

## Teach Your Children to Pick Their Own Books

BEING able to choose motivates children to read more, develop more skills and enjoy reading. What is a good mix of choice and guidance?

1. Step back and let them try to choose something. For example, if your child wants to read a book about monsters, you might say something like, "I'm not sure a book about monsters is a good fit, but what do you think?"
2. If you think a book is not right for your child, give the reasons why. For example, "The last time you read a book on monsters, you had nightmares. Do you remember how scared you were? I don't want that to happen to you again."
3. If you do not think the book is appropriate, give two good options. For example, "You can't have the monster book. Choose one of these instead."  
In addition to reading skills, reading choice benefits their lives in general as it provides practice in making thoughtful, responsible choices.

## Surprising (and Tearless) Ways to Develop Your Child's Reading Comprehension Skills

by Robin Glaser, Children's Librarian

HAS a teacher told you that your child is not reading at grade level? If your child is reading at level, would you still like to develop her/his skills? Increasing a child's reading level is often frustrating for parents and children. However, there are excellent, tearless ways to develop reading comprehension.

After the first grade is a good time to start allowing children to choose their own books — with your guidance.

Children read more when they see other people reading. Do you read in your child's presence? Family read-alouds are a good choice to model the fun of reading, expand vocabulary and develop comprehension skills.

Reading a variety of materials is essential to fostering literacy growth. After finding a book they like on grade level, let them choose a book they want to read even if it is below grade level or above it. When a child is interested in reading a book above grade level, the motivation often compensates for any reading difficulties. Reading below level increases reading speed and fluency.

You may be surprised as to what is included in effective reading material. Any continuous text develops reading skills. This includes comics, gaming manuals, fiction and nonfiction, magazines and newspapers. Yes, you read that correctly: Gaming manuals are effective reading material.

What about comic books and graphic novels? Yes, comic books are real reading. Since the 1940s, studies have shown that reading comic books has the same benefits as reading novels.

In 2020, a graphic novel won the John Newbery Medal for the most outstanding contribution to children's literature.

Here is another surprise: audiobooks help develop reading skills, including decoding and comprehension. Also, like reading, they promote well-being and emotional intelligence.

Studies consistently show that students learn more when they enjoy what they read whether it is at, below or above grade level. They are more likely to remember new words and develop deeper comprehension skills. Reading enjoyment predicts reading success.



## ADVENTURE — BEGINS AT — YOUR LIBRARY™

# Library Connections

The MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY Newsletter

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## Summer Library Celebration: Fostering a Love of Reading and Learning

by Marcus Mitchell, Public Relations Officer

THE Mobile Public Library invites the community to join us for our annual Summer Library Celebration. As we gear up for another exciting season of literacy and learning, we are thrilled to offer a diverse array of programs and activities aimed at encouraging reading and exploration among individuals of all ages.

At the heart of our mission is a commitment to support literacy and foster a love of reading within our community. With the Summer Library Celebration, we aim to provide valuable resources and opportunities for school-age children, teens and adults to continue their reading journey throughout the summer months.

Each summer, the Mobile Public Library hosts a wide range of engaging programs and activities designed to appeal to readers of all interests and backgrounds. From lively storytimes for young children to thought-provoking book clubs for adults, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Additionally, we offer workshops, special events and other interactive experiences that spark curiosity

and inspire a lifelong love of learning.

Join us for a different special event each week throughout June and July. We'll feature juggler Ron Anglin, Wayne Curtis and the Mobile Alabama Africatown Drummers, puppeteer David Stephens, Mobile Environmental Studies Center's Wildlife of Mobile Road Show, the Excelsior Band and storyteller

Deborah Ferguson.

As we prepare for the summer, we are excited to announce our partnership with community-minded businesses who share our commitment to literacy and education. Through their support, we will be able to enhance our offerings and reach even more members of our diverse community. With additional books, materials and incentives, we aim to inspire our patrons to continue reading and learning outside the classroom environment.

Join us for another summer of reading, learning and exploration. Together, let's inspire a lifelong love of reading and learning in Mobile, and beyond.

For more information about our Summer Library Celebration and upcoming programs, please visit [www.mobilepubliclibrary.org](http://www.mobilepubliclibrary.org) or contact us at 251-545-3366.



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Our mission is to support literacy and connect our community.

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## Success at the Friends of the Mobile Public Library Book Sale

WE extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of you who participated in the annual Friends Book Sale. This year, 118 volunteers from our community spent over 2,000 total hours setting up the sale, tallying books at the cash registers and helping people

bring their new books to their cars. Book sales not only helped us raise vital funds but also contributed to spreading knowledge, fostering literacy and nurturing a love for reading in our community. We hope to see you next spring!

# Fun at the Gulf Coast Children's Book Festival

by Cherold Rhodes, Youth & Children's Services



**W**E love books! And what could be better than sharing books with children? Staff from the Mobile Public Library and the Bookmobile were privileged to participate in The Gulf Coast Children's Book Festival with the Boys & Girls Clubs of South Alabama on April 25 at The Grounds. The festival is an eagerly anticipated annual event to get books into the hands of young readers and inspire a lifelong love of reading. Established in 2019 as part of the Read Learn Achieve Initiative of the Boys & Girls Clubs of South Alabama, the festival complements Mobile Public Library's mission to support literacy and connect our community and is free for children in kindergarten through

fifth grade. The festival features children's book authors, live book readings, exhibitors, and free books for teachers, students and entire classrooms. Every child who attended received a free drawstring bag with two books from the organizers.

Staff from Mobile Public Library attended and sponsored one of the storyteller stages. They shared live book readings and stories from a story stage, played games with books as prizes, and introduced students to the Bookmobile and library services. Students and teachers were all invited to board and browse the Bookmobile and get a Mobile Public Library card.

We are grateful to have collaborated with the Boys & Girls Clubs of South Alabama to inspire a love of reading in our community's youth.

# Juneteenth Celebration with Mobile African American Genealogical & Historical Society (MAAGHS)

by Elizabeth Theris-Boone, Local History & Genealogy Manager

**O**N Saturday, June 22, at 10 a.m., join us at the Ben May Main Library with MAAGHS President Mary Jones-Fitts for an in-depth genealogy workshop focusing on using plantation and business records to research your African American ancestors. Jones-Fitts is a professional genealogist, lecturer and instructor, with over 40 years of experience, who has traced her ancestry back to Guinea, Africa, and whose passion is assisting others in learning more about the individuals whose lives and experiences paved the way for their descendants and the lives

they lead today.

This workshop will be presented in-person, as well as virtually via Zoom and Facebook Live on the Mobile Public Library Local History & Genealogy page. Registration is required, for in-person and Zoom attendance. Please email Elizabeth Theris-Boone at [etheris@mplonline.org](mailto:etheris@mplonline.org) or call 251-494-2172 to register and indicate whether you plan to attend in-person or virtually.

After the workshop, and in recognition of Juneteenth, we will have a special lecture, "The Legends of Africatown," presented by Robert Battles,

1st Congressional District representative of the Black Heritage Council. Battles will discuss the history of the Clotilda, the last American slave ship, and highlight its importance to the history of Mobile, to Africatown, and to many of Africatown's residents whose families trace connections to the 109 enslaved survivors of the Clotilda's voyage from Africa to Mobile in 1860. This special presentation will start at 12:30 p.m. and is limited to in-person attendees. Light refreshments will be served, and Battles will have a selection of African artifacts on display.

# Mobile Literary Festival: A Day for Writers

by Jodie Cain Smith, Mobile Literary Festival Founder

**A**CCOMPLISHED and aspiring writers of all genres gathered at the 2024 Mobile Literary Festival held on March 23 in historic downtown Mobile.

This free festival kept attendees entertained while exploring how to apply theatrical elements to their writing. Volunteer faculty members — all published authors and industry experts — Carrie Dalby, Candice Marley Conner, Michael Strecker, Jason Stuart, Amy Delcambre, Carolyn Haines, Mandy Haynes, Lena Payton Webb, Jodie Cain Smith, and Cynthia Eden delved into setting, plotting, marketing and book-



to-script adaptations.

Writing Away Refuge's (WAR) Pitch War rounded out our program offerings with what every writer looking to publish wants and needs: feedback on their pitches. Literary agent Terri Wolf and WAR faculty Joyce Scarbrough gave feedback on over 30 pitches.

A favorite at the annual festival is the Brown Bag Lunch & Listen. Sue Brannan Walker and her poets from

Negative Capability Press and Mobile Botanical Gardens did not disappoint this year, performing thought-provoking,



emotional and humorous poems to a packed audience.

Attendees shopped at The Haunted Book Shop's popup shop, featuring area author favorites, national bestsellers, books about the craft of writing, and children's books.

Festival founder Jodie Cain Smith stated, "The Mobile Literary Festival strives to bring Mobile's vast literary community together for one day of learning, sharing ideas and celebration. Every year, I walk away with renewed vigor for my own writing and a reminder of the thriving literary community we have here on the Gulf Coast."

Now heading into its seventh year, the Mobile Literary Festival happens each March, thanks to the Mobile Public Library, The Haunted Book Shop and Mobile Writers' Guild. To receive updates for the 2025 festival, visit and join the Mobile Literary Festival's Facebook page.

# Tackle Our Summer Reading Challenge Online This Year

**R**EAD 400 minutes (about six-and-a-half hours.) this summer to receive a prize and entries into the grand prize drawings for a camping equipment bundle and family movie packs. Minutes can be tracked on our paper logs, as always, but you also have the option of using the Beanstack app. Just download the Branstack app from the Apple App Store or Google Play to get started.

We have challenges running year-round on Beanstack, but our Summer Reading Challenge is the biggest one of the year. The grand prize camping bundle includes folding chairs, a camp table, two sleeping bags, two EVA sleeping mats and a battery-powered fan with built-in tent light.

You can also help your kids get a head start in reading by taking part in the ongoing "1,000 Books Before Kindergarten" challenge. Children who complete the challenge receive a medal and certificate to celebrate their achievement. If the current challenges aren't your cup of tea, there's always a new challenge in the works.

Beanstack is great for more than just our regular reading challenges. Do you find yourself browsing titles and wondering whether you've read something? You can easily log what you're reading by scanning the ISBN barcode with your phone and later search your reading log in the app to see what you've read already.