

May 2011: MCGT Book Recommendations:

Single books (alphabetical by author):

- *Time Cat*, by Lloyd Alexander
- *The Indian in the Cupboard*, by Lynne Reid Banks
- *Peter and the Starcatchers*, by Dave Barry
- *The Last Unicorn*, by Peter S. Beagle
- *The Incredible Journey*, by Sheila Burnford
- *The Report Card*, by Andrew Clements
- *Book of Greek Myths*, by Ingri D'Aulaire
- *The Door in the Wall*, by Marguerite De Angeli
- *Linnets and Valerians*, by Elizabeth Goudge
- *George's Secret Key to the Universe*, by Lucy Hawking
- *The Phantom Tollbooth*, by Norton Juster
- *The Jungle Book*, by Rudyard Kipling
- *Homer Price*, by Robert McCluskey
- *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*, by Robert C. O'Brien
- *Surviving the Applewhites*, by Stephanie Tolan
- *The Hobbit*, by J.J.R. Tolkien (who also wrote *Lord of the Rings*).
- *Red Sails to Capri*, by Ana Weil
- *Swiss Family Robinson*, by Johanna David Wyss

Series or authors of multiple books (alphabetical by author):

- *Chronicles of Prydain*, by Lloyd Alexander - includes *The Black Cauldron*
- *Lost Years of Merlin* series, by T.A. Barron. "My son adored this series, as well as his more recent books. They are beautifully written. They came out the same time as the first Harry Potter book and didn't get near the exposure. Harry Potter was too intense for my son at that age, but he loved the Merlin books."
- *The Never Land* series, by Dave Barry. *Peter and the Starcatchers* is the first in the series
- *Wizard of Oz* series, by Frank Baum. "My son really enjoyed the *Wizard of Oz* series at that age. There are actually about 10 books in the series and they can be a little hard to find, but should be locatable through inter-library loan if your local library system doesn't have them. The vocabulary in them is great."
- *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*; *Fudge* series, by Judy Blume
- *Adventure* series by Enid Blyton. "My kids loved *The Valley of Adventure*, *The Castle of Adventure*, You might stay away from the first book (*The Island of Adventure*) and *The Mountain of Adventure* to start with; they are the scariest ones. If your child likes first two I mentioned and has read the rest, then go ahead with those."
- *Freddy the Pig* series, by Walter R. Brooks. "Freddy Goes to Florida", "Freddy the Politician" are some titles. Website about the Freddy books: <http://www.freddythepig.org/>.
- *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, by Lewis Carroll. "This suggestion made me laugh due to having a memory of my son sneaking downstairs at age 4 to read *Alice in Wonderland* out of the coveted classics books on a high shelf. If he was quiet we knew he wasn't in trouble, but reading in some corner somewhere..."
- Series about Ramona Quimby and her family and friends, Mouse and the Motorcycle, Henry Huggins by

Beverly Cleary

- *How To Train your Dragon* series, by Cressida Cowell

- Roald Dahl books: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*, *James and the Giant Peach*. "Roald Dahl is great, but you may want to peek at books individually, depending on your family's tolerance for twisted humor."

- *Hardy Boys Mysteries*: books and graphic novels, by Franklin W. Dixon

- *Young Wizards* series, by Diane Duane.

"Both of my gifted readers (6th grader and 11th grader) thoroughly enjoyed the series. The first book is *So You Want To Be A Wizard*. I think there are ten in the series which is not yet finished. Small warning: the mother of one of the main characters dies in the fifth book, but it is not graphic; it is handled more like a passing on. My son is also sensitive to death and violence, but was able to handle that part just fine."

"I second the Young Wizard series. Our whole family loves those books. We started reading it before our son was in kindergarten and when our daughter was in 2nd grade. My daughter finished all that had been published at that time in 3rd and 4th grade and my son went back and read them in 2nd through 4th grade. Then we all reread them last year before the new one came out. I think it is a greatly overlooked series. It does touch on some teenage relationship issues but not from a dating/sex standpoint. The two characters (one boy and one girl) are ones that many of our kids will be able to relate to."

- Edward Eager books: *Half Magic*, and several more with time travel themes

- *The Great Brain* series, by John Dennis Fitzgerald

- Jean Craighead George : *My Side of the Mountain*; *Julie of the Wolves*

- Robert Gilmore: *Wizard of Quarks*; *Alice in Quantumland*. "Basically they take the concepts of quantum physics and put it in a readable story based on the *Wizard of Oz* and *Alice in Wonderland*. My son loved them at that age, though he fell in love with high end physics early on and was already researching string theory for a second grade research report. So I'm not sure how well someone without that passion would like the books."

- *The Seekers* series, by Erin Hunter (though these might not be great for a more sensitive kid, I'm not sure).

- *Redwall* Series, by Brian Jacques.

"My son thoroughly enjoyed the Redwall Series by Brian Jacques when he was around that age. Lots of adventure, critters instead of people, many themes running through the stories that encourage deeper thinking, etc. The libraries typically have these, and used bookstores are good sources. Our son read each of them many times." "My son has also loved the Redwall series. It has knights, epic battles, etc, but all on the scale of mice and other woodland creatures."

- *Nancy Drew Mysteries*: books and graphic novels, by Carolyn Keene

- *Time Quartet* series, by Madeleine L'Engle (*Wrinkle in Time* is the first one.)

- *Narnia Chronicles*, by C.S. Lewis

- Jack London: *Call of the Wild*; *White Fang*

- *Betsy, Tacy and Tib* series, by Maude Lovelace, a Mankato author.
- *Fablehaven* series, by Brandon Mull. "There is some disappearing people but no hint at death."
- Books by Terry Pratchett, especially *Tiffany Aching* series which includes "Wee Free Men" and "A Hat Full of Sky".
- *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series, by Rick Riordan. "If your child is sensitive to death, I'd wait on Percy Jackson, or screen it first, as the mom gets seemingly killed in the beginning of the first book. Even though she turns out not to be dead later on, it was too much for my child (who's not especially sensitive) to have the mom die."
- *Harry Potter* Series, by J.K. Rowling
- *Septimus Heap* series by Angie Sage (another wizard series)
- Diane Stanley has several terrific biographies (Mozart, Saladin, Queen Elizabeth I, Princess Ka'iulani of Hawaii, Michaelangelo, Peter the Great). "They are text heavy, but still beautifully illustrated and written for curious, thoughtful children. My now 8 year-old pours over them."
- *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, by Trenton Lee Stewart. "This series is a fun read for gifted kids, because it is about gifted kids. It is at about the 6th grade reading level. It is a mystery and there is some violence in it; so, it isn't for the kids who get scared easily, but it's great for kids who can handle Harry Potter. The four main characters, Reynie, Sticky, Kate and Constance, are each gifted in their own unique way, but all four are highly intelligent. Reynie has deep analytical abilities. Sticky has an eidetic memory. Kate has visual-spatial awareness and is physically adroit. Constance is just way out there....I'll let you figure her out yourself. It's a great series for the mystery, but also for the good values taught."
- *Letzenstein Chronicles*, by Meriol Trevor
- *The Cronus Chronicles*, by Ann Ursu ("though these might not be great for a more sensitive kid, I'm not sure").
- *The Boxcar Children Mysteries* series, by Gertrude Chandler Warner
- E. B. White books: *Charlotte's Web*, *Stuart Little*, *Trumpet of the Swan*.
- *Little House on the Prairie* series, by Laura Ingalls Wilder
- Marsha Williams has wonderful illustrated Shakespeare, Chaucer, Dickens, Greek classics, King Arthur, Don Quixote, Robin Hood
- *Enchanted Forest Chronicles* series, *Frontier Magic* series, and *Mairelon the Magician* series – all by Patricia Wrede

Other resources suggested by MCGT members:

- Google Scholastic Book Wizard It allows you to enter a title. It "levels" the title. Then you can enter how many years above that level you would like to find a book. For example, if you level Harry Potter and tell it 3 years above it, it will give books like Harry Potter but at that higher reading level.
- Chinaberry catalog (chinaberry.com) has a lot of great ideas for "precocious readers."

- This website gives a list of books appropriate for whatever your child's reading level is. It helps to know your child's lexile score, which you should know as a result of standardized reading tests.

<http://www.lexile.com/findabook/>

- *Some of My Best Friends Are Books, 3rd edition* by Judith Wynn Halsted includes lists of books in lots of different genres, and brief synopses of each book makes choosing books for gifted kids really helpful.

- "A good children's librarian should also be able to help." Someone else wrote: "I'd also second the recommendation to talk to your local librarian. That's how we find many of the books that my daughter has enjoyed."

- Hoagies' Gifted Education page has compiled lots of book lists for gifted readers from a variety of sources: www.hoagiesgifted.org/reading_lists.htm

(Published in the Minnesota Council for the Gifted and Talented newsletter, Outlook, in the July/August, 2011 issue.)