Read your way TO THE BALLPARK
The goal of summer reading programs is to encourage elementary-aged children to keep reading during summer vacation to avoid what is known as the “summer slide.” Public libraries are the perfect place for children of all ages to access free educational and enrichment activities and programs.

Throughout the summer of 2024, many libraries across the country will celebrate summer reading focusing on the theme of Adventure Begins. An adventure is defined as an unusual and exciting experience or activity. Children, by nature, are explorers, whether participating in hands-on experiences or using their imaginations.

The Tampa Bay Rays, Suncoast Credit Union and the Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program have teamed up to create a lineup of free summer reading adventures to encourage and reward students for reading.

Everyone’s commitment to education in our community makes this an exciting matchup, especially with this year’s special theme: Adventure Begins. By reading books, graphic novels and newspaper articles this summer, all students in grades pre-k through 12 in Charlotte, Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Sarasota counties can participate.

On the pages of this publication, you can get some great book suggestions to exercise your imagination throughout summer vacation. Visit your local library or RaysBaseball.com/Reading for your game card. Once you read for 24 hours, you can win two tickets to see the Tampa Bay Rays at Tropicana Field.

Journal your way through summer

Keeping a reading journal is a great way to keep track of what you have read and learn more about yourself. A journal can serve as a reminder of the adventures you read. While you are reading books and newspaper articles this summer, write down questions, thoughts and opinions about what you have read. Through your reading, you can explore new concepts and ideas. While you are keeping your journal, read the Tampa Bay Times at least twice a week, along with your books. You can read news, sports, comic strips or even advertisements. What are your thoughts about the things you read in the newspaper? To begin your journal, write about something that you have read in the Times that directly affects your life. Share some of your journal entries and thoughts with your peers and family. Submit a book or newspaper article review to Jodi Pushkin at ordernie@tampabay.com.
Did you know?

Since 2006, the Rays Baseball Foundation’s summer reading program, Reading with the Rays presented by Suncoast Credit Union, has been encouraging kids to avoid summer reading loss by participating in this fun and interactive reading program during the summer months. More than 500,000 Tampa Bay area students from nine surrounding counties have participated since its start!

Exploring new worlds

Throughout the pages of this Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education publication, you will see suggested reading for students in grades pre-k through fifth grade. There are additional reading suggestions for students in grades pre-k through 12, broken down by grade level and genre, on the Summer Learning page of the Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education website. Go to tampabay.com/nie, and click on Summer Learning under the Resources tab.

Whether you are reading a printed book or the digital version, action, adventure, comedy, history, fantasy and new worlds are inside for you to explore. Your adventure into new worlds is endless.

You can find these exciting tales of adventure and more on the virtual shelves of your local library. You can choose to read any books and graphic novels that interest you. The book lists provided are just suggestions.

Suggested Reading

for grades Pre-K through 2

A Mouthful of Minnows by John Hare
A Spoonful of Frogs by Casey Lyall
A Very Big Fall by Emmy Kastner
Beak & Ally by Norm Feuti
Bibbidi Bobbidi Academy Rory and the Magical Mix-Ups by Kallie George
Big Truck, Little Island by Chris Van Dusen
Bug on the Rug by Sophia Gholz
Chickadee Criminal Mastermind by Monica Silvie
Cornbread & Poppy by Matthew Cordell
Cranky Chicken by Katherine Battersby
Dear Dragon by Josh Funk
Doggo and Pupper by Katherine Applegate
Federico and the Wolf by Rebecca J. Gomez
Five Hiding Ostriches by Barbara Barbieri McGrath
Fluffy McWhiskers Cuteness Explosion by Stephen W. Mervis
Fussy Flamingo by Shelley Vaughan James
Good Rosie! by Kate DiCamillo
Grumpy Monkey by Suzanne Lang
Ice Cream Face by Heidi Woodward Sheffield
If You Ever Want to Bring an Alligator to School, Don’t! by Elise Parsley
If You Give a Mouse: Time for School, Mouse! by Laura Joffe Numeroff
Invasion of the Unicorns by David Biedrzycki
Ira Sleeps Over by Bernard Waber
Ivy Lost and Found by Cynthia Lord
Kamala and Maya’s Big Idea by Meena Harris
Kindergarten, Here I Come! by D.J. Steinberg
Knight Owl by Christopher Denise
Leo the Late Bloomer by Robert Kraus
Lil’ Merl and the Dastardly Dragon by Liam Barrett
Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse by Kevin Henkes
Little Lovable Lucy’s Big Day and Little Lovable Lucy, You’re So Big by Norma Roth and Shayna Rose Penn
Maybe... by Chris Haughton
Mel Fell by Corey R. Tabor
Miss Nelson Is Missing! by Harry Allard
The Hunger Heroes: Missed Meal Mayhem by Jarrett Lerner
My Papi Has a Motorcycle by Isabel Quintero
Not That Pet by Smrithi Prasadam-Halls
Puppy Problems by Paige Braddock
Rot: The Cutest in the World by Ben Clanton
Sir Ladybug by Corey R. Tabor
Splish Splash Barkyard Bash by Norma Roth and Shayne Rose Penn
Sylvester and the Magic Pebble by William Steig
The Cookie Fiasco by Dan Santat and Mo Willems
The Electric Slide and Kai by Kelly Baptist
The Fairy Dogmother by Maribeth Boelts
The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson
The Littlest Yak by Lu Fraser
The Pout-Pout Fish Goes to School by Deborah Diesen
Strange Planet: The Sneaking, Hiding, Vibrating Creature by Nathan W. Pyle
The Three Billy Goats Gruff by Mac Barnett
The Very Impatient Caterpillar by Ross Burach
Tomatoes In My Lunchbox by Costantia Manoli
We Don’t Eat Our Classmates by Ryan T. Higgins
What if, Pig? by Linzie Hunter
What Pet Should I Get? by Dr. Seuss
What’s the Weather? by Shelley Rotner
Wheels by Sally Sutton
When Glitter Met Glue by Karen Kilpatrick
Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak
Wings by Christopher Myers
Once upon a time, in a land not too far away, there were two fearless mascots living at Tropicana Field. By day, they led typical lives, yet as soon as batting practice began, they changed into their superidentities. These two super mascots were Raymond and DJ Kitty!

These two super mascots love meeting new people, saving the world from dangerous wild pitches, evil flying bats and dreaded hot dog shortages. Every day they are on the field, there is a new adventure. After making Tropicana Field a better place, they spend their down time in their underground dugout relaxing and, of course, reading.

From the depths of the Gulf of Mexico

It was 26 years ago when Rays scouts, on a fishing trip in the Gulf of Mexico, spotted a strange looking animal. The creature, drawn to the boat by the smell of hot dogs and mustard, climbed aboard and entertained the scouts with his silly antics.

The scouts named him “Raymond,” and the rest is history. Raymond accepted the invitation to become the fun-loving fuzzball mascot for the Tampa Bay Rays.

Although Raymond’s animal-like appearance causes confusion among fans of all ages, scientists discovered that Raymond is actually a previously undiscovered species of dog known as “Canus Manta Whatthefluffalus” or a Seadog.

Seadogs have all the traits of normal dogs. They enjoy going for walks, playing with kids and fetching foul balls. Unlike other dogs, they are five to six feet tall, walk upright, are blue in color and chase catfish. While other dogs live on land, Seadogs usually live in or around the water. Seadogs are well known for their fun-loving nature, passion for baseball and general good looks.

Raymond loves baseball and reading. His other hobbies include belly dancing, hugging, eating hot dogs, doing flips, playing full-contact shuffleboard, extreme chess and meeting kids. Some of Raymond’s favorite books are the Clifford the Big Red Dog series by Norman Bridwell, Hank the Cowdog series by John R. Erickson, Dog Man series by Dav Pilkey and Two Hot Dogs With Everything by Paul Haven.

... to the streets of St. Petersburg

It was the year 2010, in a city known as St. Petersburg where a kitten was found in the back of Tropicana Field near the dumpsters. This was not your average cat. At six feet tall and 200 pounds, this was the hippest cat in all the land.

The scouts at Tropicana Field discovered that this cat had a secret talent: the ability to throw down the hottest scratches in all of Major League Baseball. Dubbed DJ Kitty, this fine feline became the Designated Disc Jockey (DDJ) for the Tampa Bay Rays.

DJ Kitty is the coolest disc jockey on the planet. He plays the hits while watching the hits. Some of DJ Kitty’s favorite songs are “Pump Up the Jam” by Technotronic, “Jump Around” by House of Pain, “Do It Again” by The Chemical Brothers, “Voodoo People” by The Prodigy and “Jump” by The Movement.

But when he is relaxing in the dugout, DJ Kitty’s No. 1 song is “Year of the Cat” by Al Stewart. His favorite thing to do while listening to his favorite music is read!

DJ Kitty’s favorite books are the Cat in the Hat books by Dr. Seuss, The Cricket in Times Square by George Selden, Hip Cat by Jonathan London and Bad Kitty: Kitten Trouble by Nick Bruel.

Did you know?

Established in April 2008, the Rays Employee Community Outreach Team (ECOT) provides voluntary hours to community service agencies that enhance or improve the quality of life in the communities it serves. In total, Rays employees have logged more than 40,000 volunteer hours split between monthly ECOT events and other ongoing projects.

Rhyming words

Raymond and DJ Kitty love to read and to sing. Did you know songs and poems have rhyming words in them? According to Vocabulary.com, “A rhyme is when the ending sounds of two words sound alike.” Some examples would be cat and hat, mouse and house, bat and rat. Look through the pages of the Tampa Bay Times to find as many rhyming words as you can. Don’t forget to check the comic pages and advertisements. Cut out the rhyming words you find and paste them on a piece of paper. Create a poem or short story with the words. Share your creation with your family and friends.
Suggested Reading

for Grades 3 through 5

**Allergic** by Megan Wagner Lloyd
**Amari and the Night Brothers** by B.B. Alston
**Gamer Squad: Attack of the Not-So-Virtual Monsters** by Kim Harrington
**Bad Kitty School Daze** by Nick Bruel
**Bedhead Ted** by Scott SanGiacomo
**Better with Butter** by Victoria Piontek
**Caterpillar Summer** by Gillian McDunn
**Charlotte’s Web** by E. B. White
**Clean Getaway** by Nic Stone
**Confessions of a Dork Lord** by Mike Johnston
**Coraline** by Neil Gaiman
**Diary of a Wimpy Kid** by Jeff Kinney
**Distress Signal** by Mary E. Lambert
**Dog Man** by Dav Pilkey
**Dragons in a Bag** by Zetta Elliott
**El Deafo** by Cece Bell
**Fantastic Mr. Fox** by Roald Dahl
**Glitch** by Laura Martin
**Good Dogs on a Bad Day** by Rachel Wenitsky and David Sidorov
**Harriet the Spy** by Louise Fitzhugh
**Honestly Elliott** by Gillian McDunn
**Island of the Blue Dolphins** by Scott O’Dell
**J.D. and the Great Barber Battle** by J. Dillard
**James and the Giant Peach** by Roald Dahl
**Julietta and the Diamond Enigma** by Luisana Duarte Armendariz
**Katie the Catsitter** by Colleen AF Venable and Stephanie Yue
**Leonard (My Life as a Cat)** by Carlie Sorosiak
**Malaika and the Wheelchair** by Mary Mwangangi
**Measuring Up** by Lily LaMotte
**Mystery on Magnolia Circle** by Kate Klise
**Night Frights: The Haunted Mustache** by Jo McGee
**Odder** by Katherine Applegate
**Olga and the Smelly Thing from Nowhere** by Elise Gravel

**Plant Earth is Blue** by Nicole Panteleakos
**Power Forward** by Hena Khan
**Secondhand Dogs** by Carolyn Crimi
**Shirley & Jamila Save Their Summer** by Gillian Goertz
**Simon B. Rhymin** by Dwayne Reed
**Sisters** by Raina Telgemeier
**Solimar: The Sword of the Monarchs** by Pam Muñoz Ryan
**Strangeville School is Totally Normal** by Darcy Miller
**Stuck** by Jennifer Swender
**Swim Team** by Johnnie Christmas
**The Area 51 Files** by Julie Buxbaum
**The City of Ember** by Jeanne DuPrau
**The Curse on Spectacle Key** by Chantel Acevedo
**The Fighting Ground** by Avi
**The First Rule of Punk** by Celia C. Pérez
**The Graveyard Book** by Neil Gaiman
**The Incredibly Dead Pets of Rex Dexter** by Aaron Reynolds
**The Magical Reality of Nadia** by Bassem Youssef and Catherine R. Daly
**The Million Dollar Race** by Matthew Ross Smith
**The Mouse with the Question Mark Tail** by Richard Peck
**The Newspaper Club** by Beth Vrabel
**The Phantom Tollbooth** by Norton Juster
**The Raven Heir** by Stephanie Burgis
**The Sideways Stories From Wayside School** by Louis Sachar
**The Unicorn Rescue Society Series** by Adam Gidwitz
**Forge Your Dragon World: A Wings of Fire Creative Guide** by Tui T. Sutherland

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**Lovable Lucy Series**

by Norma Roth and Shayna Rose Penn

Lovable Lucy is a fluffy, curious and emotive dog. She loves adventures and exploring her neighborhood with her family, and her nose! Children can relate to Lucy as she faces new, and sometimes challenging, situations. The Lovable Lucy series, written by Tampa Bay resident Norma Roth, engages kids’ imaginations while portraying positive ways to encourage confidence and kindness. The books’ themes focus on self-discovery and confidence; positive emotional expression; teamwork and problem solving; and inclusivity and empathy.

**Grades: Pre-k-2**
**Publisher: Wag Your Tale Pr**
**Book Summary: Amazon; Lovable Lucy series website**

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**Knight Owl**

by Christopher Denise

Since the day he hatched, Owl dreamed of becoming a real knight. He may not be the biggest or the strongest, but his sharp nocturnal instincts can help protect the castle, especially since many knights have recently gone missing. While standing guard during Knight Night Watch, Owl is faced with the ultimate trial — a frightening intruder. It’s a daunting duel by any measure. But what Owl lacks in size, he makes up for in good ideas.

**Full of wordplay and optimism, this surprising display of bravery proves that cleverness (and friendship) can rule over brawn.**

**Grades: Pre-k-3**
**Publisher: Christy Ottaviano Books**
**Book Summary: Amazon**
Get ready to Read Your Way to the Ballpark

Parents, you can encourage your children to participate in the Reading with the Rays program this summer. There are suggested book titles for students on the pages of this Newspaper in Education publication. Visit the Times NIE website for more reading suggestions for students of all ages, as well as some extra activities. Go to tampabay.com/nie and click on Summer Learning under the Resources tab. All students in grades prekindergarten through 12 are eligible to participate in the Reading with the Rays program. Visit your local library or RaysBaseball.com/Reading for your game card. The library systems on the next page are proud partners of the Reading with the Rays program. You can find out more about your library’s summer programs online by going to the main library web page.

Reading books and exploring adventures and fantasy can be a lot of fun. Did you know that Rays mascot DJ Kitty loves reading books, especially adventure books? He loves exploring fantasy worlds and going where no cat has gone before. DJ Kitty also likes reading about people in the community and imagining those people in different adventurous settings. Choose an animal – it can be one you have heard of or a completely new one – and imagine that animal in your own community. Find an article in the Tampa Bay Times and put your character into the situation described in the article. Write a brief paragraph about what the creature does in the situation presented in the article. Illustrate your story and share it with your classmates and family. You also can share the paragraph and artwork with the Reading with the Rays program coordinators and earn a special Rays prize. You can email your story to Jodi Pushkin at ordernie@tampabay.com.

Reading fun

Understanding stories

The best way to understand the facts in a story is to identify the who, what, where, when, why and how elements of the story. Read one of the stories or a comic strip in the Tampa Bay Times. Break down the meaning of the story by noting the facts of who is the story about, what happened in the story, where does the story take place, when does the story take place and why.
The materials in this publication correlate to the following Florida Standards for elementary school students:
- ELA. K1.F.1.1
- ELA.K1.F.1.2
- ELA.K5.F.1.3
- ELA.K5.F.1.4
- ELA.K5.R.1.1
- ELA.K5.C.1.1
- ELA.K5.C.1.2
- ELA.K5.C.1.4
- ELA.15.R.1.2
- ELA.15.R.1.3
- ELA.K5.R.2.2
- ELA.25.R.2.3
- ELA.K3.R.3.2
- ELA.K4.C.2.1
- ELA.5.C.2.1
- LAFS.68.RI.4.10
- LAFS.68.SL.1.1
- LAFS.68.SL.1.2
- LAFS.68.SL.2.4
- LAFS.68.SL.2.5
- LAFS.68.SL.2.6
- LAFS.68.W.1.1
- LAFS.68.W.1.2
- LAFS.68.W.2.4
- LAFS.68.W.3.7
- LAFS.68.W.3.8
- LAFS.68.W.3.9
- LAFS.68.W.4.10

Your Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education team

The Newspaper in Education (NIE) program is a cooperative effort between schools and the Times Publishing Co. to promote the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources. Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text. Since the mid-1970s, NIE has provided schools with class sets of the Times, plus our award-winning original curriculum, at no cost to teachers or schools.

With ever-shrinking school budgets, the newspaper has become an invaluable tool to teachers. The Times and our NIE curriculum are rich educational resources, offering teachers an up-to-the-minute, living text and source for countless projects in virtually every content area.

NIE serves teachers in private, public, alternative and home schools. Email ordernie@tampabay.com to become an NIE teacher.

For information about how you can donate to NIE, call 727-893-8138 or visit tampabay.com/nie. Keep in the know about the Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program by following us on Twitter: twitter.com/TBTimesNIE and liking us on Facebook: facebook.com/TBTNIE.

Teachers, you can order copies of the Tampa Bay Times for your summer school classroom by emailing ordernie@tampabay.com.

Newspaper in Education staff
- Jodi Pushkin, manager, jpushkin@tampabay.com
- Sue Bedry, development officer, sbedry@tampabay.com

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Written by Jodi Pushkin, Tampa Bay Times
Designed by Stacy Rector, Fluid Graphic Design, fluidgraphicdesign.com, stacyrector1@comcast.net
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- ELA.K5.C.1.2
- ELA.K5.C.1.4
- ELA.15.R.1.2
- ELA.15.R.1.3
- ELA.K5.R.2.2
- ELA.25.R.2.3
- ELA.K3.R.3.2
- ELA.K4.C.2.1
- ELA.5.C.2.1
- LAFS.68.RI.4.10
- LAFS.68.SL.1.1
- LAFS.68.SL.1.2
- LAFS.68.SL.2.4
- LAFS.68.SL.2.5
- LAFS.68.SL.2.6
- LAFS.68.W.1.1
- LAFS.68.W.1.2
- LAFS.68.W.2.4
- LAFS.68.W.3.7
- LAFS.68.W.3.8
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- ELA.K5.C.1.2
- ELA.K5.C.1.4
- ELA.15.R.1.2
- ELA.15.R.1.3
- ELA.K5.R.2.2
- ELA.25.R.2.3
- ELA.K3.R.3.2
- ELA.K4.C.2.1
- ELA.5.C.2.1
- LAFS.68.RI.4.10
- LAFS.68.SL.1.1
- LAFS.68.SL.1.2
- LAFS.68.SL.2.4
- LAFS.68.SL.2.5
- LAFS.68.SL.2.6
- LAFS.68.W.1.1
- LAFS.68.W.1.2
- LAFS.68.W.2.4
- LAFS.68.W.3.7
- LAFS.68.W.3.8
- LAFS.68.W.3.9
- LAFS.68.W.4.10
ATTENTION, KIDS!

Suncoast Credit Union and the Tampa Bay Rays are ready to make reading fun all summer long. Check out our Reading with the Rays program where you can earn prizes just for doing what you love to do – read! It’s as easy as A-B-C!

WIN PRIZES!

Use your game card to track hours and collect prizes. If you read 24 hours during the program you can earn exclusive Rays prizes!

HOW IT WORKS:

A. Pick up your game card at your local library or visit raysbaseball.com/reading
B. Pick up your favorite books
C. Start reading!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH EDUCATION!

Over the course of the program, more than 500,000 students have combined to read for 3.16 million hours during their summer break! Over 103,000 fans experienced a Rays game for free thanks to the reading program.

LET'S MAKE 2024 A READING HOME RUN!

Suncoast.com