

Stop the Summer Reading Slide With Eco-Themed Kids' Books | Earth911.com

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Summer is a time for playing outside and enjoying the environment. At least [one study](#) has shown that playing outside as a child is an important predictor of protecting the environment as an adult. But parents need to ensure kids keep up their reading skills, which often [slide over the summer](#).

These books with environmental themes, sorted by reading level, will improve both your kids' literacy and their environmental awareness. We suggest reading them in a treehouse or on a picnic blanket in the sun.

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Picture Books

- [A Leaf Can Be...](#) by Laura Purdie Salas

A leaf can be a... shade spiller, mouth filler, tree topper, rain stopper. Find out about the many roles leaves play in this poetic exploration of leaves throughout the year.

- [The Tantrum That Saved the World](#) by Megan Herbert and Michael E. Mann

A little girl inherits a huge problem she didn't ask for, and then channels strong emotions into positive action. The second part explains the science of climate change in age-appropriate language.

- [Seeds of Change: Wangari's Gift to the World](#) by Jen Cullerton Johnson

It's never too early for children to see examples of strong women who make the world a better place. That Wangari's work illustrates the often overlooked intersection between ecology and justice makes this example even better.

Books for Younger Middle Grade

- [The Magic School Bus and the Climate Challenge](#), by Joanna Cole

Trust the beloved kids' science series Magic School Bus to explain the facts of global warming in ways kids understand, and to give them ideas about how they can help.

- [The Last Wild](#) by Piers Torday

A boy who can talk to animals — but not people — fights against extinction in this book reinforcing the 2019 [Earth Day theme](#) of protecting endangered species.

- [Operation Redwood](#) by S. Terrell French

The environmental movement is too-often associated with white people. In Operation Redwood, a biracial boy challenges his rich relatives to look past the profit motive and protect an old-growth redwood grove on property they own.

Books for Middle Grade Tweens

- [Gorilla Dawn](#) by Gill Lewis

Two children living in the Congo's war zone risk everything to protect a captured baby gorilla from life in captivity. Although not graphic, this book is intense. It addresses the impact of violence on children and wildlife and reveals the connection between the rare earth minerals in consumer electronics and devastating destruction in Africa.

- [We Are the Weather Makers](#) by Tim Flannery and adapted by Sally M. Walker

This adaptation offers younger readers the same clear look as the original at the history of climate change, how it will unfold over the next century, and what can be done to prevent a cataclysmic future.

- [Squirm](#) by Carl Hiaasen

While not as overtly environmentalist as the well-known [Hoot](#), Hiaasen's latest novel still features tween protagonists who care about animals and appreciate the natural world more than the adults around them. His characteristic irreverent humor is on full display as well.

- [The Casket of Time](#), by Andri Snær Magnason

From poetry to nonfiction, books by Icelandic author Andri Snær Magnason are unified by environmental concern. Now available in English, his 2013 novel for tweens and teens, *The Casket of Time*, tells the story of Sigrun, a teenager whose TimeBox® opens too early. Her family entered the TimeBoxes to sleep out "the situation," but now she finds herself among the few who are left awake to fix the world. Younger readers will enjoy his first children's book, [The Story of the Blue Planet](#).

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