

# Winning Ideas for Encouraging Summer Reading

## Summer Reading by Mail

Submitted by Debbie Tofte, Beaver Creek Elementary School, Beaver Creek, OR

For the kids who need the most reading help but I worry will get the least, I prepare 10 envelopes to mail inexpensive books to them to read. Each envelope includes a book and a postage paid postcard addressed to me. Each postcard has a different kind of question on it, such as "What did this story make you think of" to encourage them to think about their reading and respond. I scour yard sales and the Goodwill to find appropriate inexpensive books in good shape and media mail is pretty inexpensive for a paperback. It's been very successful and fun for both the students and myself.

## Book List Ideas

Submitted by Christy Hild, St. Therese Elementary School, Kansas City, MO

The summer is packed with many events. Parents try very hard to provide appropriate experiences for their children. As a teacher and parent I am always questioning if I am meeting the children's needs. I know what reading levels that all of my students are at when they leave for the summer, so I complete a leveled search according to the interests of each child in my classroom. Scholastic's Book Leveler program creates a list of titles that I print. I give this list of reading materials that is at the child's level which makes parents feel good and at the same time keeps the child happy because the reading is of interest to them. This empowers parents because there are millions of books! Who knows how to pick the right books for children? Teachers with the help of Scholastic.com. That's who!

## Welcome Back Book Club Lunch Parties

Submitted by Renee Parker, Selinsgrove School, Selinsgrove, PA

Each year, my school has a "move up" day, so I get to meet the students that will be in my classroom during the upcoming year. On this day, I get to introduce myself, give students a tour of the classroom and talk about what to expect in third grade. I also give students a list of 10 GREAT books to read to get ready for third grade. I choose books that are available at the library. I also have several copies of the titles available so that students and parents may sign them out for the summer, and I choose a variety of picture books and chapter books. I explain to students and families in a letter that they may read the books independently or with a family member. I also post the letter and recommended reading list on my school web page in case a student loses his list. During the first week of school, students need to return the list to me with a parent signature beside any book that they have read. Then, over a period of 10 weeks, students join me for lunch and we talk about the recommended books. We talk about a new book each week. For example, in week one, I may invite any students who read *The Teacher from the Black Lagoon* to join me for lunch. Then, the next week, I will choose another book from the list, and any student who read that title will join me for a lunchtime book club. This continues for 10 weeks. Some students will read all 10 books, and others will only read one or two; however, it encourages summer reading and also promotes family time during the busy summer months.

### Library Link

Submitted by Katie Ensell, Pointview Elementary School, Westerville, OH

It's difficult to keep up family involvement during the summer. No one idea has been 100% successful for me. As a result, I try to use a combination of two or three different strategies so that at least most kids are reading some of the summer.

I love to get each student involved in the local library's summer reading program. For example, our library system [Columbus Metro Libraries, Ohio] has a themed reading program each summer. Students read books, fill out a form, and earn prizes for each level of books read. They can also be entered to win a grand prize, such as an mp3 player. This is an exciting way for the students to read all summer long!

I also pass out a reading log at the end of the school year with a note to parents. I tell the families that if the student fills out the reading log [date, title, author, time spent reading] and brings it back to me the first week of the next school year, I will give them a prize. I usually have about 60% participate. The students take ownership of their own summer reading and are more committed because I put them in charge of their own book choices.

Up until the end of the school year, I pass out flyers to families that help them choose just-right books, and even make the lists specific to that child's Guided Reading level. The students especially love bringing in their reading logs the next year because they know that I use them as an example for the incoming class.

### Personal Letters

Submitted by Jayne Cobern, Marumsc Hills Elementary School, Woodbridge, VA

For my kindergarten students summer reading can be difficult. Most of them are beginning readers so finding texts that are accessible to them is difficult. To help motivate them to read, I ask each student to bring in several self-addressed, stamped envelopes. During the summer I send them each several short letters using controlled vocabulary and including a sticker or other small treat. Because I know my students, I can tailor these letters to their reading level. Then, at the end of the summer I ask them to bring their completed reading list (from the library or school form) and reward them with praise, a hug and a small treat. The students look forward to the notes and the hug!

Source: <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3751807>