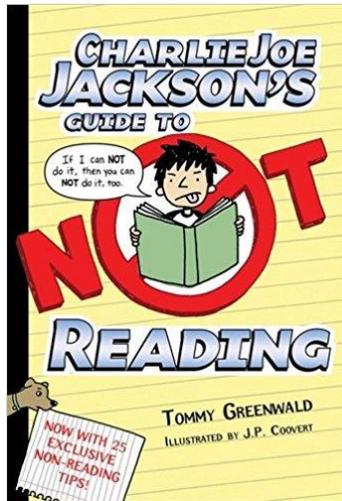


“HOW CAN I ENCOURAGE MY RELUCTANT READER?”

One of my favorite quotes is by James Patterson, author of the popular *Middle School* series. He said “There’s no such thing as a kid who hates reading. There are kids who love reading, and kids who are reading the wrong books.”

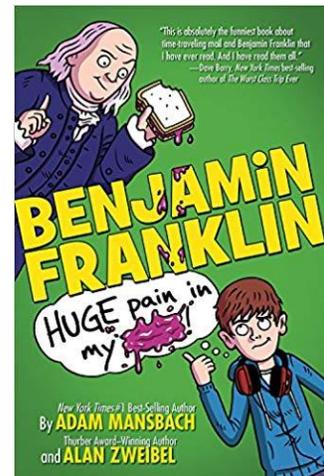
Reluctant readers can often be hooked by books that are extra funny, gross, naughty, full of adventure or scary. But I want to go beyond the books they already know about, like Captain Underpants, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, or Star Wars. I like to suggest books that they might not find on their own, but I know they will enjoy reading!



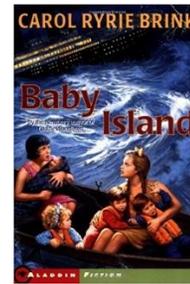
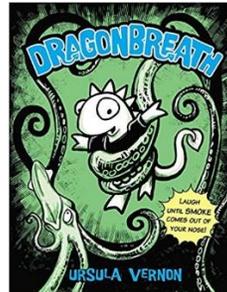
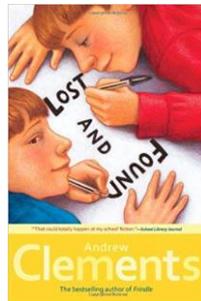
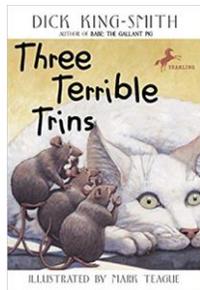
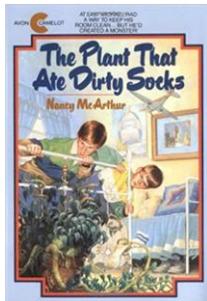
One of my favorite books to hand to an older boy is Charlie Joe Jackson's Guide to Not Reading, by Tommy Greenwald.

It’s about a 6th grader who claims to have never finished a book in his entire life. He pays friends to tell him how the books turn out so he can write his book reports. The plot will really appeal to a kid who doesn’t like to read and it’s laugh-out-loud funny. There are now 6 books in the series.

Another book I’ve been recommending a lot recently is Benjamin Franklin Huge Pain In My ***, by Adam Mansbach and Alan Zweibel. A middle schooler named Franklin has to write a letter to a *Famous Historical Person* for an extra-credit assignment. He puts the letter (complete with an old stamp swiped from his step-father’s stamp collection) in the mailbox when he gets flustered by a girl. Things get really interesting when Ben Franklin actually writes back! (*Can you imagine Ben Franklin giving out dating advice?*)



I also like to recommend The Plant That Ate Dirty Socks, by Nancy McArthur, Three Terrible Trins, by Dick King-Smith, Lost and Found, by Andrew Clements, the Dragonbreath series by Ursula Vernon and Baby Island, by Carol Ryrie Brink.



I find one of the best ways to get a so-called reluctant reader to read is to find him (or her) books about something he loves. Kids can really get turned off to reading if they are forced to read books they have absolutely no interest in. (I hate those darned “required reading” lists! You’ll rarely find a classroom full of kids who all enjoy reading the same books. You’ll be lucky to even find siblings who enjoy the same books.) On the other hand, if a kid is excited about the topic, he is more apt to get hooked by the story. There are books out there for every kid – it just might take a bit of effort to find the right fit. In my experience it can even be as simple as having someone other than the parent make a recommendation. More than once I’ve heard a parent say, “He won’t read anything *I* suggest, but if **you** suggest it he’ll try it.”

Boys frequently enjoy reading non-fiction more than fiction, but they do need to read fiction, too. If your son likes non-fiction better, try to find fiction books that deal with a favorite topic. Kids who like history could try the ‘*I Survived*’ series by Lauren Tarshis, or the ‘*My Name Is America*’ and the *Dear America* series by various authors. There are lots of historical fiction books available, covering a wide range of time periods.



For boy sports lovers try authors Matt Christopher, Mike Lupica, Tim Green, Dan Gutman, Alfred Slato, or Sigmund Brouwer. For girls who love sports try the *Broadway Ballplayer* series by Holohan, *Icebreaker*, *Offside* and others in the *Sports* series (various authors), gymnastics books by Dominique Moceanu, ice skating books by Nola Thacker, or *The Kicks* soccer books by Alex Morgan. Sports titles for girls seems to be a publishing trend recently and we are adding more titles all the time.

For a dinosaur lover – Try *The Enormous Egg*, by Oliver Butterworth (one of my childhood favorites – it’s dated now, but still a fun read), *Dinosaur Habitat* by Helen

Griffith, Raising Rufus by David Fulk, Cryptid Hunters, by Roland Smith or the *Dinotopia* series (various authors).

Your local librarian can steer you toward other sure-fire books, whether your child likes science, math, chess, castles, the Titanic or computer games. Trust me, librarians **love** to make recommendations. It's probably my favorite part of the job. You can also find plenty of lists created by parents and teachers on Pinterest, Amazon and other websites. I personally like to work one-on-one with each family, so I can tell by the child's reactions whether my suggestions are heading in the right direction.

So next time your "reluctant" reader needs a book to read, come on in to the Library and let me help you find just the right book!