

UEL READING TIPS



Supporting your child

In the Upper Elementary years, children are expanding their reading abilities in remarkable ways. They are moving beyond decoding to develop stronger comprehension, critical thinking, and personal reading preferences. At this stage, daily reading continues to be one of the most powerful supports you can offer.

- Encourage your child to read independently, while making time to read together or discuss books, strengthens vocabulary, empathy, and the ability to understand increasingly complex ideas.
- Offer a wide range of texts, fiction, nonfiction, biographies, poetry, and topics that tap into their curiosity, and allow your child to choose what interests them most.
- Consistency is key: even 15–20 minutes a day builds stamina and confidence.
- Keep the experience positive by celebrating effort, modeling your own reading habits, and supporting exploration rather than focusing on levels or speed.

The goal is to nurture a thoughtful, motivated reader who discovers books as a source of knowledge, imagination, and joy.

Create a Special Reading Space



This winter break, have your child create their very own reading space in a room of your home. Make it comfortable, inspiring, and enjoyable. It can be a tent or simply a pillow in the corner...having a dedicated space to read encourages children to dive into a good book!



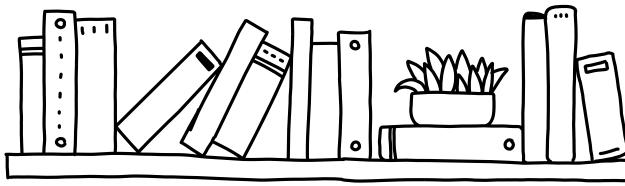
Send us a Photo

Email a photo of your child in their reading space over break. They can share their reading spaces with the class once we return to school.



How to Find Good Books

- **Visit the Library:** Take a trip to the local library and guide your child to topics you know they are interested in- (ex: magnets, dinosaurs, baby animals)
- **Do a Genre Survey:** Read a few books from a variety of genres to see what your child connects with and to show them there are all kinds of books to explore!
- **Find a Series:** Often times finding a good book is the most challenging part, reading books from a series takes this struggle out of the equation.
- Visit WhatShouldIReadNext.com for more ideas



SUGGESTED UEL READING

Don't know where to start? Here are some ideas.

Beautiful Picture Books

- The Book of Mistakes, Corrinna Luyken
- To See Clearly: A Portrait of David Hockney
- The Apartment: A Century of Russian History
- Will's Words: How William Shakespeare Changes the Way You Talk, Jane Suttecliff
- The Universe in You: A Microscopic Journey, Jason Chin
- Coming Home: A Hopi Resistance Story, Mavasta Honyouyi

Contemporary Fiction With Strong Themes

- Wonder, R.J. Palacio: kindness, perspective-taking, moral development
- The Wild Robot, Peter Brown: technology, nature, and philosophical questions
- Frindle, Andrew Clements: creativity, language, and student agency
- When You Trap a Tiger, Tae Keller: folklore, healing, and intergenerational storytelling

High-Interest Adventure & Fantasy

- Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Rick Riordan: mythology, humor, fast pace
- I Survived (series), Lauren Tarshis: historical survival stories; motivating for reluctant readers
- Keeper of the Lost Cities, Shannon Messenger: rich world-building, friendship
- The Mysterious Benedict Society, Trenton Lee Stewart: puzzles, teamwork, moral choices

Historical Fiction

- The War That Saved My Life, Kimberly Brubaker Bradley: resilience, WWII history
- Sarah, Plain and Tall, Patricia MacLachlan: family, belonging, pioneer life
- My Side of the Mountain, Jean Craighead George: survival, independence, nature

Realistic Fiction and Growing-Up Stories

- Harbor Me, Jacqueline Woodson: voice, belonging, social awareness
- The One and Only Ivan, Katherine Applegate: empathy, animal welfare
- Counting by 7s, Holly Goldberg Sloan: identity, giftedness, healing
- The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise, Dan Gemeinhart: grief, hope, personal growth

Mysteries and Logic-Friendly Reads

- The Westing Game, Ellen Raskin: logic, inference, complex puzzles
- A to Z Mysteries (upper-level titles), Ron Roy: accessible mystery for emerging UE readers
- Enola Holmes (younger editions), Nancy Springer: Victorian-era sleuthing
- The Parker Inheritance, Varian Johnson: history, codes, social justice

Nonfiction for the Inquiring Mind

- I Survived True Stories (nonfiction companion series): real accounts of historical events
- The Mysteries of the Universe, Will Gater: cosmic education with stunning visuals
- The Way Things Work Now, David Macaulay: machines, physics, engineering concepts
- How We Got To Now (young readers edition), Steven Johnson: innovation and human progress

Graphic Novels (High Engagement, High Literacy Value)

- New Kid, Jerry Craft: belonging, identity, social dynamics
- Amulet (series), Kazu Kibuishi: fantasy with strong visual storytelling
- Sunny Side Up (series), Jennifer Holm: emotional growth and family themes
- Sherlock Bones, Renée Treml: mystery + humor in a graphic novel format

Poetry and Short-Form Literature

- Where the Sidewalk Ends, Shel Silverstein: humor, imagination, wordplay
- Brown Girl Dreaming, Jacqueline Woodson: lyrical memoir exploring identity
- Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices, Paul Fleischman: collaborative reading and rhythm
- A Hurricane Is, Calef Brown: metaphor and descriptive language