



CANTON ACADEMY
LOWER SCHOOL
SUMMER READING GUIDE
2026

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

Philippians 4:8 (ESV)

Nurturing hearts, challenging minds in a Christian environment.

Canton Academy Lower School Summer Reading Guide 2026

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Introduction

Dear Lower School Families,

Summer is one of childhood's sweetest seasons—a time for making memories, enjoying family, and discovering the joy of a good book. Whether reading on the couch, by the pool, at the ball field, or on a family vacation, books have a wonderful way of inspiring imagination, strengthening minds, and bringing families together.

At Canton Academy, we believe that one of the greatest gifts we can give our children is a lifelong love of reading. Our Summer Reading Guide has been designed to encourage students to continue growing as readers while still enjoying a well-deserved break.

Participation in the Summer Reading Program is entirely optional, and our hope is simply to provide opportunities and resources that support learning throughout the summer months.

For families interested in additional academic review, optional BJU Press Vacation Stations workbooks are available and provide practice in reading and mathematics concepts that complement our Lower School curriculum.

As students entering The Bridge Years prepare for the exciting opportunities that await them, required summer reading will provide a shared foundation for discussion and learning as they begin the school year together.

Above all, my prayer is that our students return to campus in August refreshed, encouraged, and ready for another wonderful year of learning and growing together. May your summer be filled with faith, family, fun, and great books.

Enjoy every popsicle, every trip to the pool, every family vacation, and every page turned. Questions?

Please feel free to contact me at dblanton@cantonacademy.org. I would be happy to help.

Blessings,

Dawn Blanton
Lower School Principal

Canton Academy Lower School Summer Reading Guide 2026



WHY SUMMER READING?

"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents."

— Emilie Buchwald

At Canton Academy, we believe that one of the greatest gifts we can give our children is a lifelong love of reading. Books have the power to inspire imagination, expand vocabulary, strengthen comprehension, and deepen understanding of the world around us.

Reading throughout the summer also helps students maintain important skills and return to school confident and prepared for another successful year.

Our Summer Reading Program seeks to:

- Cultivate a lifelong love of reading.
- Expose students to quality literature.
- Strengthen reading skills and comprehension.
- Encourage meaningful family experiences around books.
- Prepare students for a successful school year ahead.

Most importantly, reading creates opportunities for families to slow down, spend time together, and enjoy stories that are true, honorable, lovely, and worthy of praise.

Whether reading on the couch, by the pool, at the ball field, or on family vacation, we hope every Panther discovers a story worth remembering this summer.

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SUMMER READING AT A GLANCE

Participation in the Canton Academy Lower School Summer Reading Program is entirely optional. Students who complete the program requirements will have the opportunity to earn one bonus Reading test grade during the first nine weeks.

RISING KINDERGARTEN

- Enjoy books together.
- Foster a love of reading through daily read-aloud experiences.
- Have fun!

RISING FIRST GRADE

- Read one book from the recommended list.
- Complete a classroom project during the first weeks of school.
- Information and due dates will be provided by the first grade teachers.
- Earn bonus credit during the first nine weeks.

RISING SECOND–FOURTH GRADES

- Read two books:
 - One featured selection
 - One additional title from the recommended list.
- Score 80% or higher on one corresponding Accelerated Reader test.
- Complete a classroom project during the first weeks of school.
- Classroom teachers will provide project information and due dates.
- Earn one bonus Reading test grade during the first nine weeks.

THE BRIDGE YEARS

(Rising Fifth Grade and Rising Sixth Grade)

- Read the assigned novels.
- Be prepared for assessments on the second Friday after school begins.
- Begin the school year with a shared foundation for discussion and learning.

Questions?

Please contact Mrs. Blanton at:

dblanton@cantonacademy.org

OPTIONAL SUMMER LEARNING

WITH VACATION STATIONS

For families interested in additional academic review during the summer months, BJU Press offers Vacation Stations workbooks designed to help students retain important skills while still enjoying a well-deserved break.

These engaging workbooks provide ten weeks of review in reading, language arts, and mathematics through colorful activities and independent practice that can be completed in just 10–15 minutes each day. Progress charts are also included to help students celebrate their accomplishments along the way.

Participation is entirely optional. Our hope is simply to provide families with additional resources that support continued learning and help students return to school feeling confident and prepared for another successful year.

TO ORDER

Families may purchase the Vacation Stations workbook corresponding to their child's rising grade level through BJU Press.

<https://www.bjupresshomeschool.com/category/vacation-stations/5637160516.c>

Enjoy the journey—and happy learning!

RISING KINDERGARTEN

Building a Love of Reading

"There are many little ways to enlarge your child's world. Love of books is the best of all."

— Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

Kindergarten is the beginning of a wonderful journey! Through stories, songs, and conversations, children develop vocabulary, imagination, and a love of learning that will serve as the foundation for years to come.

There is no formal Summer Reading Program requirement for rising kindergarten students. Instead, we encourage families to enjoy books together and foster a love of reading through daily read-aloud experiences.

As you read with your child, consider helping them:

- Predict what might happen next in the story.
- Retell favorite events and characters.
- Listen for rhyming words.
- Practice beginning sounds and letter recognition.
- Talk about how characters feel and make choices.

Books About Starting Kindergarten

Kindergarten, Here I Come!

D.J. Steinberg

The Kissing Hand

Audrey Penn

The Jesus Storybook Bible

Sally Lloyd-Jones

Too Shy to Say Hi

Shannon Anderson

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RISING FIRST GRADE

Growing as Readers

First graders are taking exciting steps toward becoming independent readers. Summer is a wonderful time to enjoy books together, build confidence, and nurture a lifelong love of reading.

Participation in the Summer Reading Program is optional.

Students who choose to participate will read one book from the recommended list below and complete a classroom project during the first weeks of school. Information regarding the project and due dates will be provided by the first grade teachers.

Featured Reading

Biscuit Finds a Friend
Alyssa Satin Capucilli

Additional Reading

Biscuit's New Trick

The Foot Book

There's a Hole in My Pocket

I Lost My Tooth!

The Eye Book

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!

Goodnight Moon

Nate the Great

Go, Dog. Go!

Frog and Toad Are Friends

Fly High, Fly Guy!

Green Eggs and Ham

Eat Your Peas, Louise!

The Giving Tree

Henry and Mudge series

Bonus credit will be earned through the classroom project only. Information and due dates will be provided by the first-grade teachers.

RISING SECOND GRADE

Discovering New Adventures

Second graders are ready to explore new stories, memorable characters, and ideas that spark curiosity and imagination.

Featured Reading

Choose ONE

Joseph Had a Little Overcoat
Simms Taback

or

Snowshoe Thompson
Smiler Levinson

Additional Reading

Choose ONE

Old Black Fly
Jim Aylesworth

The Golly Sisters series
Betsy Byars

Kitten's First Full Moon
Kevin Henkes

This Is Not My Hat
Jon Klassen

Days with Frog and Toad
Arnold Lobel

Little Bear series
Else Holmelund Minarik

Amelia Bedelia
Peggy Parish

The High-Rise Private Eyes series
Cynthia Rylant

The Three Pigs
David Wiesner

Bonus Credit Opportunity

- Read two books:
 - One featured selection
 - One additional title from the recommended list.
- Score 80% or higher on one corresponding Accelerated Reader test.
- Complete a classroom project during the first weeks of school.
- Classroom teachers will provide project information and due dates.

RISING THIRD GRADE

Becoming Independent Readers

"Once you learn to read, you will be forever free."

— Frederick Douglass

Third graders are becoming increasingly independent readers. Through engaging stories and memorable characters, students have opportunities to strengthen comprehension, expand vocabulary, and discover the joy of reading.

Featured Reading

Choose ONE

Mr. Putter & Tabby series
Cynthia Rylant

or

The Glorious Flight
Alice Provensen

Additional Reading

Choose ONE

The Lighthouse Family series
Cynthia Rylant

Mr. Popper's Penguins
Richard and Florence Atwater

Little House in the Big Woods
Laura Ingalls Wilder

The Family Under the Bridge
Natalie Savage Carlson

Owls in the Family
Farley Mowat

Paddington Bear series
Michael Bond

The Bears on Hemlock Mountain
Alice Dalgliesh

Bonus Credit Opportunity

- Read two books:
 - One featured selection
 - One additional title from the recommended list.
- Score 80% or higher on one corresponding Accelerated Reader test.
- Complete a classroom project during the first weeks of school.
- Classroom teachers will provide project information and due dates.

RISING FOURTH GRADE

Exploring Great Literature

"Good books, like good friends, are few and chosen; the more select, the more enjoyable."

— Louisa May Alcott

Fourth graders are ready to explore literature that encourages curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper appreciation for the written word. Through timeless stories and memorable characters, students continue to develop the habits and skills of thoughtful readers.

Featured Reading

Choose ONE

The Courage of Sarah Noble
Alice Dalgliesh

or

The Whipping Boy
Sid Fleischman

Additional Reading

Choose ONE

The Door in the Wall
Marguerite de Angeli

The Hundred Dresses
Eleanor Estes

Heidi
Johanna Spyri

The Penderwicks
Jeanne Birdsall

The Cricket in Times Square
George Selden

The Trumpet of the Swan
E. B. White

Little House on the Prairie
Laura Ingalls Wilder

Bonus Credit Opportunity

- Read two books:
 - One featured selection
 - One additional title from the recommended list.
- Score 80% or higher on one corresponding Accelerated Reader test.
- Complete a classroom project during the first weeks of school.
- Classroom teachers will provide project information and due dates.



THE BRIDGE YEARS

Growing in Wisdom and Wonder

"Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days."

— Job 12:12

As students enter The Bridge Years at Canton Academy, they embark on an exciting season marked by increasing independence, responsibility, and academic growth.

Rooted in Canton and built for tomorrow, The Bridge Years encourage students to think deeply, grow in empathy, and cultivate a lifelong love of learning.

Through shared literary experiences, students will begin the school year with a common foundation for discussion and learning.

Students entering The Bridge Years are expected to complete the required summer reading assignments for their grade level.

**Assessments over the required novels will be administered on
the second Friday after school begins.**

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RISING FIFTH GRADE

Students entering fifth grade will read the following novels during the summer.

Required Reading

The Cay

Theodore Taylor

Number the Stars

Lois Lowry

Students will be assessed over these novels on the second Friday of the school year.

The stories students encounter in fifth grade invite them to consider themes of courage, friendship, sacrifice, and perseverance. We look forward to beginning the school year together through these shared literary experiences.

RISING SIXTH GRADE

Students entering sixth grade will read the following novels during the summer.

Required Reading

Summer of the Monkeys
Wilson Rawls

Wonder
R. J. Palacio

Students will be assessed over these novels on Tuesday, August 11, 2026.

As students continue their journey through The Bridge Years, these books provide opportunities to reflect on compassion, character, empathy, and the importance of treating others with kindness and respect.

Additional Recommended Reading

A Long Walk to Water
Linda Sue Park

The Hiding Place (Young Readers Edition)
Corrie ten Boom

The Chronicles of Narnia
C. S. Lewis

The Hobbit
J. R. R. Tolkien

The Penderwicks
Jeanne Birdsall



FAMILY READ-ALoud FAVORITES

"There is no friend as loyal as a book."

— Ernest Hemingway

Some of childhood's sweetest memories are made with a good book and the people we love. Whether gathered on the couch, reading before bedtime, or listening together on a family road trip, shared stories have a wonderful way of creating lasting memories.

The following books are family favorites that lend themselves beautifully to reading aloud together.

K5–FIRST GRADE

The Jesus Storybook Bible

Sally Lloyd-Jones

Blueberries for Sal

Robert McCloskey

Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel

Virginia Lee Burton

The Tale of Peter Rabbit

Beatrix Potter

The Velveteen Rabbit

Margery Williams

Wise Words: Family Stories that Bring Proverbs to Life

Peter J. Leithart

SECOND–THIRD GRADE

Because of Winn-Dixie

Kate DiCamillo

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

Kate DiCamillo

Mr. Popper's Penguins

Richard and Florence Atwater

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

C. S. Lewis

The Trumpet of the Swan

E. B. White

The Penderwicks

Jeanne Birdsall

Treasures of the Snow

Patricia St. John

FOURTH–SIXTH GRADE

The Railway Children

E. Nesbit

Anne of Green Gables

L. M. Montgomery

The Chronicles of Narnia

C. S. Lewis

Treasures of the Snow

Patricia St. John

The Hobbit

J. R. R. Tolkien

The Wheel on the School

Meindert DeJong

The Hiding Place (Young Readers Edition)

Corrie ten Boom

On the Edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness

Andrew Peterson

As children grow older, family read-alouds often become less frequent. We hope these stories encourage families to preserve the wonderful tradition of reading together and create memories that will long outlive the summer months.

Some books entertain. Some books teach. And some books quietly become lifelong friends.



UNTIL AUGUST...

"Kindred spirits are not so scarce as I used to think. It's splendid to find out there are so many of them in the world."

— L. M. Montgomery

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

Philippians 4:8 (ESV)

May your summer be filled with faith, family, fun, and wonderful stories.

May you discover new adventures, revisit old favorites, and create memories that will remain long after the pages have been turned.

Enjoy every popsicle, every trip to the pool, every family vacation, and every page turned.

We look forward to welcoming our Panthers back to campus in August!

Blessings,

Dawn Blanton
Lower School Principal
dblanton@cantonacademy.org

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