

12+ Awesome Novels to Read Aloud with Kids



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Read these aloud!

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I read with my son every night at bedtime, and I have some serious opinions about what makes for a great kids' book. Compelling story? For sure. Great characters? Definitely. And there's also a certain *je ne c'est qu'oi* that makes a book truly awesome to read out loud. A flow of words, a natural progression of dialog, and of course grand opportunities for voices!

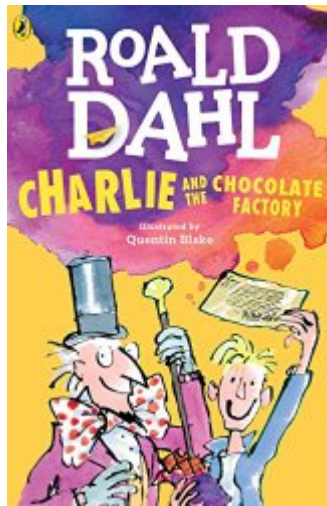
Beginning on the next page is a list of the books my six-year-old and I have most loved together so far, and that I truly loved reading aloud.

Who am I?

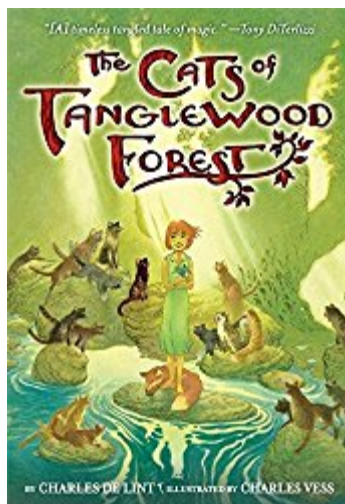
My name is [Kim Werker](#). I write books about creativity and making stuff, and generally behave like a camp counselor for grownups. You can read more about me [here](#), and see what I'm currently up to [here](#).

Feel free to pass this PDF along to anyone you think will enjoy it!

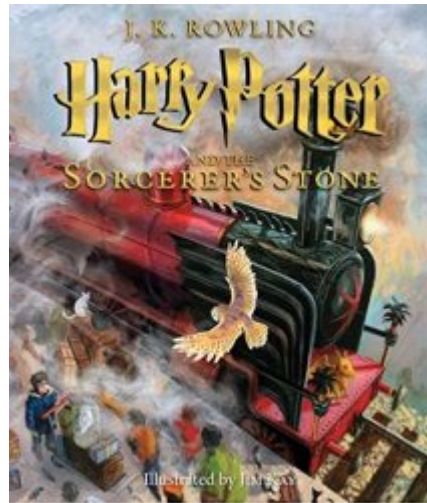
(I've used Amazon affiliate links here; I'll be paid some change if you decide to make a purchase after clicking.)



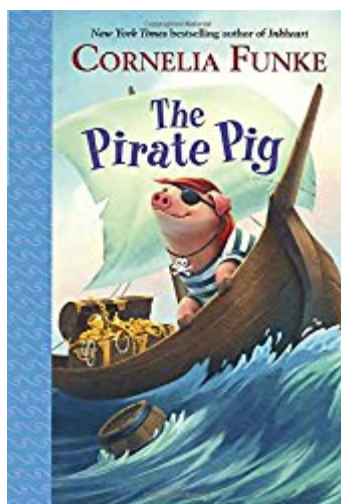
Roald Dahl is perhaps the reigning master of writing books that are meant to be read aloud. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is one that's accessible even to the youngest children, and it affords a fabulous opportunity to discuss what it is to be poor, and kind, and selfish, and greedy.



The Cats of Tanglewood Forest, by Charles de Lint is a bit more sophisticated and subtle than some of the other novels on this list, and I think a fair amount of the story went over my son's head. That said, he thoroughly enjoyed it. There are heavy themes of death and resurrection, and I found the book to be absolutely stunning.



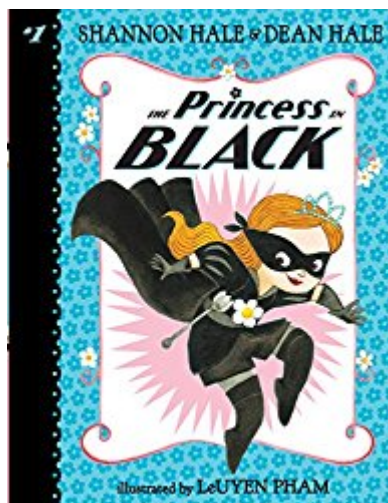
No list would be complete without Harry Potter, and I highly recommend the illustrated versions. *The Philosopher's Stone* was released in the fall of 2015 and *The Chamber of Secrets* a year later. I hope they keep to a yearly release schedule, so my kid's maturity level can keep pace as the stories get more intense.



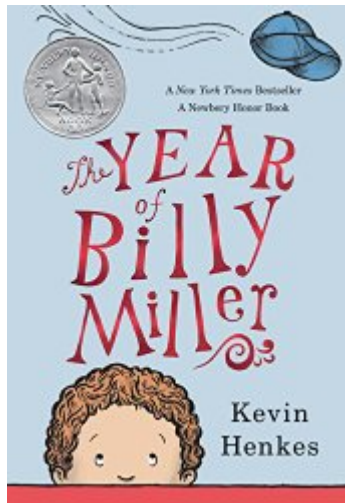
This is a short one, and a sweet one. *The Pirate Pig* was our introduction to Cornelia Funke's writing, and though I thought it was merely okay, the kid loved it and insisted we read it again immediately. Three times over.



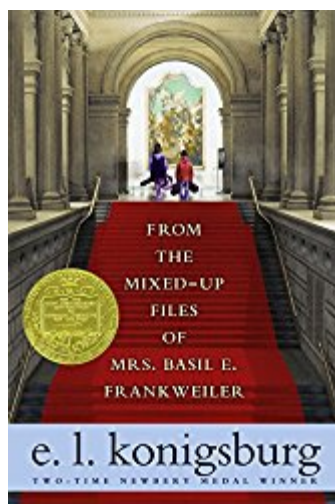
Though the story centres on travel through space and time – a concept wholly over the heads of most primary-grade children, let alone preschoolers – *Fortunately the Milk*, by Neil Gaiman is so delightful, and so amenable to reading silly voices, that even if half the story is lost to confusion it's still super fun to read aloud.



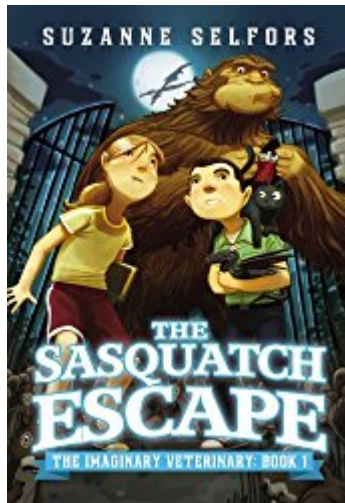
There are several books in the *Princess in Black* series about a frilly princess who hides a monster-fighting alter ego. These are short books relative to most others on this list, but they're terrific. My son loves them.



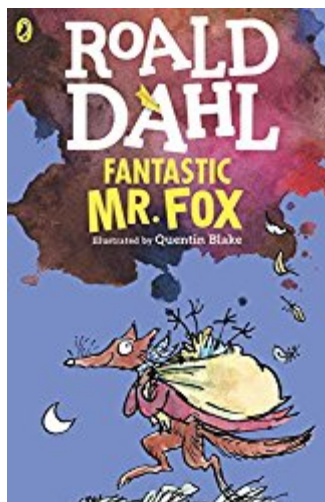
The Year of Billy Miller, by Kevin Henkes, is about Billy's time in second grade. It's a lovely family portrait that I as a parent could relate to as much as my son could as a kid. It's a quiet book about normal life, and it's great for sparking conversation about the everyday ups and downs of school and friends and work and family.



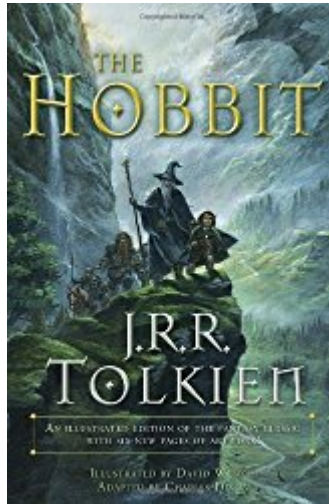
I loved *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* as a kid growing up in New York City, and started thinking about it when I took the kid to Manhattan for a few days last spring – and to his first major art museum (the MOMA, not the Met). We told our neighbour about our trip after we returned home, and he thought the same thing. The next day he came over with a copy of this book, and the kid *loved it*.



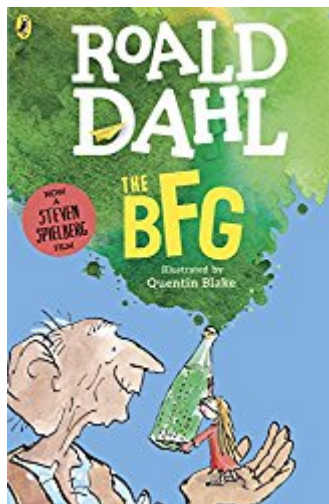
The six-book **Imaginary Veterinary** series by Suzanne Selfors is truly outstanding, and I don't know why it's not a more prominently popular series. The protagonists become great friends, and the books are full of humour, fantasy, and great problem solving. Especially recommended for kids who aren't ready to be scared.



This one is a true delight to read aloud, and provides a solid invitation to discuss guns. Not that we all want to discuss guns with our kids, but when I discovered the role the farmers' shotgun plays in this story, I decided it was time to discuss the power of those weapons. Also, we laughed a lot through this story.

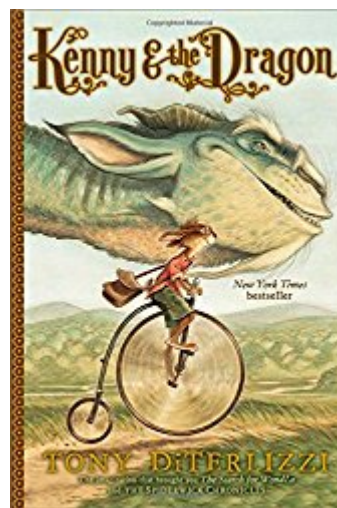
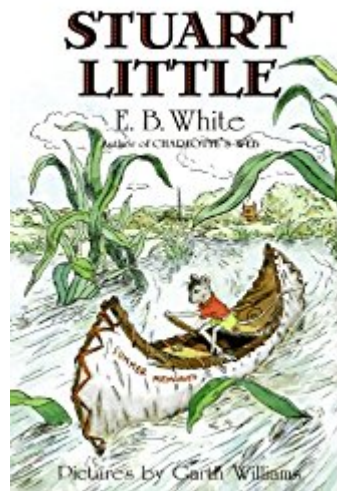
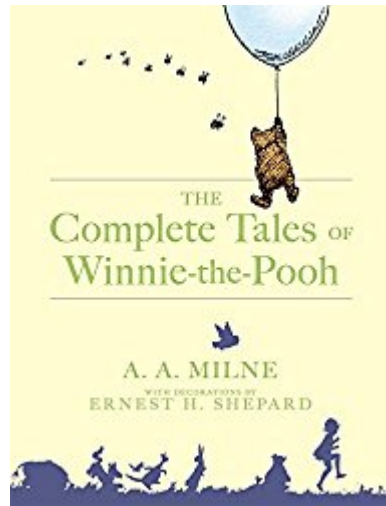


This one is an exception, because *The Hobbit* is actually a total slog to read aloud. The book could have a third of its text cut out without affecting the story at all. But it's saved by the parts with the Gollum, which are truly inspired to read aloud. And if you're familiar with the story you can skip parts as you read.



Ok, no *this* is the best Roald Dahl book to read aloud. The fantastical vocabulary of the Big Friendly Giant is *the best*, and this was the first novel to elicit uncontrollable giggling from the kid. I suspect that when he gets older, he may consider this one of the first books he truly loved.

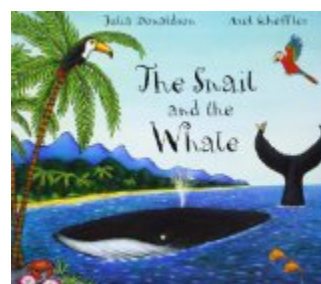
And
these!



Plus, here
are some
awesome
picture
books,
too.



I dare you not to get choked up every time you read this outstanding tale of creativity and perseverance.



The Snail and the Whale is perhaps my favourite picture-book read-aloud of all time.



You'll crack yourself and your kid up all the way through!

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