


Read your way
TO THE BALLPARK





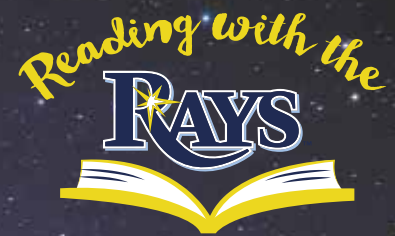
The importance of literacy

 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 are excited to celebrate the theme of adventure in the 17th annual Read Your Way to the Ballpark summer reading program!

Reading with the Rays: Read Your Way to the Ballpark program



The crack of the bat, the smell of hot dogs and popcorn and the sound of children reading mark the beginning of summer reading season!

Summer is here, and it is time to sit down with a good book, graphic novel, magazine or newspaper and enjoy watching our Tampa Bay Rays in action. Once again, the Rays, Tampa Bay-area libraries, 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.



Suncoast Credit Union

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.

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!



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. Martin

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 Smriti Prasad-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

THE →

ADVENTURE →

BEGINS →

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.

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.



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 fuzziest 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 Whattheluffalus” 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.



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
Julieta 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

Pages & Co. Series:
The Bookwanderers
by Anna James



Planet Earth is Blue
by Nicole Panteleakos
Power Forward by Hena Khan
Secondhand Dogs by Carolyn Crimi
Shirley & Jamila Save Their Summer
by Gillian Goerz
Simon B. Rhyming 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

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 Press
Book Summary: Amazon;
Lovable Lucy series website



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.

Did you know?

Twenty-six years ago, the Tampa Bay Rays adventure began when the team announced it would host Spring Training in St. Petersburg. On May 7, 1998, they became the first team in the "modern era" to host spring training in their home city.

The Area 51 Files by Julie Buxbaum

When Sky Patel-Baum is sent to live with her mysterious uncle, she didn't imagine she'd end up here: Area 51. A top-secret military base with a bajillion rules and so classified not even the president knows its secrets. And, it turns out, the place is full of aliens! As Sky sets out to explore her extraordinary new home with her pizza-obsessed pet hedgehog Spike, she meets her otherworldly next-door neighbor Elvis and his fluffy pup, Pickles. But something mysterious is afoot in Area 51. Some of the aliens have gone missing... at the exact same time Sky arrived. New best friends Sky, Elvis, Spike and Pickles try to crack the case, but the clock is ticking

Grades: 3-7
Publisher: Delacorte Press
Book Summary: Amazon



Mr. Tickety-Toc Clock: Goodnight Mr. Clock by Davon Miller

The day is ending and Mr. Tickety-Toc Clock is going to bed. When he accidentally sets his alarm clock at the wrong time he'll do anything so he can get some sleep. Kids will love this book as they learn the importance of getting a good night's sleep in a fun way! Author Davon Miller, a St. Petersburg, Florida, native, is a young, published children's author and illustrator best known for his children's book series titled Mr. Tickety-Toc Clock. Read more about Miller at RaysBaseball.com/Reading.

Grades: K-2
Publisher: CreateSpace Independent
Publishing Platform
Book Summary: Amazon



Reading fun

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.



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.

WORD SEARCH

Find these fun baseball words in the puzzle below

BATS	THIRD	FOUL	PRACTICE	WALK
BALLPARK	CATCHER	BALL	DOUBLE	ASSIST
OUTFIELD	BULLPEN	HOMERUN	GROUNDOUT	TRIPLE
INFIELD	BASE	STRIKEOUT	DEFENSE	
FIRST	HIT	SHUTOUT	OFFENSE	
SECOND	FLYBALL	RAYS	SHORT STOP	

L C Z S M Y O S D D I V T V W I U Q M S
 D E F N C A C L L G L S T R I K E O U T
 L H W Q J A R Z E C R E Z C D R B C I B
 K R A P L L A B I I N T I I Z A B A J O
 O S O E X N J E F C Y L U F B Y N Z T F
 R Z T M F Z S T N S D D D O T S M I O F
 W I G G H N R P I Q H L Z Z D U I W A Q
 H G T R E I R H P X E U K E Y N O J J F
 E P B F P A C J G Z J E T J Y N U S Q D
 S H F L C S A K E L J J U O U R I O R B
 N O E T Y S T T V S L M H R U J W H R B
 E N I J A I C R X O V A E T N T J Z B G
 F C Q N L S H R Y D W M B N H B I U L H
 E O H F I T E S E C O N D Y A I L I L R
 D Z F P U M R W H H O T G T L L R L A X
 T I H E S A B S A N G F S V P F J D B V
 E L B U O D C C R L C H W E P R R U L P
 S H O R T S T O P C K U N O I X L Q U L
 E N V F H D T Y J I H W H P R E G Q O I
 T C Q I O S V X Z Z X R Z B J L G M F U

KEEPING UP WITH THE TIMES

Don't forget, you can keep up with the Rays games and chart your favorite players' statistics by reading the Tampa Bay Times every day. Reading the Times digital edition is a great way to practice reading every day.

Charlotte County Library System

Website: charlottecountyfl.com
 Phone: 941-625-6470

Pasco County Library Cooperative

Website: pascolibraries.org
 Phone: 727-861-3040

Citrus County Library System

Website: citruslibraries.org
 Phone: 352-795-3716

Pinellas Public Library Cooperative

Website: pplc.us
 Phone: 727-441-8408

Hernando County Public Library System

Website: hernandocountylibrary.us
 Phone: 352-754-4043

Polk County Library Cooperative

Website: mypclc.org
 Phone: 863-834-4280

Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperative

Website: hcplc.org
 Phone: 813-273-3652

Sarasota County Library System

Website: sarasotacountylibraries.org
 Phone: 941-861-1110

New Port Richey Public Library

Website: nprlibrary.org
 Phone: 727-853-1267

Osceola Library System

Website: osceolalibrary.org
 Phone: 407-742-8888



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 X: [x.com/TBTimesNIE](https://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.

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Florida Standards

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; ELA.K5.V.1.3LAFS.68.RI.4.10; LAFS.68.SL.1.1; LAFS.68.SL.1.2; LAFS.68.SL.1.3; 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



READING WITH THE RAYS MAKES SUMMER READING A HIT!



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!



PROUD PARTNER OF THE TAMPA BAY RAYS

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

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