

Popular Chapter-Book Series for Young Readers

Selected/Annotated by Barbara Begin Campbell – December, 2015

Interest levels K-3; Reading levels Gr. 1-3

Series

ADVENTURES OF SOPHIE MOUSE. Poppy Green / Jennifer A. Bell. Little Simon, 2015.

Sophie is an 8.y.o. mouse in this animal fantasy. She and other anthropomorphized creatures act in familiar relationships, with gentle plots dealing with issues such as prejudice, perseverance, and fears.

ANNA BANANA. Anica Mrose Rissi / Meg Park. Simon and Shuster, 2015.

Features 3rd grader Anna, her dachshund Banana and her best friends Sadie and Isabel. Realistic fiction based on familiar family, friend and school relationships and situations.

BACKYARD WITCH. Christine Heppermann & Ron Koertge / Deborah Marcero. Greenwillow/HarperCollins, 2015

Fantasy in which a 9 year-old girl, worried about missing her friends who are away on vacation, finds magic in her own backyard. Birding tips included.

BALLPARK MYSTERIES. David A. Kelly/Mark Meyers. Random House, 2011.

Nine-year-old cousins, Mike and Kate solve mysteries related to baseball events and players, and since Kate's mom is a sports reporter, they have access to stadiums and players. The formula persists as each book takes place in a different Major League stadium. Includes sports trivia.

CARVER CHRONICLES. Karen English / Laura Freeman. Clarion, 2013.

Character-driven, authentic stories feature African-American, 3rd grade boys with realistic plots related to school, siblings, homework, friends. Each book stands alone, featuring a different character.

CHICKEN SQUAD. Doreen Cronin / Kevin Cornell. Atheneum, 2014.

Humorous spinoff of the *J. J. Tully* series by the same author, these chicks band together to solve mysteries. Of course, they learned from J.J. Tully, the retired search and rescue dog who is ever ready to step in to save the day. Laugh out loud funny, with silly situations, large fonts, plentiful illustrations and engaging characters.

CLAUDE. Alex T. Smith. Peachtree, 2013.

Little dog Claude wears a beret, and appears to be French, but he lives in England where he and his friend Sir Bobblysock (who really is a sock) share adventures visiting the city, foiling art

thieves, vacationing at the beach, and more. Plenty of support from the illustrations as Claude navigates his silly/funny situations.

CLEMENTINE. Sarah Pennypacker / Marla Frazee. Hyperion, 2006.

Spunky, energetic 3rd grader finds herself in realistic, but sometimes troublesome, and often funny situations relating to family, friends and school.

DIGBY O'DAY. Shirley Hughes/ Clara Vulliamy. Candlewick, 2014.

Anthropomorphic, canine pals, Digby and Percy like to drive Digby's red convertible, enter races, solve mysteries, and share adventures. Very easy to read, books have much picture support with a bit of a British feel.

DRAGON MASTERS. Tracey West / Graham Howells. Scholastic, 2014-15.

8 year-old Drake and his friends are taken to live in King Roland's castle to be trained as dragon-masters. Each must learn to train the dragon they are paired with and discover its special powers.

EERIE ELEMENTARY. Jack Chabert / Sam Ricks. Scholastic (Branches), 2014.

Third grader, Sam Graves is a hall monitor at his new school. He and his friends learn that their school is alive, and they must form a group to protect students who attend and find out the secrets about the school. Fast moving plot and not *too* scary.

FRANKLIN SCHOOL FRIENDS. Claudia Mills / Rob Shepperson. Margaret Ferguson Bks. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013.

Features third grade girls - a different main character in each book facing school, family and friendship situations that are realistic and recognizable.

GALAXY ZACK. Ray O'Ryan / Jason Kraft. Little Simon, 2013.

Futuristic tales set on Planet Zebulon where 8 year old Zack's father has accepted a new job. Zack starts a new school, faces bullies, and finds friends in a world filled with futuristic gadgets and interplanetary travel.

GREETINGS FROM SOMEWHERE. Harper Paris / Marcos Calo. Little Simon, 2014.

Ethan and Ella, 2nd grade twins, travel with Mom who is a journalist, and Dad who homeschools them as they go on realistic adventures, and solve mysteries.

HEIDI HECKELBECK. Wanda Coven/Priscilla Burris. Little Simon, 2012.

Heidi first enters Gr. 2 after being homeschooled her whole life. She learns to manage going to a real school, finding friends, dealing with mean girls, and when all else fails, she tries a bit of magic. Heidi is a witch!

JASPER JOHN DOOLEY. Caroline Adderson / Ben Clanton. Kids Can Press, 2012.

Funny, quirky Jasper, approximately 6-8 years old, navigates school, family, sibling and growing-up issues and activities. Plenty of dialog and situations early elementary readers will relate to.

JUDY MOODY. Megan McDonald / Peter H. Reynolds. Candlewick, 1999.

Funny chapter books feature a feisty third-grade girl. Plots deal with school issues, a pesky younger brother, Stink. Realistic plots; dialogue and behavior rings true for the ages of characters. See also other series by this author/illustrator team featuring the same characters – some may be slightly easier to read: *Judy Moody and Stink*; *Judy Moody and Friends*; *Stink*.

JUST GRACE. Charise Mericle Harper. Houghton Mifflin, 2007.

Misnamed by her 3rd grade teacher, seven-year-old Grace is precocious, capable and energetic. Fast-paced, realistic plots center around friends, school, family with just the right touch of humor and fun. Cartoon-like illustrations and a strong cast of characters keep the story lively and engaging.

LOLA LEVINE. Monica Brown / Angela Dominguez. Little, Brown, 2015.

Second-grader Lola is half Peruvian, half Jewish; her artist dad works at home and her mom is a newspaper reporter. Multicultural themes, food and experiences are represented throughout. She has a pesky younger brother, Ben and a best friend Josh. Lola is great at soccer, loves writing in her diary, and she energetically faces realistic family, friend and school situations

LOUISE TRAPEZE. Micol Ostow / Brigitte Barrager. Random House, 2014.

Louise, a feisty 7 year old member of part of the Sweet Potato Traveling Circus Troupe, loves flashy, "fancy" costumes, but she finds herself afraid of heights when her big opportunity to perform arrives.

MAGICAL ANIMAL ADOPTION AGENCY. Kallie George / Alexandra Boiger. Disney/Hyperion, 2015.

Fantasy with a young girl who becomes a volunteer for an agency which finds homes for magical, unwanted animals such as unicorns, fairy horses, magic toads and dragons. Characters include gnomes, wizards and witches.

MARGUERITE HENRY'S MISTY INN. Kristin Earhart / Serena Geddes. Aladdin, 2015.

Willa Dunlap, her younger brother Ben, and family adjust to their move to Chincoteague Island from Chicago to open a Bed and Breakfast. Refers to/recalls Marguerite Henry's characters and setting of *Misty of Chincoteague* and the history of the ponies.

MAYBELLE. Katie Speck / Paul Ratz de Tagyos. Henry Holt, 2007.

Maybelle, the little cockroach who lives under the Peabody's refrigerator, is tired of crumbs but her efforts to get to the "real" food get her into adventures and trouble. Funny, fast-moving and easy to read.

MERCY WATSON. Kate DiCamillo / Chris Van Duesen. Candlewick, 2005.

Mercy is a little pig with very human emotions, aspirations and behaviors. Engaging and funny, students will enjoy Mercy's exploits either during read-aloud or on their own as a beginning reader/early chapter book selection for K-Gr.2.

MONKEY ME. Timothy Roland. Scholastic, 2014.

Rambunctious, overly-active Clyde eats a radioactive banana and now finds that when he gets excited, he turns into a monkey - up to monkey business, all too often. Silly but fun with much support for reluctant readers in abundant illustrations, and graphic sequences.

NANCY CLANCY. Jane O'Connor / Robin Preiss Glasser. Harper, 2012.

Third grader, Nance Clancy (aka. Fancy Nancy from the picture book series) and her best friend Bree love Nancy Drew Mysteries, so they set up a Sleuth Headquarters and begin some sleuthing and mystery solving of their own. Nancy retains her love of fancy clothes and colorful, fancy words and the plots have just enough red herrings to keep them fun.

NIKKI & DEJA. Karen English / Laura Freeman. Clarion, 2007.

Second grade, African American best friends are almost as close as sisters, sharing realistic experiences at school, at home and in the neighborhood. Contains authentically drawn characters and rich dialogue that rings true.

NOTEBOOK OF DOOM. Troy Cummings / Katie Carella/ Liz Hersog Scholastic (Branches), 2013.

Alexander and his friends find monsters everywhere since he moved to the town of Stermont, especially in the Elementary School. Alexander keeps a notebook belonging to the Super-Secret Monster Patrol, whose job is to protect Stermont from monsters. Mysteries include disappearing students, zombies & monstrous insects.

PIPER GREEN AND THE FAIRY TREE. Ellen Potter/Qin Leng. Knopf, 2015.

Second grader, Piper misses her high-school brother when he goes to the mainland to school, but her time spent in a nearby "seemingly" magical tree helps her cope with school, new teacher, and family situations.

PUPPY PIRATES. Erin Soderberg/Russ Cox. Random House, 2015.

A group of puppies sail the seven seas looking for adventure as pirates, seeking treasure, working together, and learning to be brave.

READY, SET, DOGS! Stephanie Calmenson. Henry Holt, 2014.

Kate and Lucie, approximately 7-8 years old, are both dog lovers. They find magical necklaces in a thrift shop that allow them to become dogs. Family, school and friendship situations are silly, but fun. Back matter includes information about real dogs, dog jokes, and the author's personal experiences.

TALES FROM DECKAWOO DRIVE. Kate DiCamillo / Chris Van Duesen. Candlewick, 2014.

Some minor characters from the Mercy Watson (DiCamillo) series are given their own starring roles in these lighthearted, funny stories about various community members.

TALES FROM MAPLE RIDGE. Grace Gilmore/ Petra Brown. Little Simon, 2015.

Historical fiction presents Logan Pryce, approximately age 7-8, and a glimpse of farm and family life in the little town of Maple Ridge around the late 1890's.

VIOLET MACKEREL. Anna Bradford / Elanna Allen. Atheneum, 2012, c.2010.

Six-year-old Violet is the youngest in her family. Creative, spunky and imaginative and ever-positive, Violet deals with real-life and humorous situations with family, friends, at school, moving household, and in the neighborhood.

A Few Stand-Alone Early Chapter books:

Funke, Cornelia. *EMMA AND THE BLUE GENIE.* III. Kerstin Meyer. Trans. Oliver Latsch. Random House, 2014, .2002

First published in German, Emma, age 8, and her dog Tristan join the genie to retrieve his stolen magic ring, and regain his powers.

Hale, Shannon and Dean Hale. *THE PRINCESS IN BLACK.* III. LeUyen Pham. Candlewick, 2014.

Princess Magnolia usually looks very pink and princess-like, but in reality she is clever, powerful, and brave enough to do battle with the furry blue monster. Her secret? She has an alter ego who, dressed in black, acts as a superhero to protect the kingdom.

Willems, Mo. *THE STORY OF DIVA AND FLEA.* III. Tony DiTerlizzi. Hyperion, 2015.

Set in Paris, Diva a little white dog befriends an alley-cat named Flea, and they wander the streets, set out on adventures together, and explore each other's worlds.

For more information about some older and established series books for young readers:

Thomas, Rebecca L. and Catherine Barr. *POPULAR SERIES FICTION FOR K-6 READERS: A READING AND SELECTION GUIDE.* 2nd Edition, Libraries Unlimited, 2009. (ERL Call Number: Reference Z1037.T4654 2009)