

Thank you for volunteering for Springfield School Volunteers' 2024-2025 Read Aloud Program! Since 1969, Springfield School Volunteers has been positively impacting the lives of children across the Springfield Public School district, and we are ecstatic that you've chosen to join us in our work of helping to foster a love for books and sharing the importance of literacy in our schools.

Below, you will find some valuable tips to make the Read Aloud experience smoother for you and the school, and more fun for the students!

Read Aloud Tips & Tricks 2024

Before your Read Aloud day:

- Review the summary of the assigned book for each month.
- Look at the provided sample questions for before and after story time.
- Review the book to determine when you might use different voices, change your inflection, or add pauses for suspense or to ask questions.

On your Read Aloud day:

- Arrive to the school early. This will provide extra time for you to check in, review your book, and wait for the student escorts. Schools operate on a schedule and select a Read Aloud start time accordingly, so arriving on times also ensures that the Read Aloud starts on time.
- Some schools have limited parking. Park in any free space that is not handicapped or reserved.
- All school buildings are locked to prioritize the safety of our students. Please ring the bell to be buzzed in, then report to the main office and let them know you are there for Read Aloud.
- Don't forget to sign the book plate! The class will want to remember who the book is from!
- Before you start, ask the **Before Reading...** questions, or ask the class what they think the book will be about based on the cover. You might get some entertaining answers!
- Incorporate different voices for different characters, change inflection and use facial expressions to add suspense.
- Once you're done reading, if time permits, ask the students what they thought of the book or ask some of the **After Reading...** sample questions we've provided.

After your Read Aloud day:

- We are always open to hearing new ideas about how the program can improve. If you have any suggestions or ideas for how the program could run smoother, please email me, Elyssa Parrish (parrishe@springfieldpublicschools.com), SSV Read Aloud Coordinator.
- Relax, rest, and ready yourself for the next Read Aloud day! Know that you are a vital part of our team, and we appreciate everything you do, and every book you read.

**Thank you so much for being a Springfield School Volunteers Read Aloud volunteer!
Here's to another great year of great reading!**

Best,

Elyssa Parrish

**Elyssa Parrish, Read Aloud Coordinator
Springfield School Volunteers**

Read Aloud Summaries, Tips & Tricks

PreK/K

October: *Room on the Broom* by Julia Donaldson

Summary: A friendly witch invites various animals to join her on her broomstick, demonstrating the power of friendship and teamwork. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- Have you ever lost something? How did you find it? Did you have help?

Questions After Reading:

- How does the witch's kindness help the animals?
 - What problems do the witch and her friends face? How do they work together?
-

November: *Daniel's Good Day* by Micha Archer

Summary: Daniel enjoys a day in the city, filled with vibrant colors, friendly faces, and unexpected surprises. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- What helps you to have a good day?
- Why is it important to have a good day?

Questions After Reading:

- What made Daniel's good day turn into a perfect day?
 - What would make your day a perfect day?
-

December: *Can I Be Your Dog?* By Troy Cummings

Summary: Arfy, a lovable puppy, writes letters to potential adopters, hoping to find a forever home and a loving family. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Give me a reason someone should adopt a dog?
- Do you know what it means to adopt a dog?

Questions After Reading:

- Would you adopt Arfy?
 - How do Arfy and the letter carrier feel after finding each other?
-

January: *Dog's Colorful Day* by Emma Dodd

Summary: Dog goes on an adventure and gets colorful spots on his fur, counting them as they appear and disappear throughout the day. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- What is your favorite color?
 - Based on the cover, what do you think this book is going to be about?
-

February: *Astro Girl* by Ken Wilson-Max

Summary: Astrid dreams of becoming an astronaut and explores outer space in her imagination, inspiring children to reach for the stars and pursue their dreams. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?

Questions After Reading:

- What things did Astrid's dad say she'd have to get used to if she were to be an astronaut?
- Why is Astrid's mom her hero?

Grade 1

October: *Too Many Pumpkins* by Linda White

Summary: When Rebecca was young, she vowed she would never eat or even look at pumpkins again. And she didn't until one spring her garden was filled with them! She had an idea that led to unexpected joy for the entire community. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- What's a fruit or vegetable you don't like?

Questions After Reading:

- How does Rebecca's attitude toward pumpkins change throughout the story?
- What lessons about creativity and friendship are conveyed in the book?

November: *Listen, Buddy* by Helen Lester

Summary: Buddy the bunny rabbit has very big ears that make no difference, because he doesn't listen. His parents are always encouraging him to listen carefully and follow instructions, with no success. One day, they ask Buddy to run an errand and give him very specific directions to avoid a mean, scary, varmint. Of course, Buddy does not listen, and almost becomes part of the varmint's soup! Buddy runs all the way home and learns to listen carefully to his parents. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Why is it important to listen to your parents and teachers?
- Give me an example of what might happen when you don't listen?

Questions After Reading:

- What does Buddy learn about the importance of listening?
- How did Buddy's story inspire you to use your listening ears?

December: *Brontorina* by James Howe

Summary: Despite negative feedback from some classmates, Brontorina is determined to dance in Madame Lucille's studio. There's just one problem – the studio is too small! Join Brontorina and her friends on a journey to find a space where all can pursue their ballet dreams! [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- How would you feel if you were told your dreams wouldn't come true based on how you look?

Questions After Reading:

- How did Brontorina feel when Madame Lucille told her she couldn't be a ballerina?
- What qualities make a good friend? Who in the book shows these characteristics?

January: *Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal

Summary: Alma believes her name is too long until her father explains its origin and how she is connected to each family member's successes, hopes and dreams. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- Are you named after anyone special in your family?

Questions After Reading:

- Does Alma learn to love her name? Why?
- Where did Alma's first name, "Alma" come from? Why is it special?

February: *Wordy Birdy* by Tammi Sauer

Summary: Wordy Birdy loves to talk and often misses important details, but when her friends save her from trouble, she learns the value of listening. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Based on the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- Do you always listen to your friends? Should you always?

Questions After Reading:

- How does Wordy Birdy's talkative nature affect her friendships?
- What does Wordy Birdy learn about the importance of listening to others?

Grade 2

October: *Big Al* by Andrew Clements

Summary: Big Al longs for friendship, but he is scary looking and the other fish avoid him. When Big Al saves the smaller fish, he learns that true friendship comes from kindness and acceptance.

[Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you think of the fish on this cover? Is he scary looking? Is he bigger than the other fish?
- Do you think most of the other fish like Big Al?

Questions After Reading:

- What does Big Al learn about friendship through his encounter with the smaller fish?
- Why do you think the little fish wouldn't trust Big Al?

November: *Dear Earth, from Your Friends in Room 5* by Erin Dealey

Summary: Students write letters to Earth, expressing their love and appreciation for the planet and pledging to take care of it for future generations. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you think this book is about?
- Why is it important to care for the environment?

Questions After Reading:

- How do the students show their concern for Earth in their letters? What environmental issues are addressed in the book?
- What are some of the things Earth says that the kids could do to help her?

December: *Abiyoyo* by Pete Seeger

Summary: In a South African folktale, a young boy and his father use music and bravery to confront a giant named Abiyoyo and save their village. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- What does the father look like he is doing on the cover of the book?

Questions After Reading:

- How does the power of music help the boy and his father confront Abiyoyo?
- What did it take to gain acceptance from the village?

January: *The Bee Tree* by Patricia Polacco

Summary: "The Bee Tree" is a heartwarming story that follows a grandfather and his granddaughter, Mary Ellen, as they chase after a bee to find its hive. When they find the tree containing the hive, the grandfather uses the experience to teach Mary Ellen a valuable lesson about the joys of reading, comparing the chase to the pursuit of knowledge found in books. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you think the author wants you to know about this book just by looking at the front cover and reading the title?

Questions After Reading:

- What kind of person do you think Grandpa is? What are some of his character traits?
- What lesson does Mary Ellen learn in this book?

February: *The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig

Summary: Brian feels invisible at school until a new student, Justin, reaches out to him, igniting a friendship that helps Brian feel seen and valued. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you think this book is about?
- Have you ever been somewhere where you didn't have a friend? How did you feel?

Questions After Reading:

- What qualities in Justin help him see Brian for who he truly is?
- How can we make others feel included?

Grade 3

October: *Those Darn Squirrels!* By Adam Rubin

Summary: Old Man Fookwire tries to protect his birdfeeders from pesky squirrels but forms an unexpected friendship with them when they help him with his paintings. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- Are there any annoying animals that hang out around your house? What are they?

Questions After Reading:

- How do Old Man Fookwire's perceptions of the squirrels change throughout the story?
 - How can we find common ground and understanding with those who may initially seem different or challenging
-

November: *Ohana Means Family* by Ilima Loomis

Summary: A Hawaiian girl learns the true meaning of family and community as she prepares for a traditional luau with her extended *ohana*. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- What is the setting of the book? How might that be important to the story?

Questions After Reading:

- Why is important to embrace your culture?
 - Share one aspect of your culture you are proud of.
-

December: *Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson

Summary: A clever mouse outwits predators in the forest by creating an imaginary creature called the Gruffalo, only to encounter a real Gruffalo! [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- How does the mouse use creativity and quick thinking to outsmart its predators?
- How can we overcome challenges by using our imagination and resourcefulness?

Questions After Reading:

- How did the mouse feel when he set off into the woods?
 - Why does the mouse tell the other animals he's going to have tea with the Gruffalo?
-

January: *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka

Summary: A humorous retelling of the classic story by the wolf, who says he was framed! Wolf claims he was merely baking a cake for his Granny's birthday and ran out of sugar, so he went to the pigs' homes to borrow a cup like anyone in his position would do. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Do you know the story of the Three Little Pigs?
- Why do you think the Wolf is in jail?

Questions After Reading:

- Do you believe the Big Bad Wolf's side of the story?
 - How do you think the Big Bad Wolf felt when the pigs wouldn't lend him any sugar?
-

February: *Zahra's Blessing: A Ramadan Story* by Shirin Shamsi

Summary: While celebrating Ramadan with her family, Zahra learns about the blessings that come from sharing blessings with others. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- Name a holiday that is celebrated in a culture that is not yours.

Questions After Reading:

- How does Zahra's family celebrate Ramadan, and what traditions do they observe?
- How does meeting Haleema change Zahra's perspective on Teddy?

Grade 4

October: *The Keeping Quilt* by Patricia Polacco

Summary: A family passes a handmade quilt made from their clothes down for four generations, to help them remember their beginnings. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- If you were making a family quilt or a classroom quilt, what would you want to include in it and why?
- Are there any family items that are passed down in your family?

Questions After Reading:

- How do traditions help strengthen families?
- What does the quilt help Anna's family to remember?

November: *Cora Cooks Pancit* by Dorina Lazo Gilmore

Summary: Cora helps her mother cook pancit, a traditional Filipino noodle dish, and learns about her family's cultural heritage and traditions in the process. The book includes a glossary to help you with the Tagalog language words included in the story. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- What's your favorite food to eat with your family? Is it a food from your culture?
- What is responsibility? Share a time you demonstrated responsibility. What was your goal?

Questions After Reading:

- How does Cora's experience cooking pancit with her mother connect her to her Filipino heritage?
- Now that Cora has cooked pancit, what do you predict will happen the next time the family cooks a meal together? What jobs might Cora get to do? Why?

December: *Bo, the Brave* by Bethan Woollvin

Summary: A little girl named Bo dreams of catching a monster after her brothers tell her she is too small. On a quest to do exactly that, Bo encounters many "monsters" who aren't monsters at all, and challenge her thoughts on who the real "monsters" are. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Has anyone ever told you that you were "too little" to do something?
- What does it mean to be brave?

Questions After Reading:

- How do you think Bo's relationship with her brothers will change after this story?
- Which of the three creatures that Bo encounters on her adventure do you like the most?

January: *Fairy Science* by Ashley Spires

Summary: Esther the fairy uses her love of science to solve problems and create innovative solutions, proving that magic and science can go hand in hand. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- How does Esther use scientific principles and experimentation to solve problems and achieve her goals?
- What lessons about curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking are conveyed in the story?

Questions After Reading:

- What did Esther and her friend discover?
- What are the steps of the scientific method that Esther and her friends use?

Grade 4 continued

February: *Arnie, the Doughnut* by Laurie Keller

Summary: Arnie, a charismatic, freshly made, delicious, chocolate frosted donut with rainbow sprinkles, learns that the destiny of a donut is to be eaten. Shocked and saddened by this truth, Arnie befriends his would-be consumer and together they come up with some charming ideas for how he can avoid this misfortunate fate. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- If you were a donut, what flavor would you be?
- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?

Questions After Reading:

- What was your favorite suggestion that Arnie and Mr. Bing came up with instead of eating Arnie?
- How did Arnie's feelings change throughout the story?

Grade 5

October: *Miguel's Brave Knight* by Margarita Engle

Summary: Miguel de Cervantes, author of "Don Quixote," draws inspiration from his own life experiences and imagination to create a timeless literary masterpiece. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Describe the boy on the cover of the book. How does he look? Brave? Confident? Give me a few adjectives that describe him.
- Identify differences between the boy and the man on the front cover. Which do you think is Miguel?

Questions After Reading:

- Why does the brave knight in Miguel's dreams bring him comfort?
- How does learning to read and write impact Miguel's life?

November: *A Lady Has the Floor* by Kate Hannigan

Summary: Belva Lockwood inspired women and advocated for equality. She overcame gender barriers to become the first female lawyer to argue a case in front of the Supreme Court and the second woman to run for president of the United States, before women could vote. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Do you know who Belva Lockwood is?
- Based on the cover, who is she? Why is she important to U.S. history?
- Did women in America always have the right to vote?

Questions After Reading:

- How does Belva Lockwood challenge societal expectations and gender norms in her pursuit of justice and equality?
- How can we honor the legacy of Belva Lockwood and continue to advocate for gender equality?

December: *Skysisters* by Jan Bourdeau Waboose

Summary: Two Ojibway sisters venture off to see the SkySpirits' midnight dance and learn to treasure the silence and enjoy their sighting of the northern lights. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Have you ever heard of the Northern Lights? What do you think they are?
- What time of year does it appear to be? What are some activities you enjoy with your family in the winter?

Questions After Reading:

- Where are the sisters going?
- What does the narrator learn to enjoy?

Grade 5 continued

January: *Planting Stories, the Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpre* by Anika Aldamuy Denise

Summary: Pura Belpré, the first Latina librarian at the New York Public Library, shares her love of storytelling and introduces Latin American folktales to children in the United States. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- Do you know who Pura Belpre is?
- Based on the cover of the book, who do you think she is? What do you think she did?
- Does she seem important to the history of the United States?

Questions After Reading:

- How does Pura Belpré use storytelling to celebrate her culture and connect with children?
- What impact does Pura Belpré's work have on the representation of Latin American stories in children's literature?

February: *Juneteenth Jamboree* by Carole Boston Weatherford

Summary: Families celebrate Juneteenth, a holiday commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans, with food, music, and community festivities. [Click here to watch a Read Aloud.](#)

Questions Before Reading:

- What is Juneteenth, and why is it celebrated?
- Have you ever heard of Juneteenth?

Questions After Reading:

- How do the characters in the story honor and commemorate Juneteenth with food, music, and community gatherings?
- What are some of the details of how this community celebrated Juneteenth?