. Is it? Or isn't it? Claudia is determined to find out. Her quest leads her to Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, the remarkable old woman who sold the statue, and to some equally remarkable discoveries about herself.

Locomotion-written in entirely in verse, this book is about a boy, Lonnie, who loses his parents in a fire. A teacher encourages him to write to come to terms with his life, so he does. Uplifting. This is my favorite book we do!

The Music of Dolphins-about a girl who was raised by dolphins and is "rescued." She initially thrives but is confused by what is expected of her, and longs for her dolphin family.

The One and Only Ivan - Having spent twenty-seven years behind the glass walls of his enclosure in a shopping mall, Ivan has grown accustomed to humans watching him. He hardly ever thinks about his life in the jungle. Instead, Ivan occupies himself with television, his friends Stella and Bob, and painting. But when he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from the wild, he is forced to see their home, and his art, through new eyes.

Pictures of Hollis Woods - about an orphan who shifts from home to home. She leaves the one home where she was loved because of an accident and ends up living with an older woman who develops dementia. When a social worker discovers this, Hollis and the woman run away.

The Road to Paris - Paris has just moved in with the Lincoln family, and she isn't thrilled to be in yet another foster home. She has a tough time trusting people, and she misses her brother, who's been sent to a boys' home. Over time, the Lincolns grow on Paris. But no matter how hard she tries to fit in, she can't ignore the feeling that she never will, especially in a town that's mostly white while she is half black. It isn't long before Paris has a big decision to make about where she truly belongs.

The Skin I'm In-about a girl in a tough school who is teased because she is too dark skinned, which is a big deal in the African American community. A teacher with mottled skin comes and is so comfortable with herself, she challenges our main character to be the same