



Assemblyman  
Gary D. Finch

Dear Friend,

When school lets out for the summer, we can encourage our kids to continue learning by picking up a book or downloading an e-book on your tablet. Reading is fun! Books can immerse children in far-off worlds, new characters and thrilling narratives. To that end, I'm sponsoring a **Summer Reading Challenge**, in coordination with New York State libraries, to inspire kids to read on a regular basis throughout the summer break.

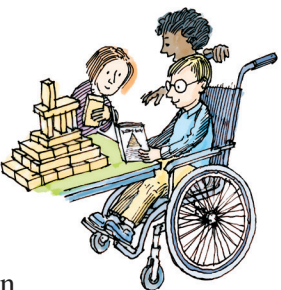
This year's theme is **"Build a Better World!"** Books can lead students to new summer adventures, to dream big, to discover new interests and they might even be inspired to build new bridges between cultures or to volunteer in a program to help improve the world around us. I've listed some book suggestions to get started, and you can head to your local library or go online for more.

Here's how the challenge works: Mark the enclosed calendar for each day in July and August that your child reads with you, someone else or alone. Once you have marked off 40 days or more, please return the completed form to my office, and I will award your child with a New York State Excellence in Reading certificate.

Thank you, and happy reading!

Assemblyman  
Gary D. Finch

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# Assemblyman Gary D. Finch's Summer Reading Challenge



"I pledge to read for at least 15 minutes each day for at least 40 days during the months of July and August. I will mark the calendar below with a check mark (✓) each day that I read by myself or with my reading buddy."

When you have marked at least 40 days on this calendar, you will earn an Excellence in Reading certificate. Just send the marked-off calendar and the completed form to my office and your certificate will arrive in the mail.

## July 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## August 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Special thanks goes to the New York State Education Department's Division of Library Development and librarians across the state for their help.

Updated 4/17

New York State Assembly  
Excellence in Reading Certificate  
Information form



Child's name ↓

School ↓

Parent/Guardian name ↓

Address 1 ↓

Address 2 ↓

Phone ↓ Email ↓

Number of days completed ↓

Favorite book read this summer ↓

Number of years participated in the Summer Reading Challenge ↓

To receive your certificate, please complete the above form and send it with the attached calendar to:

Assemblyman  
Gary D. Finch  
69 South Street  
Auburn, NY 13021

New York State  
Assembly's 2017  
Summer Reading  
Challenge



Sponsored by  
Assemblyman  
Gary D. Finch



www.summerrreadingny.gov

# The Summer Reading Challenge

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

– Mahatma Gandhi

## Suggested Reading List

For more titles, visit: [www.summerreadingnys.org/kids](http://www.summerreadingnys.org/kids)

### Poetry

**A Celebration of the Seasons: Goodnight Songs** by Margaret Wise Brown. This is a collection of the author's poems illustrated by 12 award-winning artists. The book includes a CD in which the poems are set to music. Fiction. Grades pre-K-1.

**A Poem for Peter** by Andrea Davis Pinkney. This is a book of prose which tells the story of Ezra Jack Keats, children's author and illustrator of *The Snowy Day*. Non-fiction. Grades 2-4.

**Jazz Day: The Making of a Famous Photograph** by Roxane Orgill. The story behind a famous photograph of jazz musicians in 1950s Harlem is told in prose. Non-fiction. Grades 3-7.

**Harlem Hellfighters** by J. Patrick Lewis. This is a collection of free-verse poems which tell the story of a group of black American soldiers who fought in World War I and impressed the French with their courage and inspired Europeans with their music. Non-fiction. Grades 4-7.

### Picture Books

**Sky Boys: How They Built the Empire State Building** by Deborah Hopkinson. This book chronicles the construction of the Empire State Building through the eyes of a small boy from beginning until end. Non-fiction. Grades pre-K-4.

**Rabbit's Snow Dance** by Joseph Bruchac. This is a Native American folktale about the importance of listening to your friends, the four seasons and patience. Fiction. Grades pre-K-K.

**E is for Empire: A New York Alphabet** by Ann Burg and Maureen Brookfield. This is an alphabet book that uses rhyme to introduce children to New York landscapes, culture, famous people and history. Non-fiction. Grades 1-3.

**Train** by Elisha Cooper. The sights, sounds and types of trains are presented in this poetic and colorful book. Non-fiction. Grades K-3.

**Liberty** by Allan Drummond. This is the story of a boy's role in the unveiling and dedication of the Statue of Liberty in 1886. Fiction. Grades pre-K-3.

**Miracle on 133rd Street** by Sonia Manzano. José and his family are homesick for Puerto Rico when holiday cheer is unexpectedly brought about by the community. Fiction. Grades pre-K-3.

**Tuesday Takes Me There: The Healing Journey of a Veteran and his Service Dog** by Luis Carlos Montalván. This book is a photo essay of a service dog and veteran. During their travels, they teach children how service dogs provide assistance for people with visible and invisible disabilities. Non-fiction. Grades pre-K-2.

**The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore** by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson. This is the story of the founding of the National Memorial African Bookstore in 1939 as told by the founder's son. Famous customers of the store included Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X. Non-fiction. Grades 1-4.

**Miss Moore Thought Otherwise: How Anne Carroll Moore Created Libraries for Children** by Jan Pinborough. When it was considered unimportant for children to read, one woman pushed ahead and established a children's room at the New York Public Library. Non-fiction. Grades 1-4.

**Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat** by Javaka Steptoe. This book offers a biographical introduction to an artist who rocketed to fame in the 1980s as a cultural phenomenon. Non-fiction. Grades 1-5.

### Early Readers

**Drop it, Rocket!** by Tad Hills. A dog named Rocket is ready to find new words for his word tree with his teacher, the little yellow bird. Fiction. Grades pre-K-1.

**Big Egg** by Molly Coxe. Hen discovers a huge egg in her nest one morning and visits all the farmyard animals to find out to whom it belongs. Fiction. Grades pre-K-1.

**May I Please Have a Cookie?** by Jennifer E. Morris. Alfie learns that tricks don't get him a delicious cookie, but saying please will. Fiction. Grades K-1.

### Elementary Books

**Children of the Longhouse** by Joseph Bruchac. This is an exciting story which also portrays Native American life during the 1400s where tribal boys' conflicts can be settled by a lacrosse game. Fiction. Grades 3-6.

**The Secret Subway** by Shana Corey. This is the true story of New York City's first subway. In the 1860s, Alfred Aly Beach built a fan-powered train that traveled underground, 40 years before the modern subway system was built. Non-fiction. Grades pre-K-3.

**We Came to America** by Faith Ringgold. America is a country rich in diversity. This book is a tribute to every American that came before us and reminds us that equality is a group endeavor. Non-fiction. Grades K-3.

**Maya Angelou** by Lisbeth Kaiser. This is a book in a series about outstanding women. It follows Maya Angelou from her childhood through her experiences as an actress/singer, civil rights activist and beloved writer. Non-fiction. Grades K-3.

**Fearless Flyer: Ruth Law and Her Flying Machine** by Heather Lang. In 1916, Ruth Law flew through fierce winds and numbing cold and broke the existing cross-country distance record for flying. Non-fiction. Grades K-3.

**The Year of the Rat** by Grace Lin. Change is the meaning of the Chinese year of the rat. Pacey's best friend moves away and she faces her own doubts to decide if she can become the writer and illustrator she hopes to be. Fiction. Grades 3-7.

**The Brooklyn Bridge: The Story of the World's Most Famous Bridge and the Remarkable Family that Built It** by Elizabeth Mann. This book tells the story of a remarkable family and a legendary feat of engineering. It contains rare and historical photographs, diagrams and powerful illustrations. Non-fiction. Grades 4-8.

**Broadway Star (Stage School)** by Lisa Regan. Any child aspiring to become an actor or actress will love this book as readers get into character for the stage. The basics of Broadway performance are reviewed. Non-fiction. Grades 3-6.

**Two Friends: Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass** by Dean Robbins. This book is based on the real-life friendship between Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass who both lived in Rochester, NY, for a time. They regularly met for tea to support one another, and the text introduces children to the issues of both African-American rights and women's rights. Fiction. Grades K-3.

**Astrophysicist and Space Advocate Neil Degrasse Tyson** by Marne Ventura. This is the biography of the man who is the director of New York's Hayden Planetarium. The book explores his childhood in the Bronx, his academic career and his status as a scientific expert. Non-fiction. Grades 3-6.

**Drita, My Homegirl** by Jenny Lombard. This is the story of a family coming to America from war-torn Kosovo and how friendship can overcome a vast cultural divide. Fiction. Grades 3-5.

**I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark** by Debbie Levy. This book about the life of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg proves that disagreeing doesn't make you disagreeable. She has spent her life disagreeing with inequality and standing up for what's right. Non-fiction. Grades pre-K-3.

### Middle School Readers/Tweens

**The Education of Ivy Blake** by Ellen Airgood. This is a story about finding the family you need and taking charge of your own future in order to be your best self. Fiction. Grades 4-6.

**Walking Two Worlds** by Joseph Bruchac. This book is a true story about the early education of a Native American who became famous and achieved great success within both the white world and the world of his Seneca people. Fiction. Grades 5 and up.

**Under the Same Sky** by Cynthia DeFelice. When Joe wants a motorbike, his father makes him work on the family farm in upstate New York picking berries and working alongside migrant workers. Joe learns about their struggle. Fiction. Grades 5-9.

**Taking Flight: From War Orphan to Star Ballerina** by Michaela and Elaine DePrince. This is the memoir of a girl's journey from an orphanage in war-torn Sierra Leone to becoming the principal dancer of the Dance Theatre of Harlem. Non-fiction. Grades 6 and up.

**So You Want to Be A Wizard?** by Diane Duane. This is the first in a series of 10 books about two lonely kids caught up in a never-ending battle between good and evil. Fiction. Grades 5-8.

**The Great Shelby Holmes** by Elizabeth Eulberg. Nine-year-old Shelby is the best detective in her Harlem neighborhood. Fiction. Grades 3-6.

**You Want Women to Vote, Lizzie Stanton?** by Jean Fritz. This biography of a 19th-century feminist gives a picture of the world that women lived in and why it was so hard to change society. For example, her father thought girls weren't as important as boys and her husband was embarrassed by her public speaking. Non-fiction. Grades 3-6.

**The Road to Paris** by Nikki Grimes. This is a book about friendship, family and faith told through the character, Paris, in search of a home in a harsh world. Fiction. Grades 4-7.

**A Bandit's Tale: The Muddled Misadventures of a Pickpocket** by Deborah Hopkinson. In 1887, 11-year-old Rocco arrives in New York City and is forced to live in squalor and beg for money. He finds the city's cruelty to children and animals intolerable and decides to make things better despite a cost to himself. Fiction. Grades 4-7.

**Skating With the Statue of Liberty** by Susan Lynn Meyer. This book is about a French Jew who emigrates with his family from occupied France in 1942. It's about the struggles of immigrants as well as racism and religious intolerance in America. Fiction. Grades 4-7.

**Riot** by Walter Dean Myers. During the summer of 1863, the worst race riots the U.S. has ever seen take place in New York City. Claire, the daughter of an Irish mother and black father, finds herself torn between the two sides. Fiction. Grades 7 and up.

**The Hero Two Doors Down: Based on the True Story of Friendship Between a Boy and a Baseball Legend** by Sharon Robinson. Steve, age 8, learns that his baseball hero, Jackie Robinson, is moving into his all-Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn. Lessons in friendship, respect and unity follow. Fiction. Grades 4-7.

**8th Grade Superzero** by Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich. Despite an embarrassing start to the school year resulting in the nickname "Pukey" in his Brooklyn middle school, Reggie discovers the value of community activism through volunteering at a homeless shelter and becoming a Big Brother volunteer. He decides he has the courage to run for class president. Fiction. Grades 5-9.

