Read Aloud Tips & Tricks 2026

Thank you for volunteering for Springfield School Volunteer's Read Aloud Program! Since 1969, Springfield School Volunteers has been making an impact in 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!

Before your Read Aloud day:

- Review the summary of the book assigned for that month"
- Look at the provided sample questions for before, and after story time.
- Read the book to test out when you should use different voices, change your inflection, add pauses for suspense, or ask questions.
- Watch the videos of the books being read aloud (links included) to get some more ideas.

On your Read Aloud day:

- Arrive to the school early. This will provide extra time to check in, review the book again and maybe even have a snack while you wait for the student leader to guide you to their class. It will also ensure that the Read Aloud starts on time.
- Parking may be limited at some schools. Park in any free space, as long as it isn't marked handicapped or reserved. All school buildings are locked to prioritize the safety of our students. Please follow the instructions to be buzzed in, and report to the main office.
- Don't forget to sign the book plaque! The book is a gift from you to the class. They'll want to remember who it is from!
- Once you get settled in your classroom, ask the ***Before Reading…*** questions you reviewed, or simply 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 some of the ***After Reading…*** sample questions we've provided.

After your Read Aloud day:

- We are always open to hearing feedback on how we can improve the program! If you have any suggestions or ideas for how the program could run smoother, including thoughts on the books, please email Elyssa Parrish, Read Aloud Program Coordinator, at parrishe@springfieldpublicschools.com.
- Relax, rest, and share your positive experiences with us and others. Please know that you are a vital part of our team. 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,

Springfield School Volunteers

Read Aloud Summaries, Tips & Tricks

PreK/K

October: *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten* by Joseph Slate

Summary: It's the first day of kindergarten and Miss Bindergarten is hard at work getting the classroom ready for her twenty-six new students. Meanwhile, Adam Krupp wakes up, Brenda Heath brushes her teeth, and Christopher Beaker finds his sneaker. Miss Bindergarten puts the finishing touches on the room just in time, and the students arrive.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/eRziqhryYr0?si=gHwBDMlyyxB95Mt-

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- How did you get ready for school this year?

Questions After Reading:

- What did you learn from this story?
- What do you think your teacher did to get ready for this school year?

November: *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister

Summary: Rainbow Fish, with its iridescent scales, is the most beautiful fish in the whole ocean. But he is also vain and proud and becomes lonely over time. He eventually overcomes his pride and begins to share his scales with the other fish and discovers that sharing and friendship bring him more happiness than his beauty.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/Xchhflqj1VI?si=Dq_lhUe6Y2RYL3Nk

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you think this book is about?
- What kind of animal is on the front cover?

Questions After Reading:

- What do you share with your friends?
- How do you make friends?

December: *Llama Llama Home with Mama* by Anna Dewdney

Summary: This story, written in rhyme, is about a little llama who wakes up sick and has to stay home from school. Mama Llama takes such good care of Llama Llama that he starts to feel better by lunchtime. But the tables turn when Mama starts feeling sick and Llama Llama has to take care of her.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/2Ib6i1AL3IM?si=ekCcNv9-uile6YvD

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is going to be about?
- Why do you think Llama Llama is staying home?

Questions After Reading:

- How does Llama Llama take care of Mama? What kinds of things does he do for her?
- What is something your family does for you when you don't feel well?

January: *Froggy Gets Dressed* by Johnathan London

Summary: When Froggy wakes up and sees snow outside his window, he can't wait to get out there to hop and frolic. But in his excitement, he doesn't dress properly for the weather. Luckily, his mother is there to remind him …every time he forgets something! A scarf, a hat, a coat…so many things to remember!

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/g_Aqq5jnDDg?si=VXxgunSSKGA7g71p

Questions Before Reading

- Look at Froggy's clothes and out the window. What season do you think it is?
- What do you wear when you play in the snow?

Questions After Reading

- Why did Froggy decide to just go back to bed?
- What is your favorite thing to do in the snow?
- What is your favorite season?

PreK/K Continued

February: *Lola Plants a Garden* by Anna McQuinn
Summary: After Lola reads a book of garden poems, she wants to plant her own flower garden. She and her mommy go to the library to get books about gardening and Lola chooses her flowers. She and Mommy buy the seeds, plant the garden, and mark the rows. Lola finds it hard to wait, but at last the flowers bloom. Now it's time for a party with her friends!

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/OC7qurRN37A?si=9mNsQLYQXmolLxmC

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you think this book is about?
- What does Lola look like she is doing?

Questions After Reading:

- Do you have a garden at home? If not, what kind of garden would you plant?
- Lola had to wait for the garden to grow. What are some other things you have to wait for?

Grade 1

October: *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain

Summary: The Way I Feel is a vibrant and expressive book designed to help young readers understand and articulate their feelings. The Way I Feel helps kids understand that feelings are neither good nor bad; they simply are.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/o1mxBUXZdqY?si=_FCVDj-NK13WqKty

Questions Before Reading:

- What are feelings? Do you know any words that describe feelings?
- What kind of face is the child on the cover making? How do you think she feels?

Questions After Reading:

- Which emotion is your favorite? What are some things that make you feel that way?
- Have you ever felt any of the feelings described in the book?

November: *Corduroy* by Don Freeman

Summary: Corduroy, a stuffed teddy bear, has been sitting on a department store shelf for a long time waiting for the love of a child. When a mother won't buy him for her little girl because his overalls are missing a button, the little bear goes on a nighttime adventure - climbing escalators and exploring the furniture department - looking all over for his missing button.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/_QmUP_pC9sU?si=rQK2AMyo5TAdZzbv

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you think this story is about?
- Do you know what overalls are? Why is one strap on Corduroy's overalls not fastened?

Questions After Reading:

- Do you have a favorite stuffed animal?
- Why wouldn't the first little girl's mother buy Corduroy?

December: *The Gingerbread Man* by Karen Schmidt

Summary: A gingerbread man escapes from the oven and runs through the countryside pursued by an old man, an old woman, a little boy, three farmers, a bear, and a wolf!

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/-XQvAdK8hp8?si=NUfsEw2M1aS2zPMx

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- Have you ever made a gingerbread man?

Questions After Reading:

- How did the Gingerbread Man escape?
- How did they finally catch him?

January: *Miss Nelson is Missing!* by Henry Allard

Summary: The students in Miss Nelson's classroom are out of control! They run around the room throwing spitballs and paper airplanes. She's not able to convince the students to behave. One day Ms. Nelson doesn't show up at school – she's missing! Will the substitute teacher Ms. Viola Swamp be able to get them to behave?

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/IlyxMsqvpwA?si=sgd-RwK8rnHmocTk

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- Who do you think Miss Nelson is?

Questions After Reading:

- What did this book teach you about how we treat our teachers?
- Do you think Miss Nelson was really "missing"?

Grade 1 continued

February: *Mother Bruce* by Ryan T Higgins

Summary: Bruce is a grumpy bear that likes to keep to himself. He dislikes most things, except eggs. One day the goose eggs he's about to boil hatch and four real, live goslings come out. Bruce starts to lose his appetite, but even worse, the goslings think he's their mother! Bruce tries to convince the goslings that he's not their mother. He even tries to explain migration to get them to go south, but Bruce can't seem to rid himself of his new companions.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/syj8LhWi7k4?si=HM2SgPf5_2XlPo33

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- What type of animal is Bruce?

Questions After Reading:

- Why were the goslings following Bruce around?
- How do you think he could've gotten them to stop following him?

Grade 2

October: *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andrae Guy

Summary: Giraffes Can't Dance tells the story of Gerald, a tall and clumsy giraffe who is sad because he cannot dance like the other jungle animals. After a wise cricket helps him listen to the music of nature, Gerald discovers his own unique rhythm and learns to dance with joy and confidence.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/1a2Smau__Dk?si=DoSXiMXKpVbwNiCV

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you know about giraffes?
- Do you think giraffes really dance?

Questions After Reading:

- Who helped Gerald learn to dance? How?
- What made Gerald's dancing special?

November: *Pecan Pie Baby* by Jacqueline Woodson

Summary: All anyone wants to talk about is the new "ding-dang baby" that's on the way, and Gia is getting sick of it! If her new sibling is already such a big deal, what's going to happen to Gia's nice, cozy life with Mama once the baby is born?

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/XAdzxqVXcKo?si=-xLVMLg7MIHCaZIr

Questions Before Reading:

- Have you ever had pecan pie?
- Why do you think the book is titled Pecan Pie Baby?

Questions After Reading:

- Do you have younger siblings at home?
- What does Mama do to help Gia feel better about the new baby?

December: *The Sandwich Swap* by Her Majesty Queen Raina Al Abdullah

Summary: Lily and Salma are best friends who do everything together and share everything – except their lunch. One has a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, the other hummus on pita, and they both think the other's food looks "gross!" When they finally come out and say what they think, their friendship is pushed to its limits. The argument gets a little bit messy, but eventually they overcome their differences and embrace diversity.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/Ry4AWDz7sGc?si=8rlmnmnmeRrjOdQ_

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you think this book is about?
- What is your favorite kind of sandwich?
- Do you like things that your friends don't?

Questions After Reading:

- What did Lily and Salma learn about their differences?
- How did they make up after their argument?

January: *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* by Ibtihaj Muhammad & S. K. Ali

Summary: Muslim Olympian Ibtihaj Muhammad and S.K. Ali tell the story of sisters Asiya and Faizah on the first day of a new school year. Faizah knows that it is going to be special day for her older sister Asiya because it is her first day of hijab. She wears a hijab of beautiful blue fabric, like the ocean waving to the sky. But not everyone sees it as beautiful, and in the face of hurtful, confusing words, Faizah finds new ways to be strong.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/YLFzDfVuWUA?si=JASNJx_uL0sythWf

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- Do you know what a hijab is?

Questions After Reading:

- Why did some kids make fun of Asiya?
- How do Faizah and Asiya respond to their mean words?
- Faizah looks up to Asiya. Who do you look up to?

Grade 2 continued

February: *Ira Sleeps Over* by Bernard Weber

Summary: Ira Sleeps Over is about a young boy who is excited to be invited to his first sleepover. But he faces one big dilemma…should he bring his teddy bear to the sleepover? This heartwarming story teaches valuable lessons about friendship and being true to oneself.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/loMkdiD5PMs?si=m0HaPIwJC3Ik22gH

Questions Before Reading:

- Have you ever had a sleepover?
- Do you have a favorite stuffed animal or something else that you bring to a sleepover?

Questions After Reading:

- What is your favorite thing to do at a sleepover?
- What does Ira learn about his friend?

Grade 3

October: *The Light Within You* by Namita Moolani Mehra

Summary: Diya is excited to be going to India for Diwali, the Festival of Lights, because she'll get to spend time with Nani, her beloved grandmother, who she hasn't seen since her family moved from India. India is 7,850 miles away – a 24-hour journey! Once Diya arrives in India, she immediately feels at home. She and Nani go shopping at the bazaar and prepare for the festival. As Diya and Nani celebrate Diwali together, Diya's heart soars. But all too soon, her trip will come to an end. Nani helps Diya understand how to take some of the light and magic of Diwali with her when she leaves. There are an Author's Note, Glossary and Diwali affirmation at the back of the book that you might also want to read to the students.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/q164ug_-6l4?si=x4hDfaC8uGleY-2Z

Questions Before Reading:

- Have you ever moved to a new city or school? How did it feel?
- Have you ever heard of the Festival of Lights?
- What do you think the "light within you" means?

Questions After Reading:

- Why was Diya sad?
- How does Nani help Diya feel better about having to leave India?
- What do you think the "light within you" means now that you've heard the story?

November: *Waiting for Tomorrow* by Susan Yoon

Summary: Appa [Ah-pah (Father)] is coming home tomorrow after being away for a long time. Sisters Haejin [Heh-jin] and Hanna want to make something very special to celebrate his return. They decide to prepare his favorite treat - hotteok [huh-tuk], a brown-sugar-filled Korean pancake. But when their batter is ruined and they are out of money and ingredients, what will they do? They learn that love, and time spent together as family are what really matter.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/smkfoqih4sQ?si=5P10p1RuMUTA03k9

Questions Before Reading:

- How do you think the girls on the cover know each other? Are they sisters? Friends?
- Why do you think they are waiting for tomorrow?

Questions After Reading:

- How do Haejin and Hanna feel when their batter is ruined? Was Appa still happy even though the hotteok didn't come out perfect?
- What did the sisters learn about teamwork?

December: *Tomás and the Library Lady* by Pat Mora

Summary: Based on a true story, this book is about a Mexican American child of migrant farm workers who discovers the magic of reading during a summer in Iowa. Every summer he and his family follow the crops north from Texas to Iowa, spending long, arduous days in the fields. At night, Tomás liked to listen to Papa Grande (Grandfather) tell stories. Before long, Tomás knows all the stories by heart, so Papa Grande tells him, "There are more stories in the library." The very next day, Tomás meets the Library Lady, and a whole new world opens up for him. Be sure to share the Note About the Story at the end of the book with the students.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/dIUEjU_v3bU?si=WUPb2jGM9q7s1rP3

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you think this book will be about?
- What do you call someone who works at the library?
- Do you like going to the library?

Questions After Reading:

- What does the library lady show Tomas?
- How does Tomás become the teacher, and why do you think he likes it?
- What book would you recommend to Tomás?

Grade 3 continued

January: *The Hula Hoopin' Queen* by Thelma Lynne Godin

Summary: A spunky girl from Harlem named Kameeka is determined to defeat her rival, Jamara, so she can be the Hula Hoopin' Queen of 139th Street. As she's planning to go challenge Jamara, Mama reminds her that she has to help prepare for their neighbor Miz Adeline's birthday party. Kameeka gets distracted on her way home from the store and by the time she gets home, Miz Adeline is already there. There's no time to make a cake, but it turns out Ms. Adeline also has "the hula hoopin itch." Soon everyone at the party joins in on the fun.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/op9Bc7GWCuw?si=cZFQIn7lPsaZlBYM

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- What does it mean to be the queen (or king) of something? Do you consider yourself to be the queen or king of anything?
- Do you know how to hula hoop?

Questions After Reading:

- How would you explain what the "hula-hoopin' itch" is?
- How did Kameeka make up for not having cake? How does the mood at the party change?
- Who is the real Hula-Hoopin' Queen?

February: *Dream Big: Michael Jordan and the Pursuit of Excellence* by Deloris Jordan

Summary: Long before he became an All-Star professional basketball player, Michael Jordan imagined winning an Olympic gold medal, and with dedication and perseverance, that's exactly what he did. Written by Michael's mother and illustrated by Barry Root, this heartwarming picture book gives a rare glimpse into a sports hero's childhood, emphasizing the role that good values played in his success.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/108Gd7MSJGg?si=KuPc025pje1wy4zV

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover, what do you think this book is about?
- Have you ever had to practice something hard to get better at it?
- Do you know who Michael Jordan is?

Questions After Reading:

- What was one thing Michael's mom taught him? What do you think she meant when she said, "dreaming is for dreamers"?
- What do you want to be when you grow up? What are some small steps you can take now to reach your own big dreams?

Grade 4

October: *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires

Summary: A creative young girl has a wonderful idea. "She is going to make the most MAGNIFICENT thing! She knows just how it will look. She knows just how it will work. All she has to do is make it, and she makes things all the time. Easy-peasy!" But making her magnificent thing is anything but easy! The girl tries and fails repeatedly. Eventually, the girl gets really mad. She is so mad, in fact, that she quits. But her assistant (her dog) convinces her to take a walk, and she comes back to her project with renewed enthusiasm and manages to get it just right.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/yt_GmmOx06Y?si=-t-E3C0Q2UeBoikC

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you see on the cover?
- Have you ever tried to build or make anything?

Questions After Reading:

- What makes the little girl quit on her project?
- How does her dog help her get it right?
- Why is it important not to give up?

November: *Too Much Glue* by Jason Lefebvre

Summary: In art class one day, Matty decides to make the most fantastic glue project ever, with a super-special ingredient – himself! Ignoring his teacher's warnings, Matty bellyflops onto the glue-covered table, rolls all around in the sequins and glitter, and encounters an unexpected glitch. When he tries to get up, he boings right back into the slippery, sticky mess! Matty's friends try some yarn lassoes and a gigantic tow truck, the school nurse dabs at Matty – but each attempt only makes things worse! Finally, Matty's dad walks in, peels him off the table, and brings him home. Will Matty be a half-boy, half-art project forever, or will he finally make his masterpiece?

Watch Read Aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lSKUMy1980&list=PLVkRno2M8Jkpso5VkXR32GK8nlBBEygCa&index=12

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you see on the cover? What do you think this book will be about?
- What usually happens when you use too much glue?

Questions After Reading:

- What would you have done to try to get Matty unstuck? Do you think it would work?
- Why do you think Matty's dad wasn't mad when he saw Matty?
- Did you notice anything funny about the principal's note (his name)?

December: *Carla and the Christmas Cornbread* by Carla Hall

Summary: Christmas is Carla's favorite holiday of the year. She goes to her grandparents' house and eats grandma's special recipe—a perfectly delicious cornbread. She listens to her grandpa Doc's marvelous stories about traveling the world. And, best of all, she spends lots of time with her family. But when Carla accidentally takes a bite out of Santa's sugar cookie, she thinks she's ruined Christmas. How will Santa know to stop at their house if they don't leave him a midnight snack? With her grandmother's help, Carla comes up with a plan, but will it be enough to save Christmas?

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/91I44tXvCOk?si=yMDyDwsxaPqo2MgZ

Questions Before Reading:

- Do you have a favorite holiday?
- Have you ever eaten cornbread?
- What is your favorite holiday food?

Questions After Reading:

- How do you think Carla felt when Granny helped her instead of getting mad?
- If you could leave Santa any kind of snack, what would you leave? Why?

Grade 4 continued

January: *Hello Lighthouse* by Sophie Blackall

Summary: This book tells the story of a lighthouse "built to last forever" that has stood for generations, guiding ships safely home from the sea. Set in the present day, the story follows the lighthouse's last keeper and his family as they go about their daily lives - tending the light, keeping the lighthouse in working order, and watching the changing world around them. Eventually, the lighthouse is modernized, and its keeper is no longer needed. Although the way lighthouses operate changes over time, the lighthouse remains a lasting symbol of guidance, safety, and home. The book reminds us that while roles and ways of doing things may change, their importance can live on in our memories.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/pOI-CIWW9sc?si=OKEPGaApqwSYevsq

Questions Before Reading:

- Have you ever visited a lighthouse?
- Do you know what lighthouses are for?
- What do you think this book is about?

Questions After Reading:

- What are some of the changes the lighthouse has seen over time?
- How do you think the keeper and his wife felt when they had to move away because a machine took over?

February: *My Rotten, Redheaded Older Brother* by Patricia Polacco

Summary: There's nothing worse than a rotten red-headed older brother! Patricia's brother Richard can run the fastest, climb the highest, spit the farthest, and still smile his extra-rotten, greeny-toothed, weasel-eyed grin. But when little Patricia wishes on a shooting star that she could do something - anything - to show him up, she finds out just what wishes - and rotten redheaded older brothers - can really do.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/ogoEpqfdVaw?si=18QO7OHrp2PYrKpW

Questions Before Reading:

- Do you have an older brother or sister?
- Have you ever felt like someone else was better at everything than you were? How did it make you feel?

Questions After Reading:

- Why does Patricia think her brother is rotten?
- What does Patricia wish for?
- How does Richard's behavior change when Tricia gets hurt? How did that change their relationship?

Grade 5

October: *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkinson

Summary: Clara, a young slave girl and seamstress, dreams of freedom—for herself and her family and friends. When she overhears a conversation about the Underground Railroad, she has a flash of inspiration. Using scraps of cloth and scraps of information gathered from other slaves, she fashions a map that the master will never recognize.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/T6iWHhBpstA?si=vDijzIpeIAgjouoc

Questions Before Reading:

- What do you think this book is going to be about?
- Do you know anyone who sews?
- Do you know how you make a quilt?

Questions After Reading:

- How does learning to sew change Clara's life on the plantation?
- Could Clara have made the quilt without the help of others? How does Clara's quilt help herself and others escape?
- Why do you think Clara decided to leave the quilt at Home Plantation?

November: *The Rooster Who Would Not Keep Quiet!* by Carmen Agra Deedy

Summary: La Paz is a happy, but noisy village. A little peace and quiet would make it just right. So, the villagers fire their mayor and elect the bossy Don Pepe who promises peace and quiet. Before long, singing of any kind is outlawed. Even the teakettle is afraid to whistle! But there is one noisy rooster who doesn't give two mangos about this mayor's silly rules. Instead, he does what roosters were born to do.

Watch Read Aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9m1Ui-3Nt_4&list=PLVkRno2M8JkpsoSVkXR32GK8nIBBEygCa&index=9

Questions Before Reading:

- What sound does a rooster make?
- We know that at times it can be too noisy, but do you think it can be too quiet?

Questions After Reading:

- How does Don Pepe get the town of La Paz to be quiet?
- How did the rooster show bravery?
- Why is it important to speak up for what you believe in?

December: *Getting to Know Ruben Plotnick* by Roz Rosenbluth

Summary: David is excited that Ruben is coming to his house, but worried about how he will react when he meets Grandma Rosie, who suffers from dementia and often says and does unexpected things. Will Ruben make jokes about her to their classmates? Will he imitate her whispery voice? What if Grandma Rosie suddenly wants to dance? This heartwarming story of senility and school-age embarrassment reveals the importance of looking beneath the surface to really get to know someone.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/hGpFUuJ6MyI?si=JVlCbZP3H0kszzb9

Questions Before Reading:

- Looking at the cover art, who do you think Ruben Plotnick is?
- What kind of personality might Ruben have?

Questions After Reading:

- How does Ruben react to David's unpredictable Grandma?
- At the beginning of the book, David thinks Ruben is just a wacky joker. How does his opinion of him change by the end of the book?
- The main lesson in this story is about 'looking beneath the surface' to really get to know someone. What does that mean to you?

Grade 5 continued

January: *No Small Potatoes: Junius G. Groves and His Kingdom in Kansas* by Tonya Bolden

Summary: This is the biographical story about Junius G. Groves, who came from humble beginnings. He was born into slavery in the Bluegrass State, but freedom came when he was still a young man. Junius intended to make a name for himself. He walked west and stopped in Kansas. Working for a pittance on a small potato farm was no reason to feel sorry for himself, especially when he's made foreman. But Junius dreamed of owning his own farm, so he did the next best thing. He rented the land and worked hard! As he built his empire, he also built a family, and he built them both on tons and tons of potatoes. He never quit working hard, even as the naysayers doubted him. In time, he had five hundred acres and a mansion to call his own, and he was declared the Potato King of the World.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/4gHGpH2eQx0?si=7-EDlmOFIsSLJLRo

Questions Before Reading:

- Do you know who Junius G. Groves is?
- How many potatoes do you think he grew to have a potato kingdom?

Questions After Reading:

- After hearing the story, what do you think the term "no small potatoes" means?
- How did Junius come to own his own farm?
- Junius didn't just build wealth for himself; he built things to help the community. Do you think it is important to help others if you become successful?
- What big goal or dream do you have?

February: *The Girl with a Mind for Math by Julia Finley Mosca*

Summary: Written in rhyme, this biographical story introduces us to Raye Montague—the hidden mastermind who made waves in the U.S. Navy! After touring a German submarine in the early 1940s, young Raye set her sights on becoming an engineer. Little did she know sexism and racial inequality would challenge that dream every step of the way, even keeping her greatest career accomplishment a secret for decades. Through it all, the gifted mathematician persisted—finally gaining her well-deserved title in history: a pioneer who changed the course of ship design forever.

Watch Read Aloud: https://youtu.be/maBiBjirKwk?si=NE4XPQJD_GohUzC0

Questions Before Reading:

- Do you know who Raye Montague is?
- What does it mean to have a "mind for math"?

Questions After Reading:

- How did Raye respond to unfair treatment instead of giving up?
- If someone doubts what you can do, should you give up? Why not? What should you do?
- What can we learn from Raye's perseverance and hard work? She said, "Aim for the stars. At the very least, you'll land on the moon." What does that quote mean to you?