

BEST OF YESTERDAY

Greenbelt Anniversary Children's Reading List

When they weren't playing outside on Greenbelt's many playgrounds or swimming in the new public swimming pool, Greenbelt's first kids were reading some terrific books! You can follow in their footsteps by enjoying books from this list of Newbery Medal winners and other significant books of the 1930s. See the key at the bottom of the list to find out where to borrow them.

1930s Newbery Medal Winners

***Hitty, Her First Hundred Years*⁺**

Published 1929

The narrator and central character is a tiny wooden doll named Mehitabel (Hitty), who was carved for a little girl named Phoebe. The book details Hitty's adventures as she becomes separated from Phoebe and travels from owner to owner over the course of a century.

Rachel Field

1930 Newbery Medal winner

The Cat Who Went to Heaven*

Published 1930

Set in ancient Japan, this story of patience and compassion concerns a poor artist and a calico cat. As he works on a painting for the local temple, the artist becomes fond of the cat, and he includes a cat in the painting, even though the priests believe that cats cannot go to heaven.

Elizabeth Coatsworth

1931 Newbery Medal winner

***Waterless Mountain*⁺**

Published 1931

Mentored by his uncle, a Navajo boy living in Arizona in the 1920s undergoes years of rigorous training to become a medicine man, learning the legends and traditions of his culture in the process.

Laura Adams Armer

1932 Newbery Medal winner

Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze*

Published 1932

Fu Yuin-fah, the son of a poor widow from the countryside of western China, wishes to become a coppersmith in the big city on the Yangtze River. With the help of many people, including an old scholar and a missionary, he eventually attains his goal.

Elizabeth Lewis

1933 Newbery Medal winner

Invincible Louisa: The Story of the Author of Little Women*

Published 1933

This biography describes the life of Louisa May Alcott, author of *Little Women*. The story recounts some of the events Louisa later used in her books, including meetings of the Pickwick Club and the death of one of Louisa's younger sisters, Elizabeth.

Cornelia Meigs

1934 Newbery Medal winner

***Dobry*⁺**

Published 1934

Dobry is a young boy who lives in a small farming village in Bulgaria. At an early age, Dobry discovers a love and talent for art. While some in the village are impressed by his talent, his mother worries that Dobry will not take over the family farm.

Monica Shannon

1935 Newbery Medal winner

Caddie Woodlawn*

Published 1936

Caddie is a lively eleven-year-old girl living in 1860s Wisconsin. Weakened by illness as a young girl, she was allowed to run wild with her brothers to regain her health. The book follows her as she spends a year having a string of adventures and scares.

Carol Ryrie Brink

1936 Newbery Medal winner

***Roller Skates*⁺**

Published 1936

While her parents travel abroad, young Lucinda Wyman goes to stay with Miss Peters and Miss Nettie in New York City. Lucinda experiences unprecedented freedom, exploring the city on roller skates and making friends with all types of people.

Ruth Sawyer

1937 Newbery Medal winner

The White Stag*

Published 1937

The White Stag is a mythical retelling that follows the warrior bands of Huns and Magyars across Asia and into Europe, as the brothers who lead the two tribes chase a mysterious white stag.

Kate Seredy

1938 Newbery Medal winner

Thimble Summer*

Published 1938

In drought-stricken, Depression-era Wisconsin, nine-year-old Garnet Linden finds a silver thimble in a dried-up riverbed near the farm where she lives. The summer that follows is so wonderful and full of exciting events that Garnet comes to believe that the thimble has magical powers.

Elizabeth Enright

1939 Newbery Medal winner

1930s Newbery Honor Books

***Calico Bush*⁺**

Published 1931

Thirteen-year-old French immigrant, Marguerite, orphaned and alone, indentures herself to a farming family in harsh, isolated and beautiful 18th-century coastal Maine.

Rachel Field

1932 Newbery Honor book

The Golden Basket

Published 1936

Two sisters, Celeste and Melisande, stay at the Golden Basket hotel in Bruges with their father. They befriend Jan, the innkeeper's son, and encounter several of the other guests. On a visit to Bruges cathedral with Jan, they meet a dozen little schoolgirls, including Madeline.

Ludwig Bemelmans

1937 Newbery Honor book

***Pecos Bill: The Greatest Cowboy of All Time*⁺**

Published 1937

Set in the Old West during American westward expansion, this book tells the stories of the American folk hero Pecos Bill. Raised by coyotes, Pecos Bill acquires the ability to talk to animals, and he grows up to be a famous cowboy.

James Cloyd Bowman

1938 Newbery Honor book

***Bright Island*⁺**

Published 1937

Born and raised on Bright Island off the Maine coast, Thankful Curtis loves to sail and help her father with the farm. At the suggestion of her dreaded sister-in-law, Thankful reluctantly agrees to attend school on the mainland for her senior year.

Mabel Robinson

1938 Newbery Honor book

On the Banks of Plum Creek*

Published 1937

This is the fourth book in the Little House series. The story is a fictionalized retelling of a few years of the author's childhood when the Ingalls family, having left the Kansas prairie, travels by covered wagon to Minnesota and settles in a dugout on the banks of Plum Creek.

Laura Ingalls Wilder

1938 Newbery Honor book

Mr. Popper's Penguins*

Published 1938

A housepainter who dreams of adventure receives a surprise gift from an explorer: A penguin! Mr. Popper's household is turned upside-down as he and his family accommodate the new arrival, who is soon joined by other penguins.

Richard and Florence Atwater

1939 Newbery Honor book

Additional 1930s Children's Literature Milestones

Nancy Drew and the Secret of the Old Clock*

Carolyn Keene

Published 1930

This is the first book in the Nancy Drew Mystery Stories series. Nancy, a strong-willed and independent teenager, is an amateur sleuth. In this novel, she becomes interested in the missing will of the recently deceased Mr. Crowley while trying to help struggling relatives of the wealthy man.

Fifteen more Nancy Drew mysteries were published during the 1930s: *The Hidden Staircase*, *The Bungalow Mystery*, *The Mystery at Lilac Inn*, *The Secret Of Shadow Ranch*, *The Secret of Red Gate Farm*, *The Clue in the Diary*, *Nancy's Mysterious Letter*, *The Sign of the Twisted Candles*, *The Password to Larkspur Lane*, *The Clue of the Broken Locket*, *The Message in the Hollow Oak*, *The Mystery of the Ivory Charm*, *The Whispering Statue*, *The Haunted Bridge*, and *The Clue of the Tapping Heels*.

***Swallows and Amazons*⁺**

Arthur Ransome

Published 1930

Two sets of siblings enjoy a summer at the lake, sailing, camping, and pretending to be pirates.

Little House in the Big Woods*

Laura Ingalls Wilder

Published 1932

This is the first book in the Little House series. The story is a fictionalized retelling of the author's early childhood in the Big Woods near Pepin, Wisconsin, in the early 1870s.

Farmer Boy*

Laura Ingalls Wilder

Published 1933

This is the second book in the Little House series. The story is based on the childhood of the author's husband, Almanzo Wilder, who grew up in the 1860s in upstate New York.

***The Incredible Adventures of Professor Branestawm*⁺**

Norman Hunter

Published 1934

An absentminded professor has a series of comic misadventures with his misguided inventions, including pancake-making machines and burglar-catchers.

Mary Poppins*

P.L. Travers

Published 1934

When the Banks family's nanny storms out in a huff, Mary Poppins takes the job. The children soon learn that their nanny, though she is stern, vain, and usually cross, has a magical touch.

Little House on the Prairie*

Laura Ingalls Wilder

Published 1935

This is the third book in the Little House series. The book is a fictionalized retelling of the months the Ingalls family spent on the Kansas prairie around the town of Independence. The family faces difficulty and danger as they travel west and move into a one-room house on the prairie.

***The Box of Delights*⁺**

John Masefield

Published 1935

Kay Harkin must deal with mysterious messages, magical boxes, time travel and the threat of Christmas disappearing altogether.

***The Good Master*⁺**

Kate Seredy

Published 1935

Jancsi lives on his family's farm in rural Hungary. When his city cousin comes to visit, he expects her to be demure, but she's been sent to the country by her parents because she's so headstrong.

Mary Poppins Comes Back*

P.L. Travers

Published 1935

Nothing has been right since Mary Poppins left the Banks family. She returns aboard Michael's kite and leads the children on more adventures.

The Hobbit*

J.R.R. Tolkien

Published 1937

The prequel to *The Lord of the Rings* relates the quest of hobbit Bilbo Baggins to win a share of the golden treasure guarded by Smaug the dragon.

Family From One End Street

Eve Garnett

Published 1937

Ten stories about a happy working-class family living in a small English town. A good read-aloud book for younger children.

The Sword in the Stone*

T.H. White

Published 1938

To prepare young Arthur (Wart) for eventual kingship, the wizard Merlyn tutors the boy and turns him into different animals. On one of his adventures, Wart meets Robin and his Merry Men.

1930s Children's Literature For Early Readers

The Story Of Babar*

Jean de Brunhoff

Published in English in 1933

The original story of the elephant who visits the city and returns to the elephant realm educated and cultured.

Other early Babar books published in the 1930s include *The Travels of Babar**, *Babar the King**, *Babar's ABCs**, *Babar and Zephir**, and *Babar at Home**.

And To Think That I Saw It On Mulberry Street!*

Dr. Seuss

Published 1937

This is the first children's book by Dr. Seuss. A boy named Marco describes a parade of imaginary people and vehicles traveling along Mulberry Street, in a story he dreams up to tell his father. .

The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins⁺

Dr. Seuss

Published 1938

When the king rides past Bartholomew Cubbins, he orders the boy to remove his hat. But every time Bartholomew removes his hat, another hat mysteriously appears!

Wee Gillis

Munro Leaf

Published 1938

A longer picture book about a young bagpiper caught between highland and lowland Scottish cultures. A Caldecott honor book.

Madeline*

Ludwig Bemelmans

Published 1939

Although she is the smallest girl at her boarding school in Paris, Madeline is the most adventurous.

*Available from the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS)

⁺Available through the Marina inter-library loan service at PGCMLS

