

**DOUBLE
ISSUE!**

AUGUST 2024

35+ ELEMENTARY LIBRARY IDEAS FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL

WELCOME TO THE ELEMENTARY LIBRARY IDEAS NEWSLETTER!



It's a brand-new school year and a brand new year of the Elementary Library Newsletter! We started this newsletter in January 2023 as a way to share fresh ideas for elementary librarians.

To those of you just joining us, we are so happy you are here! In this monthly newsletter, you will find loads of ideas, tips, freebies, video links and book lists from six veteran school librarians, bloggers, and resource creators.

We release a new Elementary Ideas Newsletter at the beginning of each month. Look for colorful blocks within this newsletter to meet each of our talented contributors!

REACH OUT AND SEND US AN EMAIL!

Got something to say or ask our group?
Send us an email!

If there is a feature you'd like to see in the newsletter, or if you just want to say hi, please give us a shout!

If you'd like to reach out to all of us at once, send us an email at eslibrarynewsletter@gmail.com.



**CONTRIBUTING
AUTHORS:**

[The Trapped Librarian](#)
[The Library Patch](#)

[That Library Girl](#)
[Mrs J in the Library](#)

[MrsReaderPants](#)
[Library Learners](#)

Idea #1: Celebrate Those Quirky Holidays

by Leigh Collazo (MrsReaderPants)



Celebrate quirky holidays throughout the year with this Monthly Digital Bulletin Boards BUNDLE!

These scrolling slideshows include major, minor, and quirky holidays for every month of the year. The slides include loads of fun facts, would-you-rathers, trivia, questions, and more! All text is editable in Google Slides and PowerPoint.

[See this year-long bundle from MrsReaderPants](#)

Idea #2: Create Interactive Digital Games

by Cari White (Library Learners)

Turn your library lessons into interactive digital games that will engage your students with fun animations and sound effects. Grab this bundle for the best value.

[See these Digital Games from Library Learners.](#)

DIGITAL QUIZ GAME CHALLENGES



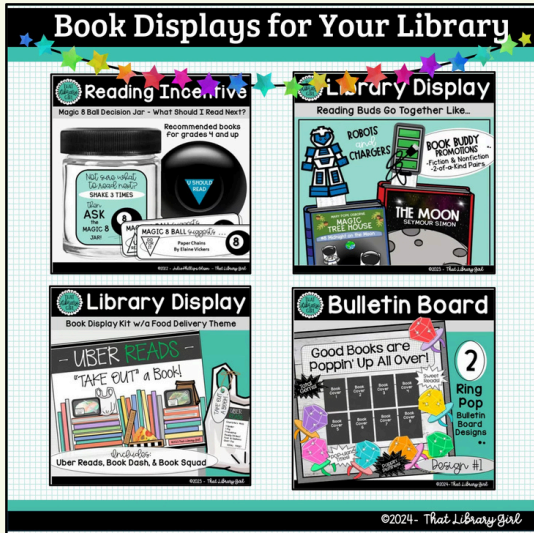
CHECK OUT LAST AUGUST'S NEWSLETTER!

Did you miss the August 2023 Elementary Ideas Newsletter?

It's also a double-issue! [You can find it here.](#)

Idea #3: Try Some New Book Display Ideas

by Julie Olson (That Library Girl)



Learn about four easy book displays that promote great books for your students.

- Magic 8 Ball Recommendations
- Reading Buds Go Together Like... (tech version)
- Uber READS - "Take Out" a Book!
- Ring Pops - "Good Books are Poppin' Up All Over!"

[See these book display ideas from That Library Girl](#)

PreK-5

Favorite New Book Releases

by Leigh Collazo (MrsReaderPants)

Books Released Summer 2024

PICTURE BOOKS

- *Sour Apple* by Linda Liu
- *Clever Crow* by Chris Butterworth
- *I Am La Chiva!* by Karol Hernández
- *The Yellow Bus* by Loren Long
- *The First Week of School* by Drew Breckmeyer
- *My Daddy Is a Cowboy* by C. G. Esperanza
- *Sea of Constellations* by Melissa Cristina Márquez
- *Life After Whale* by Lynn Brunelle
- *Desert Song* by Laekan Zea Kemp
- *Cesaria Feels the Beat* by Denise Rosario Adusei

CHAPTER BOOKS / NOVELS

- *Gamerville* by Johnnie Christmas
- *The Tenth Mistake of Hank Hooperman* by Gennifer Choldenko
- *The Cookie Crumbles* by Tracy Badua and Alechia Dow
- *They Call Me No Sam* by Drew Daywalt
- *The Spindle of Fate* by Aimee Lim
- *Majestica* by Sarah Tolcser
- *Faker* by Gordon Korman

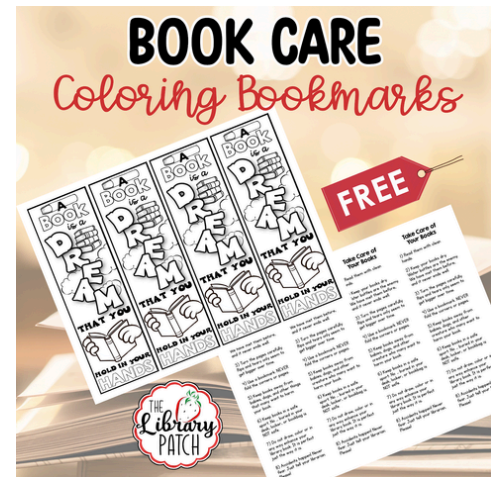
Idea #4: Color Some Quotation Bookmarks

by Sonya Dykeman (The Library Patch)

These bookmarks are like the old mullet hairstyle ... business on one side and party on the other!

The kids can color the quote, "Books are a dream that you hold in your hands" on the front of the bookmark and flip the bookmark over to be reminded of important book care rules. The rules are editable in Google Slides so that you can make them your own.

[Get these free bookmarks from The Library Patch](#)



Hi Everyone! I'm Sonya Dykeman from The Library Patch. I am a certified elementary school teacher and librarian. I have been in education for over 25 years, having spent the last 16 years in our elementary library.

I honestly LOVE what I do. I am never shy about telling my colleagues that I have the best job in school.

My husband and I love to camp and kayak in the Adirondack Mountains of New York.

OUR FAVORITE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL READ-ALOUDS

- *Lola Goes to School* by Anna McQuinn
- *Nugget & Fang Go to School* by Tammi Sauer
- *The Book That Jake Borrowed* by Susan Holt Kralovansky
- *Where Are My Books?* by Debbie Ridpath Ohi
- *Read the Book, Lemmings!* by Ame Dyckman
- *The Queen of Kindergarten* by Derrick Barnes
- *The Midnight Library* by Kazuno Kohara
- *The Together Tree* by Saaed Aisha
- *Do NOT Bring Your Dragon to the Library* by Julie Gassman
- *Our Incredible Library Book and the Wonderful Journeys It Took* by Caroline Crowe and John Joseph
- *Stella Louella's Runaway Book* by Lisa Campbell Ernst (older, but excellent)
- *Our Library* by Eve Bunting (one of the best for talking about libraries and connection to the community they are in)



Idea #5: Set Up Your Library in Just 5 Days!

by Collette Jakubowicz (Mrs J in the Library)

Did you get hired at the last minute, and need to get your library ready? Or maybe you just want to enjoy more of your summer and spend less unpaid hours prepping your library space? This article is just what you need!

I documented how I got ready for the school year in 5 work days...and if I really needed to, I could have taught classes in the space after the first day. Of course, every library is different, but I guarantee you'll find helpful tips for getting your library ready in less time!

[Read this article from Mrs. J in the Library.](#)



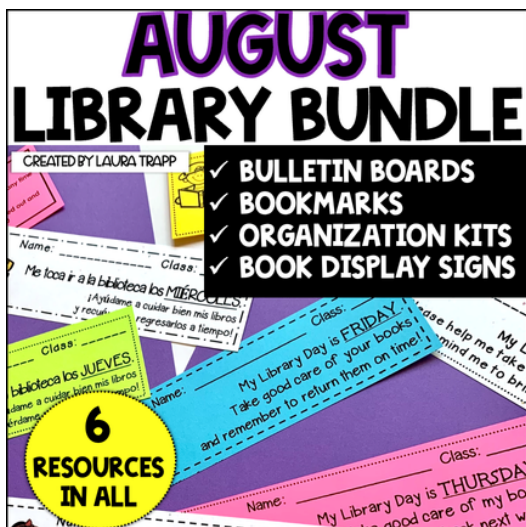
Hello! I'm Collette J., or Mrs. J in the Library. I'm a teacher-librarian with 15 years of teaching experience in school libraries. I mentor new school librarians, create library curriculum, and teach professional development.

The curriculum materials I create are always editable, and often have both print and digital versions to use in your library classes.

If you're interested in working together, I offer free 30-minute consults with no pressure to buy anything...just to chat about what you need for your library or teaching practice.

Idea #6: Organize the Library for Back-To-School

by Laura Trapp (The Trapped Librarian)



Make back to school in the library a breeze with these August resources.

These tools will help you feel relaxed and prepared as you start the new school year.

Library organization is fun and easy with these popular back to school library kits!

[See this August Library Bundle from The Trapped Librarian](#)

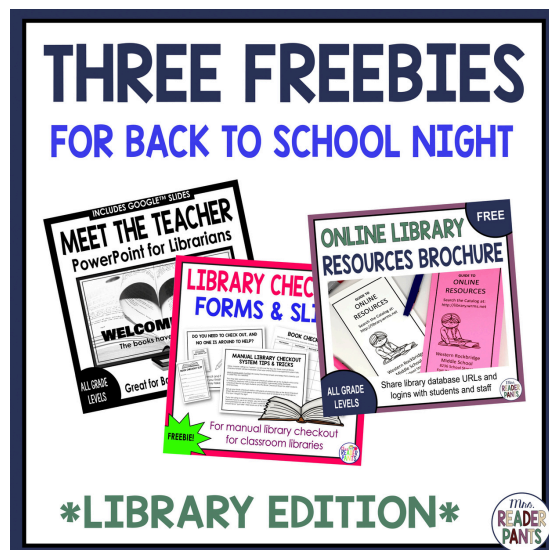
Idea #7: Get Ready for Back to School Night

by Leigh Collazo (MrsReaderPants)

If your school year has already begun, you are undoubtedly in the midst of a whirlwind right now. And I'm betting Back to School Night is looming for you in just a few short weeks. If you aren't quite there yet, don't worry, Back to School Night is coming for you, too...

To help you manage the chaos, I'm sharing three freebies that will save you time while you plan your Back to School Night.

[Grab these Back to School Night Freebies from MrsReaderPants](#)



Idea #8: Get Some Back-to-School Tips

by Cari White (Library Learners)



Check out my top tips to get ready for the back to school season. You'll be calmer and less stressed when you're prepared for the new school year!

[Read all seven back-to-school tips from Library Learners](#)



Curated, engaging library curriculum
for teacher-librarians

Click to learn more!



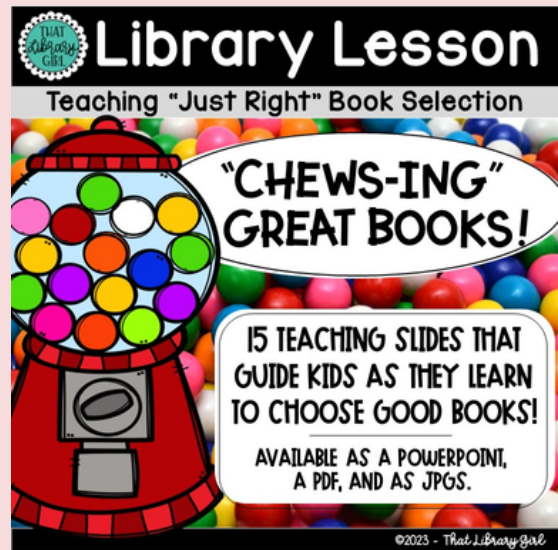
Idea #9: Help Students “Chews” Just Right Books

by Julie Olson (That Library Girl)

Start the year off strong by teaching your students HOW to select books that will be "just right" for them.

These 15 slides will support your lesson with a fun bubble gum theme! My preview on TPT has all the details.

[See this back-to-school library lesson from That Library Girl](#)



Idea #10: Get Answers to Your Genrification Questions

by Sonya Dykeman (The Library Patch)



Whether you are a librarian brand new to the field or one that has a few years under your belt, you have undoubtedly faced the question, "To genrify or not to genrify". That is certainly the question!

I have wrestled with this same question for years.. As any good librarian does when wrestling with a topic, I spent hours researching the topic and weighing the pros and the cons. In this article, I have gathered together links to the resources that I relied on the most.

[See this article from The Library Patch](#)



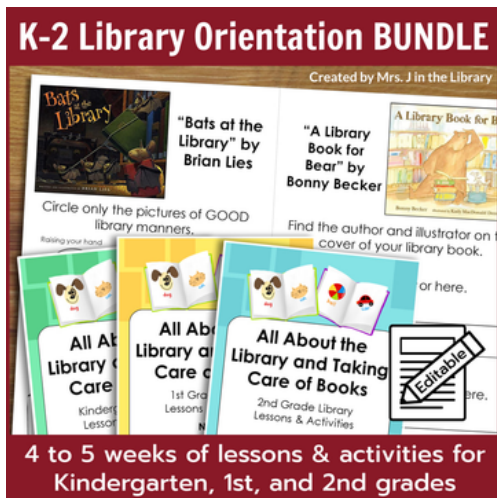
SUBSCRIBE

The Elementary Library Newsletter is a collaborative monthly publication of several veteran elementary school librarians.

To subscribe to the newsletter, please subscribe to any of the librarians' blogs linked in the green box on page 1.

Idea #11: Start with Storytime

by Collette Jakubowicz (Mrs J in the Library)



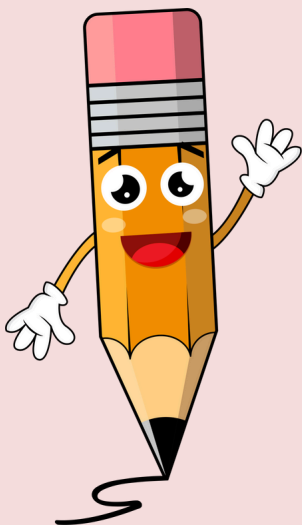
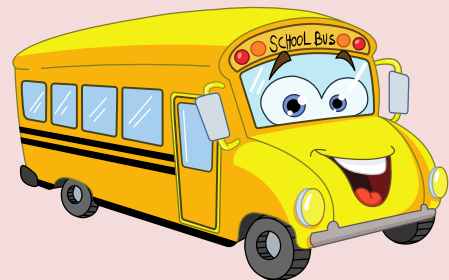
If you love reading aloud as much as I do, then you'll really love these orientation lessons that teach about the library and book care through a storytime read-aloud.

The books to read aloud are commonly found in school or public libraries, though you can swap them for other library-focused books too. In this bundle, there are 4-5 weeks of lessons for kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade. The printable activities are shown, but digital ones for Google Slides and/or Google Classroom are available too.

[Save with this Lesson Bundle on Librarians Teach or on TPT](#)

READ-ALOUDS FEATURING PERSONIFIED SCHOOL OBJECTS

- *The Yellow Bus* by Loren Long
- *Eraser* by Anna Kang
- *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt
- *Linus the Little Yellow Pencil* by Scott Magoon
- *When Glitter Met Glue* by Karen Kilpatrick
- *Pencil: A Story With a Point* by Ann Ingalls
- *The Pencil* by Allan Ahlberg
- *Too Much Glue!* by Jason Lefebvre
- *The Crayon Man* by Natascha Biebow
- *School's First Day of School* by Adam Rex and Christian Robinson



- *When Pencil Met Eraser* by Karen Kilpatrick and Luis O. Ramos, Jr.
- *When PB Met J* by Katelyn Aronson
- *Lena's Shoes are Nervous* by Keith Calabrese and Juana Medina
- *Exclamation Mark!* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal
- *Spoon* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal
- *Crayons on Strike* by Jennifer Jones
- *Scissors on Strike* by Jennifer Jones
- More in series -- *Books on Strike... Tablets, Chairs, Paints, Pencils, Play Dough, Markers, Highlighters, Sharpeners, Desks!* by Jennifer Jones
- *Emergency* by Tom Lichtenheld

Idea #12: Get Organized for Back-to-School

by Laura Trapp (The Trapped Librarian)

Save time while you squeeze a bit more fun out of summer with these organizational tips to help you get ready for a great school year!

[Read this article by
The Trapped Librarian](#)



Hey there friends! I'm Laura Trapp, aka The Trapped Librarian.

I retired in 2020 after 32 years as a full-time educator, split between the elementary classroom and library. For the past 4 years I've been teaching library classes K-8 in some small country schools. I also mentor student teachers at my alma mater!

When I'm not working, you can find me sitting next to the mighty Missouri River in my backyard or floating by on my paddle board!

Idea #13: Enjoy 28 Movie and TV Clips About School

by Leigh Collazo (MrsReaderPants)

Looking for some back to school videos to get students laughing on Day 1? This is a video list of 28 (mostly) funny TV and movie clips to help you celebrate the First Day of School.

Not all of these are elementary school-appropriate, so you'll want to watch clips all the way through before showing them to students. Enjoy!!!

[Watch all 28 movie and TV
clips from MrsReaderPants](#)



Idea #14: Label Your Library Centers

by Cari White (Library Learners)

Get started with library centers with these free library center signs. They'll make such a difference in your school year!

[Download these Centers Signs from Library Learners](#)



Idea #15: Have Students Spin the Prize Wheel

by Julie Olson (That Library Girl)



Do you have a spinning prize wheel in your library?

This *limited-time freebie* offers 26 labels and 6 prize patterns to help you come up with no-cost or low-cost reward incentives.

[Download this Prize Wheel limited-time freebie from That Library Girl](#)

Hey there -- I'm Julie Olson from "That Library Girl." I'm a certified elementary school and middle school teacher and librarian from Arkansas. (I taught for three years in Wisconsin, too!)

I retired in 2021 after 36 years of teaching PreK through 8th grade, but I'm just not quite ready to let go of my lifelong love for school libraries. I hope you enjoy our latest newsletter!



Idea #16: Plan a Year of Book Bites with Picture Books

by Sonya Dykeman (The Library Patch)

Each of the Book Bites in this bundle includes a discussion guide and four differentiated printables.

It's a lesson that utilizes one picture book but can span several grade levels.

Librarians who have purchased the product have raved about its ease of use! They also love to leave them for a substitute! Included titles will cover seasons and topics across the whole school year.

[See this bundle from The Library Patch](#)



Idea #17: Create a Student Library User Agreement Form

by Collette Jakubowicz (Mrs J in the Library)

Customize this free editable form for your back to school lessons and parent communication!

After going over book care and library rules, have students and/or parents sign it to promise they will take care of their library books.

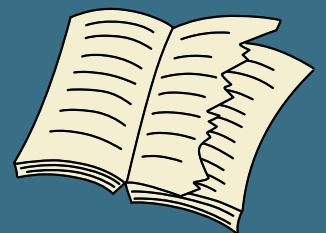
P.S. - When I used this form, ALL students could check out 2 books, even if they didn't have their parents sign this form. This form was for "extra" privileges like checking out maker kits and Playaway audiobooks, or getting up to 5 books from the library.

[Grab this freebie from MrsJinthelibrary.com \(at the bottom of the article\)](#)



BOOK REPAIR TERMS, TIPS, AND TRICKS

Do you have books that need repair? Download DEMCO's free guide to learn book care terminology as well as tips for cleaning, protecting, and repairing, too!



Idea #18: Download a Free Library Planning Guide

by Laura Trapp (The Trapped Librarian)

This month-by-month guide for your elementary library makes planning your lessons and activities easy and fun!

Get your nights and weekends back and take the guesswork out of what to teach and when. Grab your free guide today and make your library the center of your school!

[See this freebie from The Trapped Librarian](#)



Idea #19: Knock Out 10 Weeks of K-3 Planning

by Leigh Collazo (MrsReaderPants)



Your first 10 weeks of elementary library lessons are planned! This bundle of 10 Autumn Library Storytimes includes back to school and fall library lessons for K-3.

Themes include Welcome to the Library, Friendship, Library Book Care, Parts of a Book, and more!

[See this Autumn Storytime Bundle from MrsReaderPants](#)



Hello, everyone! I'm Leigh Collazo, also known as MrsReaderPants.

I am a certified secondary English teacher and school librarian who has librarian-ed in Texas and in two cities in China.

I have 18 total years of teaching experience, 15 of which are in the library. I currently live in Mexico with my husband, two teen boys, and 2 former street dogs. I love traveling, reading, trying new foods, *Seinfeld*, and 80s glam rock!

Idea #20: Try Some New Management Strategies

by Cari White (Library Learners)

Before you can teach anything this year, you need to have a plan for classroom management. This ebook can help you!

[See this Classroom Management Ebook for School Libraries from Library Learners](#)



Hi, friends! I'm Cari White, with Library Learners. After my first career as a lawyer, I was an educator for 18 years, spending most of those years as an elementary school librarian. I live in the Texas Hill Country, and I love listening to audiobooks as I float in our neighborhood's lazy river. I've got 3 grown kids and 3 grandkids. My heart is full!

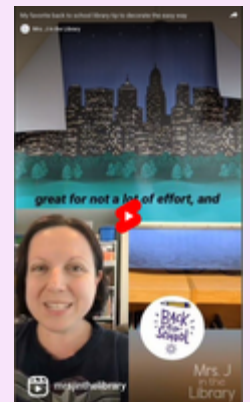
Thanks for reading our newsletter!

FUN (& CREATIVE) VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

(Click the images to view the videos - more videos on p. 21)



Watch this video to learn how teaching book care well to your youngest library learners can really pay off in the upper grades.



A quick and easy trick for decorating your school library walls to look awesome without a lot of effort. It may not look like a Pinterest library, but it will definitely be better than boring, concrete block walls! [Watch on YouTube](#), or [on Instagram](#).

Idea #21: Recruit a Student Library Club

by Julie Olson (That Library Girl)

Need some devoted help in your library?! Make a plan now to recruit awesome library club members (who'll get to do so much more than just dusting and shelving books!) Library Club members will collect backpack badges and participate in easy projects as thank you" gestures for a job well done!

[Read this article from That Library Girl](#)



Idea #22: Try a Quick & Easy ABC Research Project

by Sonya Dykeman (The Library Patch)



Need a quick research activity that could be done in just one sitting? Try an ABC Research Project.

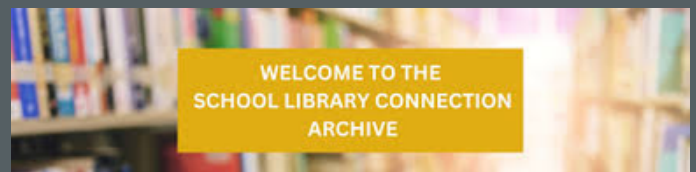
You know - when kids have to find an example or a fact that begins with each letter of the alphabet. The LOVE this tired and true challenge.

[Download this FREEBIE from The Library Patch](#)

CHECK OUT THE SLC ARCHIVE

School Library Connection is such a great resources. Even though the publication has ceased, the archive is still open to all.

The archive contains professional development materials, as well as articles from School Library Monthly and Library Media Connect magazines.



Idea #23: Get Moving & Have Fun with Orientation Games

by Collette Jakubowicz (Mrs J in the Library)

Setting expectations for older students in the library is an important part of back-to-school, and for many students it's a review of what they already know.

Make it fun and engaging with a game!

This article explains how to set-up an orientation game using simple, inexpensive materials to transform your library into a life-sized board game that students can play as they travel around to different parts of your library.

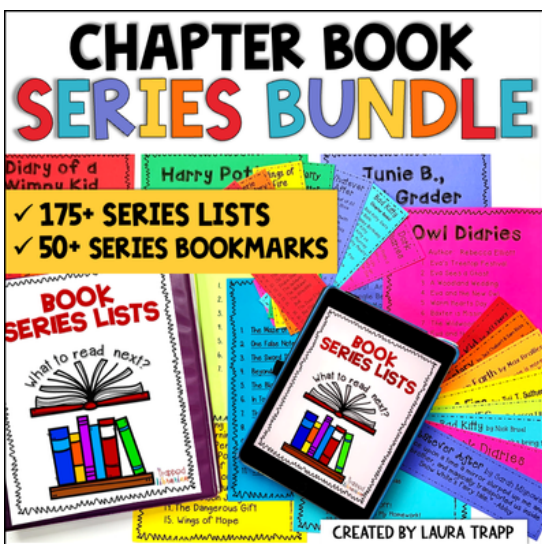
It works with any library space or layout, and you can even make it a scavenger hunt instead of a board game if you're time is limited.



[Read this article from Mrs J in the Library](#)

Idea #24: Help Students Navigate the Series

by Laura Trapp (The Trapped Librarian)



Series books can build excitement around reading in unique ways!

Help your students find a book series they connect with and they won't stop until they've read them all!

These chapter book series lists and bookmarks make it easy for your students to find their next favorite book.

[See this Chapter Book Series Bundle from The Trapped Librarian](#)

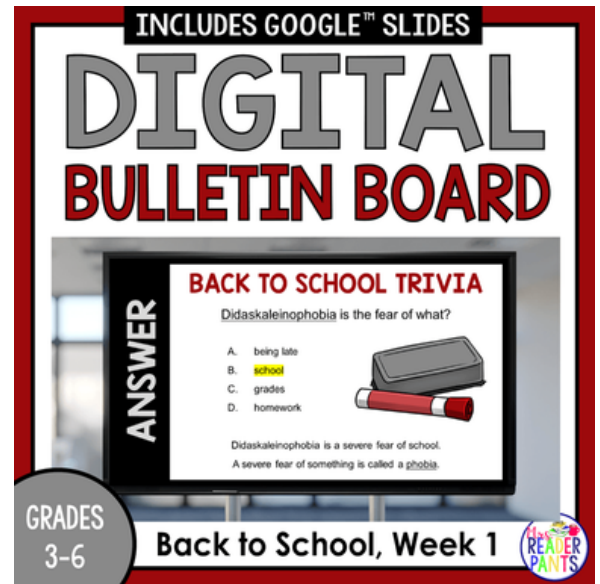
Idea #25: Try a FREE Digital Bulletin Board

by Leigh Collazo (MrsReaderPants)

This Digital Bulletin Board will grab students' attention in the first week of school! It mixes library and school announcements with fun facts for back to school.

Includes editable daily schedules, fun facts, vocabulary words, a staff spotlight, and a featured genre.

[Get this free Digital Bulletin Board from MrsReaderPants](#)



Idea #26: Try Some New PreK Library Lessons

by Cari White (Library Learners)



Are you teaching PreK in your school library this year?

Read this blog post to learn more about how to turn that PreK chaos into active learning.

[Read this article from Library Learners](#)

GRANT OPPORTUNITY FROM JLG

Many of us know the pain of trying to fill our bookshelves when our budgets are simply too tight! The Junior Library Guild wants to help you put books into your kids hands. Hurry though ... Fall grant applications are due September 6, 2024!



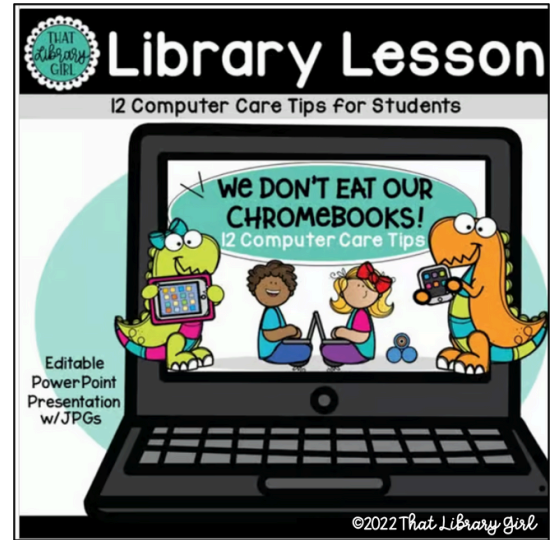
Idea #27: Teach Your Computer Care Expectations

by Julie Olson (That Library Girl)

Pair this helpful lesson with the funny back-to-school book, *We Don't Eat Our Classmates* by Ryan T. Higgins!

These 12 computer care tips (editable) will help you teach YOUR expectations for a variety of expensive learning devices.

[See this Computer Care Library Lesson from That Library Girl](#)



Idea #28: Download Some FREE Canva Templates

submitted by Sonya Dykeman (The Library Patch)

CANVA TEMPLATES FOR LIBRARIANS	
AUTHOR	TCEA
TITLE	We Appreciate Librarians Everywhere
IMPORTANT DATES	CELEBRATE READING, LIBRARIES, AND LIBRARIANS ALL YEAR LONG WITH THIS LIST
04/04	School Librarian Day
SECOND FULL WEEK IN APRIL	National School Library Week

Do you love Canva as much as I do? The possibilities are endless!

This list of free templates has been specifically curated with librarians in mind. You're not going to want to miss this list as you prepare for back to school!

[See these Canva templates from TCEA](#)

"YES, YOUR SCHOOL LIBRARIAN CAN DO THAT (AND MORE)"

This podcast episode and blog article is a great one to share with your staff and you can use some of these points in your library advocacy this year!

If you don't want to listen, scroll down for the article.



Idea #29: Learn with Back to School Online PD

by Collette Jakubowicz (Mrs J in the Library)

If you want to teach your research curriculum with library centers this year, I have a new online course that you're going to love!

The Teaching Research with Library Centers professional development course is on sale now until August 15th!

In the course, Collette from Mrs. J in the Library will show you how to teach the entire research process within the library centers framework..without spending hours of planning outside of your contract day. You'll also learn how to differentiate your research centers for different grade levels and student abilities, as well as how to track and assess student learning.



[Check it out on Librarians Teach](#)

Idea #30: Shop Those Early Back-to-School Sales

by Laura Trapp (The Trapped Librarian)



After I grumble about the early school supply displays in the big box stores, I actually love shopping for them!

Do colorful new school supplies help you look forward to the new school year too? Take a peek at some of my library favorites!

[Read this article from The Trapped Librarian](#)

GET INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR BOOK CHALLENGES

The group "Unite Against Book Bans" has developed a collection of "Book Resumes" to help librarians, teachers and community members defend books from censorship. Each resume is a pdf that is easy to print and share with others.



Idea #31: Do Something Different for Orientation

by Leigh Collazo (MrsReaderPants)

Ahh, the first day of school! Call me crazy, but I've always loved it!

If you need some fresh ideas for library orientation, I've got you covered! Several of these ideas can be used with any grade level.

[Read the article from MrsReaderPants](#)

WELCOME TO THE
NEW SCHOOL YEAR...



Check out these fun ideas for library orientation!



Idea #32: Try a FREE Book Talk Sign

by Cari White (Library Learners)



Set up passive book talks from your circulation desk with this Bitmoji Book Talk Sign.

Just set a book that you've read next to the sign, and you're all set for impromptu book talks to connect your students with their next read.

[Get this Free Book Talk sign from Library Learners](#)

BRING STORIES TO LIFE WITH NOVEL EFFECT

Just in case you've missed it... you need to check out Novel Effect! It's a magical app that responds to your voice reading to kids by adding music and special effects!



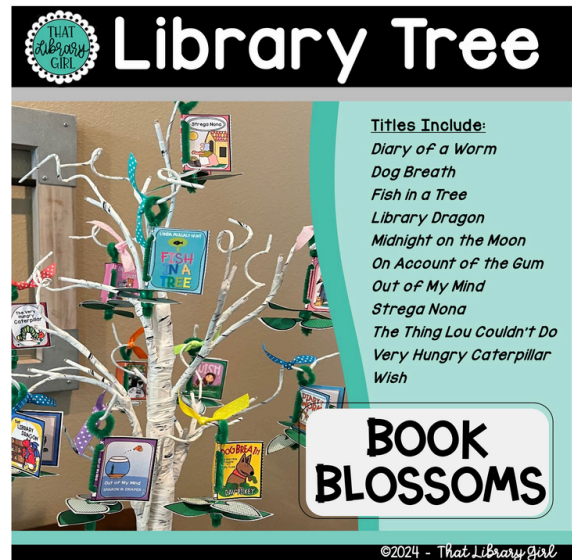
Idea #33: Let Students' Love of Reading "Blossom"!

by Julie Olson (That Library Girl)

Decorate a library tree with the eleven cute "book blossoms" in this limited-time freebie from That Library Girl!

Titles include Strega Nona, Wish, Fish in a Tree, and Dog Breath.

[Download this limited-time FREEBIE from That Library Girl](#)



Idea #34: Review Library Rules & Vocabulary with Bingo

by Sonya Dykeman (The Library Patch)



Kids LOVE themselves a game of BINGO! Why not use this entertaining game format to review your Library Rules?

BINGO squares include vocabulary like fiction, nonfiction, shelf markers, bookmarks, spines out, etc. AND ... it's all editable. So you can adapt it for your own purposes.

Perfect for the beginning of the school year!

[Grab the game now from The Library Patch](#)



GOT A QUESTION OR COMMENT? SEND US AN EMAIL!

If you'd like to reach out to all of us at once, send us an email at eslibrarynewsletter@gmail.com.

Idea #35: Tips & Tricks to Use Google Classroom with Library Classes

by Collette Jakubowicz (Mrs J in the Library)



If your district has Google Workspace, then you might already use Google Classroom. But if you're hesitant (or shudder at the bad memories of 2020), these tips will help you use Classroom to actually save time on lesson prep and classroom management. I promise it can make your life easier, and not add "one more thing" to your plate!

[Find out how at Mrs. J in the Library](#)

BRING IN SOME NEW BOOK FRIENDS



What do Frog & Toad, Greg Heffley, and Grumpy Monkey all have in common? They're members of the "Kohl's Cares" stuffy collection!

If you've wanted to start a book doll collection -- you can order online!

Idea #36 - Encourage Staff to "Be the Light"

by Laura Trapp (The Trapped Librarian)

These colorful bookmarks encourage your staff members to "Be the Light" and remind them of how you can be of service to them this year.

[Download this FREEBIE from The Trapped Librarian](#). Scroll down to the bottom of the blog post for your free download.



DISCOVER NEW BOOKS EVERY TUESDAY!

by Leigh Collazo (MrsReaderPants)

Did you know that every Tuesday morning, MrsReaderPants releases a curated analysis of the best new books for that week? Each title includes bulleted information about setting, protagonist, themes, grade level recommendations, and starred professional reviews.

This is a list I've done nearly every Tuesday since May 2016! It includes YA, middle grades, chapter books, and picture book titles.

[See the New Release Spotlight archives here](#)



FUN (AND FREE!) VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

(Click the images to view the videos - more videos on p. 13)



You and your students will get a chuckle out of this classic Sesame Street video.

You CAN get almost everything you want at the library, but maybe not cookies - sorry Cookie Monster!

Emily Arrow's sweet "Books, Books!" song is a great way to start classes with your youngest students!

The motions help everyone stay active, calm and engaged!



Library Lion is a favorite of many librarians. It's definitely one of ours.

This ten minute video from Storyline Online is a fantastic way to share the book.