for Children in Grades 2-3
reading at a 5th Grade level

25 books chosen by the American Library Association & Children’s Book Council Joint Committee to provide guidance to parents, caregivers, teachers, librarians, and others interested in discovering books for children who read at an advanced level and are seeking more challenging, but still age-appropriate, books.
Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart
by Candace Fleming
Random House Children’s Books / Yearling, 2019
A riveting look at the life, disappearance, and search for legendary aviatrix Amelia Earhart.

Go for the Moon: A Rocket, a Boy, and the First Moon Landing
by Chris Gall
Macmillian Children’s Publishing Group / Roaring Brook Press, 2019
A boy creates his own adventures to accompany the Apollo 11 astronauts in this picture book filled with scientific details and fun facts.

Echo
by Pam Muñoz Ryan
Scholastic, 2015
In a story that blends folktale and realism, a harmonica connects three musically-talented children from different periods in history.

Her Own Two Feet: A Rwandan Girl’s Brave Fight to Walk
by Meredith Davis & Rebeka Uwitonze
Scholastic / Focus, 2019
A Rwandan girl born with clubfeet moves to America and endures numerous surgeries in this story of faith and perseverance.

Genius!: The Most Astonishing Inventions of All Time
by Deborah Kespert
Thames and Hudson, 2015
Young readers are introduced to the stories of the thinkers and inventors that helped shape our modern world, such as Archimedes, da Vinci, Gutenberg, James Watt, the Wright brothers, and Tim Berners-Lee.

Migrations: Open Hearts, Open Borders
by ICPBS (various authors). Illus. by various Candlewick Studio, 2019
Postcard images of birds (and words) by 50+ creators from all over the world send messages of hope for human migration.

The One and Only Ivan
by Katherine Applegate. Illus. by Patricia Castelao
Inspired by the true story of a captive gorilla who spent 27 years in an enclosure in a shopping mall.

The Parker Inheritance
by Varian Johnson
Scholastic, 2018
A multigenerational family story set in South Carolina explores the history of racism in a mystery with elements of The Westing Game.

A Place to Belong
by Cynthia Kadohata. Illus. by Julia Kuo
Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing / Atheneum, 2019
Story illuminating the history of post-WWII Japan, told through a Japanese-American girl whose family was expatriated and had to join her grandparents on a farm outside Hiroshima.

The Poetry of Us
by J. Patrick Lewis
National Geographic Kids, 2018
A wide variety of old and new poets, poetic techniques, forms, and topics covering life in the United States, from large cities to rural areas.

The Girl Who Drew Butterflies: How Maria Merian’s Art Changed Science
by Joyce Sidman
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2018
A biography of Maria Sibylla Merian, a pioneering 17th-century scientist and artist who documented the metamorphosis of butterflies.

Mountain Dog
by Margarita Engle. Illus. by Aleksey and Olga Ivanov
A novel in verse told from two points of view: Tony, whose mother is incarcerated, and Gabe, a search-and-rescue dog who helps Tony learn about life in the wilderness.
Random Body Parts: Gross Anatomy Riddles in Verse  
by Leslie Bulion. Illus. by Mike Lowery  
Peachtree Publishing Company, 2015  
Anatomy riddles with high-level vocabulary and a Shakespeare theme.

The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus  
by Jen Bryant. Illus. by Melissa Sweet  
Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2014  
Roget is more than the creator of the thesaurus, this extensive biography shows many aspects of his life, from his list-loving childhood to his inventions. ▲ Spanish.

*Science Comics: Trees: Kings of the Forest  
by Andy Hirsch  
Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group / First Second, 2018  
A personified acorn (and its woodland friends) teach us about phototropism, the mycorrhizal network, and other science details behind the growth of a tree.

*Secret Coders  
by Gene Luen Yang. Illus. by Mike Holmes  
Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group / First Second, 2015  
In this graphic novel, Hopper is a new student at a school filled with secrets. She and friend Eni use the magic of coding to figure out what’s been hidden, but will they be discovered?

*The Serpent’s Secret  
by Sayantani DasGupta  
Scholastic Press, 2018  
A New Jersey sixth grader discovers that she might be an Indian princess who must solve riddles and battle demons to save the world.

Smile  
by Raina Telgemeier  
Scholastic / Graphix, 2010  
Based on the author’s own experiences, this graphic memoir addresses the pain and embarrassment of years of orthodontia following an accident. ▲ Spanish.

The Way Things Work Now  
by David Macaulay  
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2016  
Clever illustrations and text explain how the technological wonders of the past and present work.

What Do You Do with a Voice Like That?  
by Chris Barton. Illus. by Ekua Holmes  
Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing / Beach Lane Books, 2018  
This celebration of Congresswoman and African-American pioneer Barbara Jordan contains rich back matter that asks readers to think about how to use their own gifts toward a greater good.

What Elephants Know  
by Eric Dinerstein  
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2016  
A renowned scientist depicts the complexities of life in the Nepalese Borderlands during the 1970s and the delicate relationship between man and nature.

When the Sea Turned to Silver  
by Grace Lin  
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2016  
In a fantasy inspired by Chinese folklore, a girl goes on a quest to save her grandmother’s life.

*The Wild Robot  
by Peter Brown  
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2016  
Robot Roz is marooned on a desert island and becomes part of the wildlife family, but her new life is threatened when her creator discovers her new home.

*Wings of Fire: The Graphic Novel  
by Tui Sutherland. Illus. by Mike Holmes  
Scholastic / Graphix, 2013  
Graphic novel adaptation of the popular fantasy series shows the world of warring dragons in full color.

Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed the World  
by Rachel Ignotofsky  
Ten Speed Press, 2016  
Profiles of 50 women leaders in STEM, as well as an illustrated scientific glossary and supplemental information.

* asterisk denotes one book of a series. ▲ denotes Spanish edition available
We suggest the following sites for more book titles:
www.cbcbooks.org
www.ala.org/alsc

Questions?

American Library Association
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The Children’s Book Council
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