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Books suitable for 12 year olds

Do you need help choosing books that are both smart and fun enough for your 12-year-old to enjoy? Is choosing age-appropriate literature a challenge? When your child turns 12, it's a huge (confusing) deal. How then, in this transition from child to teen, do we keep our kids entertained? From reading milestones to the best books for 12-year-olds, here's everything you need to know. Here are 25 great book ideas for 12-year-olds. This beautifully written story will give your child the best kind of chills. It's a Newbery Honor book for 2019 — an honor well-deserved. This epistolary novel follows young Nisha, a half-Muslim, half-Hindu girl as she and her family experience the partition of India. After Nisha's mother dies, she tries to maintain a connection by writing letters to her in her diary. Readers are privy to that diary and see how Nisha, her father, and brother escape to the Hindu side of newly split India. It's a story of courage, family, and will teach your child tons about the history of the world. Everyone is afraid of Xan the witch. They keep her at bay by sacrificing one baby a year to her. Xan is a good witch though, nourishing the babies with starlight before sending them off to good homes. Until one day, when she makes an honest mistake. She accidentally feeds a baby with moonlight instead of starlight, and so decides to raise this girl, Luna, on her own. When Luna turns 13, magic of her own emerges — with dire consequences. This coming-of-age story is a New York Times Bestseller and has won numerous awards. Your 12-year-old will love the twists and Luna's growth in power. Perry Jackson has become a hero in league with Harry Potter. He's a 12-year-old boy who learns that he is the son of Poseidon. He's plunged into a world of demigods where he has to discover his own courage, power, and strength. He's a flawed but cool character who struggles to fit in. Rather than promote unbelievable heroism, Riordan has given boys a hero they can relate to. This five-book box set contains the complete series, which is much loved and acclaimed and can be enjoyed by all. My friend's daughter who's on her school's swim team adores this book. But this book is far from being for swimmers only. It tackles multiple struggles young people — especially young girls — face during the transition to teenagehood. Annabelle loves swimming but struggles with learning. She hates needing to have extra time to complete tests and feels most alive in the pool. To make things worse, her best friends seem to be changing — becoming distant — this summer. Things finally seem to be looking up when she's invited to join the high school swim team. But when an older boy begins to seem interested in Annabelle, changing circumstances force her to find where her worth lies. I've recommended the first book — "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone"— to younger kids before. What's different here, is that from age 12 your child is ready to delve into the rest of the series. While the serious tone from book four onwards might be too grim for younger children, 12-year-olds are able to process the more advanced themes. They'll be enthralled by the longer books, and won't find them too challenging. These seven books have made many children happy. Harry's journey from an ordinary orphan to a savior of the world is in a league of its own. Mental health struggles are more common than ever — both among kids and their parents. The Science of Breakable Things is about Natalie's efforts to cheer her mother up. This novel addresses mental illness, explores healthy friendships and also delves into Natalie's Korean heritage. Natalie's mom is a botanist who discovered a rare cobalt-blue orchid which survives in harsh conditions in Mexico. Now, though, she rarely leaves her room — not even to join the family for dinner. So when Natalie's science teacher tells her about an egg-drop contest with substantial prize money, Natalie competes on a team with two of her friends. She is convinced that she can make her mother happy again by replacing the now-dead blue orchid. If you're looking for something outside of fantasy, this is an excellent choice. While the premise seems somewhat sad, this book is heartwarming, beautiful, and inspiring. It's about Jane, who arrives at her newest foster home after her father is sent back to rehab, but she's determined to see him again. As time goes by, Jane comes to learn that family can be so much more than blood, and that home is where the heart is. Your 12-year-old will learn a lot about home and how some kids aren't blessed with nuclear families. There are sweet lessons about kindness and love too. Even the least sports-interested child will enjoy Jason Reynold's Track Series. The Series examines the lives of four different kids on a track team. Each book is written from the perspective of another child — Ghost, Patina, Sunny, and Lu. These kids deal with various issues from having a parent in prison to an ill parent to losing a parent in death and being an albino. Many readers especially love the first two books in the series, but the latest and final installment has also been garnering a number of fans. Readers love these books because they're short — each just a few pages above 200 — and fast-paced. Put these in the hands of your sports-loving 12-year-old and they'll be hooked! Body positivity is something children need to learn from a young age. If your child struggles with loving the body they're in (while working to be healthier, of course), this book would be a tremendous help. Ari, the boy in this novel-in-verse is bullied for being overweight. His mother is also insisting he gets on a diet, even as his parents' marriage is ending. But through it all, Ari finds new friends and a way to view his body in a more positive manner. This story is moving and can (and should) be enjoyed by both children and their parents. Roll with It is an excellent book featuring a character with a physical disability. Kids today will encounter children with differing abilities at school and even at the grocery store. But how will your kids respond to them? The author, Jamie Sumner has a child with cerebral palsy — the same condition the protagonist Ellie has. Yet Ellie isn't defined by her disability or the fact that she has to use a wheelchair. She is spunky and enjoys baking, watching cooking shows, and even writing to the hosts of these shows. This 2019 release is refreshing and also focuses on what good friendships should look like. Other themes include a strong bond between Ellie and her grandmother and a grandfather with declining Alzheimer's. Does your daughter have a crew of friends looking to do a good deed? Were you a fan of The Babysitters' Club way back when? Then you and your daughter will love Aster, Laine, Kat, and Ofelia. Four different girls become friends and band together to defend birds against their local scout group, The Floras. This book is packed with adventure, hilarity, and a lot of bonding. Because there are four unique and ethically diverse characters, there's surely someone for your child to identify with. Strange Birds was recently positively reviewed in the New York Times. It has also received a couple of starred reviews. Reminiscent of the work of Jack London, this warm story portrays the bonds between man and animal. Peter rescued Pax as a kit and the two have been best friends ever since. When Peter's father joins the army, he makes Peter return Pax to the wild and sends him to live with his grandfather. There, Peter chooses loyalty and stops at nothing to be reunited with his friend, while Pax waits patiently for him. This story is full of love and warmth and displays a fine example of companionship. More and more educators agree that reading comic books is still reading. So, of course, we've included a few of those on this list. Our first is from an expert graphic novel author, Raina Telgemeier. This novel follows an anxious girl and the physical and psychological effects of anxiety on her. Guts is based on Telgemeier's personal experience with anxiety and has already received rave reviews. Many kids have expressed how relatable the comic book has been for them. If your child struggles with anxiety, has a friend who does, or just enjoys graphic novels, don't miss out on this pick. Comparable to Roald Dahl's "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," this is an epic and colorful story. The world's most famous game maker has designed the town's new library and Kyle is determined to attend its grand opening. The problem is that once he's in, he can't get out. With the help of other kids, he must solve clues to escape. Can your 12-year-old figure out the riddles before Kyle does? Sal is always trouble. Gabi is a goody-two-shoes. It's only after Gabi realizes Sal has a magical power that the two become friends. Sal has never had anyone else to share his power with, so the two team up. There's only one problem: their shenanigans could endanger the entire universe. This story's value lies in how ordinary Sal's power is, and Gabi does not treat him any differently because of it. The anti-discrimination message is subtle but brilliant. This book is so good, even math haters (like my niece) will enjoy it. The lightning strike that gives Lucy genius-level intelligence also gives her OCD. After 12 years of being homeschooled, Lucy is at college-level knowledge. However, her grandmother insists that Lucy will only be ready to take college classes after she's grown socially. This is one of those books that helps kids develop empathy and see the world from a different perspective. Readers can't help but root for Lucy as she makes friends and expands her world beyond her love of math. Bonus? Your 12-year-old will lose their mind over how fast Lucy can do math problems. I can't leave this one off the list. I've never met anyone who disliked reading this as a child. J.R.R. Tolkien has crafted a masterpiece. Bilbo Baggins, the eponymous hobbit, is whisked away on the adventure of his life. When a team of dwarves shows up at his door, Bilbo has no choice but to follow them. They lead him on a perilous journey: to reclaim gold guarded by a vicious dragon. It presents commentary on greed. When one character stops at nothing to get the gold, they lose what's most important and find it wasn't worth it. Tolkien will teach your 12-year-old life lessons in the best way possible. This novel balances an exploration of the struggles faced by a boy with OCD with his central position in a "high-stakes mystery." Matthew Corbin is forced to stay home all day, every day, thanks to his OCD. But staying home means he might be the only one who knows what happens to a toddler who's gone missing in his neighborhood. Matthew will have to expose his condition and step out of his comfort zone (home) to help save the day. This well-paced story, although focused on a hard subject has a light tone that your 12-year-old will enjoy. Genesis hates her dark skin and dreams of being lighter-complexioned. The harsh criticism of her grandmother and father do not help her self-loathing. But after they move to a new neighborhood and she joins the choir, Genesis starts to feel like maybe she's worth something. This powerful middle-grade book is perfect for 12-year-olds finding and learning to love themselves. This series follows a group of gifted children as they work to solve a variety of mysteries. The first book in the series has nearly a thousand Amazon ratings and is widely loved by kids and adult alike. The books also contain photos, brain teasers, and puzzles as the kids dive into an adventurous secret mission. If you're a reader who enjoys adventure, science, and a good dose of mystery, you'll love these books! This honest story tells us of two young brothers who leave their comfort zone to spend the summer with their grandparents. When the brothers stop at nothing to prove that they are brave, everything backfires and they end up in a world of trouble. It's a coming-of-age story that explores serious themes, like disability, boundaries, and growing up. Coyote Sunrise has lived in a school bus with her dad in the five years since her mother and sisters died. Her dad has been coping with his grief by refusing to deal with his emotions. But Coyote has had enough and some news from her grandmother moves her to take action. As she takes her dad home (without his knowledge), they pick up a few eclectic characters on the way. Prepare for a lot of feelings, fun, and laughs on this unforgettable journey. Charlie is autistic and has challenges with processing the neurotypical world around him. His father has also been injured in Afghanistan — an occurrence that has placed a strain on their family. The family takes a road trip from California to Virginia for his father's medical treatment. Along the way, Charlie tries to find all the birds he and his father always planned to see together as a sign that his dad will be okay. This book is a perfect road trip book filled with hijinks, sibling drama, and a whole lot of heart. This honest graphic novel follows Jordan who's sent to a prestigious private school where he's one of the few kids of color in his whole grade. Eventually, he begins to feel a cultural divide — between his Black neighborhood and upscale private school. Jordan deals with microaggressions faced by people of color and this book is an excellent example of representation. If your child enjoys graphic novels, they'll be tearing through this one quicker than you can imagine. Does your child love scary books? Are they big fans of being terrified (in a fun way) by their reading material? Then the Spirit Hunters series is the pick for them. Haunted houses and ghosts rule in this pick. We certainly wouldn't recommend this book for readers new to the horror genre. However, if your child is a horror fiend, they won't be able to get enough. Reading Milestones for 12-Year-Olds At this age, 12-year-olds should be able to read with a similar set of skills that adults do (1). This can be a blessing or a curse, considering that their curiosity will peak. They'll be able to make sense of adult concepts, so you'll still have to keep an eye on what they consume (2). Ultimately, the themes you allow them to explore are up to you. As for their reading milestones, here's the norm for 12-year-olds: Vocabulary: They should be able to independently grow their vocabulary by looking up words that are unfamiliar to them. Have a dictionary on hand to help them learn independently. Impressionability: By this age, your child's opinion can be affected, altered, or influenced by what they read. They should be able to use what they've read to defend their opinions or beliefs. Layered comprehension: 12-year-olds can understand and compare different formats, levels, perspectives, or even meanings in what they read. Reading critically: 12-year-olds should be able to express issues in what they read and will have developed a taste for certain genres over others. Reading analytically: Your 12-year-old can understand how people read and write differently. They'll be able to retell an accurate unbiased account of what they've read. Reading habits: 12-year-olds can read independently for extended periods of time. They can also explore different mediums, like newspapers, academic texts, and non-fiction novels. That's a Wrap You're spoiled for choice here, but our ultimate favorite is hands down The Night Diary. Although it relays a true historical account of the Indian partition, the author wrote it with 12-year-olds in mind. It's perfect for starting conversations with your tween about the world around them. It will also teach them a great deal of empathy and perhaps encourage them to keep a diary too. Have you, or your kids, read any of these books? Do you have others you'd like to add? Let me know in the comments section. Subscribe to Our NewsletterWe won't send you spam. Unsubscribe at any time.

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