

# Books for Grades 3–5

Recommended books that reinforce understanding of program topics for students in Grades 3 through 5

Browse this list to find children’s books that have been evaluated for their alignment to key social-emotional skills and concepts. These books can be read aloud and used to reinforce skills and concepts taught throughout Second Step® Elementary. Lexile levels are also listed to provide students with SEL-aligned books they can read on their own.

## Unit 1

Author: A True Story

**Author: Helen Lester**

Part personal narrative, part writing guide, this book by Helen Lester shares the ups and downs of authorhood. Lester's frank and funny descriptions leave no doubt that writing is a messy business and some of the best ideas come from mistakes.

*Themes: Goal-Setting, Problem-Solving*

Lexile level: 570

The Book of Mistakes

**Author: Corinna Luyken**

In this book, the reader accompanies an artist as they begin a new illustration. Nearly every step is a mistake, but each mistake leads to a new and wonderful idea. When the piece is finished, the reader understands that mistakes are an important and beautiful part of making art, as well as being human.

*Theme: Growth Mindset*

Lexile level: 520

Fish in a Tree

**Author: Lynda Mullaly Hunt**

Ally can't read, but none of her teachers have noticed. Until now, she's fooled everyone by changing schools and disrupting class. But her new teacher sees how bright she is, and helps her understand and cope with her dyslexia.

Lexile level: 550

*Themes: Growth Mindset, Goal-Setting*

Lexile level: 820

Your Fantastic Elastic Brain

**Author: JoAnn Deak**

You'd be amazed at how much your brain can S-T-R-E-T-C-H! This book helps kids understand how their brain works, and how it is constantly growing and changing to learn new things.

*Theme: Growth Mindset*

Lexile level: 700

## Unit 2

El Deafo

**Author: Cece Ball**

Cece is self-conscious about her huge hearing aid. Then she discovers she can listen in on teachers' conversations, and her deafness starts to feel like a superpower! Will it help her to conquer her loneliness and find a real friend?

*Themes: Emotion Management, Feelings, Friendship*

Lexile level: 420

This book can be used with Units 2 and 4.

The Girl Who Drank the Moon

**Author: Kelly Barnhill**

This lyrical fantasy novel tells the story of a girl who, after being abandoned by her village, is being raised by the good witch who accidentally gave her some troublesome magical powers.

*Themes: Emotion Management, Feelings, Problem-Solving*

Lexile level: 640

I Can Make This Promise

**Author: Christine Day**

Edie's mom was adopted by a white couple when she was a baby, so Edie is sure her family doesn't know anything about their Native heritage. But then Edie and her friends find a box in the attic, full of letters from a woman named Edith who looks exactly like

her. Now Edie is desperate to learn more about the other Edith. Could she be the missing link to Edie's Native family? And how can Edie trust her parents, when they kept

## Unit 3

Aani and the Tree Huggers

**Author:** Jeannine Atkins

Aani lives in a village that is protected and sustained by a forest. When loggers show up to cut down the trees, she throws her arms around her favorite tree, and the women of the village follow her lead, saving the forest. This book is based on a true story.

*Themes: Problem-Solving, Empathy*

Lexile level: 650

Big Nate Lives it Up

**Author:** Lincoln Pierce

Principal Nichols asks Nate—you may recognize him from the Big Nate comic strip—to look after the new kid. Breckenridge Puffington III is no fun at all. But there seems to be something strange and familiar about him.

*Themes: Kindness, Emotion Management, Empathy, Feelings, Friendship, Problem-Solving, Perspective-Taking*

Lexile level: 520

This book can be used with Units 3 and 4.

Charlie Bumpers vs. the Teacher of the Year

**Author:** Bill Harley

Charlie starts fourth grade convinced his teacher is just waiting for him to fail: His new teacher has a reputation for being strict—and is the same one he accidentally hit with a shoe the year before.

*Themes: Kindness, Empathy, Perspective-Taking*

Lexile level: 510

The Day You Begin

**Author:** Jacqueline Woodson

There are many reasons why you might feel like an outsider, especially on the first day of school. This book shows how reaching out and sharing your story, especially when you're a little scared, can open up all kinds of possibilities.

Just My Luck

**Author:** Cammie McGovern

Nothing seems to be going well for Benny: He can't keep up with his brother on his bike, he has trouble making new friends, and he's worried about his dad. But his mom helps him learn a moving, helpful lesson about caring for others.

*Themes: Kindness, Empathy, Feelings, Problem-Solving*

Lexile level: 790

This book can be used with Units 2 and 3.

Ms. Bixby's Last Day

**Author:** John David Anderson

Topher, Brand, and Steve are stunned to learn their favorite teacher is seriously ill and leaving school right away. They go to extraordinary lengths to give her the best possible last day, and learn a valuable lesson about cherishing ordinary joys in the process.

## Unit 4

Adrian Simcox Does Not Have a Horse

**Author:** Marcy Campbell

Chloe is sure that Adrian Simcox doesn't have a horse, and she's determined to prove it. But one day, Chloe asks Adrian about his horse, and she really listens. That changes everything.

*Themes: Perspective-Taking, Empathy, Kindness, Friendship*

Lexile level: 600

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