



LOW HANGING FRUIT

Annual Summer Reading Issue

By Jeannie Standal

Research in summer learning loss began in 1906—we’ve known about this problem for a long, long time. Since then, it has been established that summer reading is a good way to combat that loss. When books come up in small talk, no one claims reading in the summer is a waste of time.

Here are the hard facts: students who do not read during the summer can lose up to three (yes, 3!) months of reading progress during the break. As that three month slide accumulates each year, the long term effect is an achievement gap of two years or more by the end of 6th grade. On the other hand, kids who have summer opportunities for enrichment (summer reading, camp, travel, museum visits, zoo, etc.), return to school engaged and ready to learn. Sometimes they even make summer gains.

The question, then, is how to get kids and families to buy into summer reading. Here are a few suggestions from Reading Rockets and the Campaign for Grade Level Reading:

1. Summer reading is fun! Let kids pick out the books that interest them, even if they are too difficult for them to read on their own. This is the time for them to learn about the pure pleasure of reading. If a reading list is in order, give lots and lots of options from which to chose.
2. Consider recommending audiobooks, especially for road trips when you can listen together. Even for those for whom reading in the car is out of the question, audiobooks are a wonderful way to surround children with words.
3. Got reluctant readers? Turn them on to graphic novels. Today’s graphic novels engage parts of the brain that print does not, making them a perfect choice for that kid who hates reading. They are more than comics these days!
4. Check in over the summer. A robo call will do very well. Perhaps the principal can call and state what s/he has been reading over the summer and ask what the kids are reading. The kids can leave a voicemail with their favorite read of the summer (so far).
5. Let younger brothers/sisters tag along! Kids who visit the library before age 6 tend to see themselves as readers from an early age.

95% of public libraries offer a Summer Reading Program. Many include prizes, activities, demonstrations, and parties.

So Read, Read, Read! If possible, go the public library yourself. Maybe you will bump into a few students there and they will see that you read over the summer, too!

LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



Kate DiCamillo’s Top Ten Reasons to Participate in Summer Reading:

The 2016 CSLP National Summer Reading Champion lays out the best arguments for Summer Reading, including avoiding chores. http://www.csllpreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/DiCamillo_SummerReading_2016_8.5x11.pdf

Collaborative Summer Reading Program

All the data you can stand about summer reading benefits! <http://www.csllpreads.org/>

Teen Video Challenge Shorts:

Show videos by students for students with this year’s “Get in the Game” summer reading theme. Find state winners at <http://www.csllpreads.org/2016-teen-video-challenge/> and see all of Idaho’s entries [here](#).

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



Summer Reading Outside the Book:

Sometimes reading a book is just too much. There are lots of other options to work reading into everyday life! Are students traveling at all over the summer? Families can read together about their destination. Going camping? Read about gear and outdoor skills. Eating breakfast? Read the cereal box. Going to the movies? Read the review or the description of the movie before going. Street signs? Check! Menus? Yes! Labels? You bet. And remind parents to read aloud—even for older kids.

DIGITAL TOOLS



Tools at www.LiLi.org:

Use **NovelList & NovelList K-8** to find grab & go book lists and lists of movies based on books in the “Quick Links” menu.

Not everyone will be excited about reading books. Try shorter bursts of reading! This year’s theme is based on sports, games, and getting moving. Try short profiles on athletes in the **Notable Sports Figures** e-reference book.

You can also use **Explora Primary** or **Explora Secondary** to find age-appropriate articles on exercise, popular athletes, and health topics. Don’t forget about the **Encyclopedia of Recreation and Leisure** to learn how we have been amusing ourselves over time!



