



Empowering
Lives
Through
Literacy

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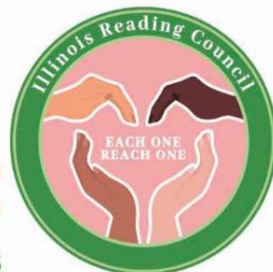
"Some books leave us free and some books make us free."
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

2027

IRC CONFERENCE

March 11-12, 2027

Springfield, Illinois



APPLY TO PRESENT AT THE 2027 IRC CONFERENCE

The Illinois Reading Council is accepting [Program Proposals to present](#) at the 2027 IRC Conference. Proposals are due by **September 1, 2026**.

Teachers, researchers, librarians, administrators, and others interested in promoting reading and related literacy areas are encouraged to submit program proposals. Please take a moment to review the 2027 Program Proposal format, general information, and criteria for selection that are available online.

We hope to see you at the 2027 IRC Conference!

[Submit a Program Proposal Today!](#)

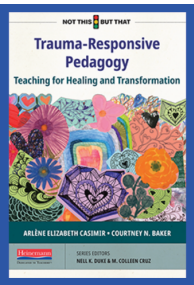
IRC BOOK CLUB

Join educators from all over the state in the online **Fall 2026 IRC Book Club!** Choose one, two, or all three book clubs!

Beginning October 18, participants will be reading, reflecting on, and responding in the **War Games** book club and/or the **Trauma-Responsive Pedagogy** book club and/or **Growing Language & Literacy** book club during the seven weeks of online discussions.



War Games was written by Alan Gratz. In the book club, participants will learn how to hold book clubs with their own middle grade classrooms based on this historical fiction novel about Olympic gold, Nazi gold, and a daring heist during the 1936 Berlin Olympics.



Trauma-Responsive Pedagogy was written by Arlène Elizabeth Casimir, Courtney N. Baker, Nell K. Duke, and M. Colleen Cruz. In the book club, participants will be provided an actionable guide that offers research and inclusive frameworks to help create a trauma-responsive classroom with the tools needed to support their students through challenges.



The *Growing Language & Literacy* books were written by Andrea Honigsfeld. In this book club, participants will choose between **Growing Language & Literacy: Strategies for English Learners** that provides K to 8th Grade Teachers with strategies to support EL students' academic language and literacy development based on the TESOL framework of language acquisition OR **Growing Language & Literacy: Strategies for Secondary Multilingual Learners** that provides secondary 6th to 12th grade teachers practical strategies to support adolescent multilingual learners across all grade levels and content areas.

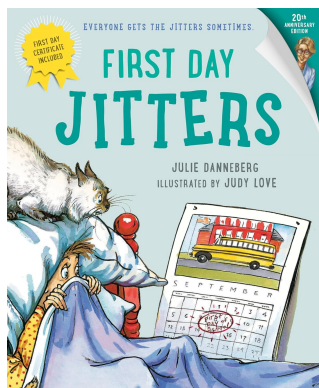
Register by **October 18, 2026**, to participate in the book club. Registration is FREE for IRC Members. The cost for non-members is \$50, which includes IRC membership for one year. PLEASE NOTE: The cost of book is not included.

Register Today!



The last month of summer vacation is slowly fading into autumn. However, August still provides

pool, time to head to the beach, waterpark, or pool, enjoy outdoor gatherings with family and friends, camping, or taking a small vacation. Although August has no major holidays to celebrate, it is Family Fun Month and National Picnic Month. There is still time to enjoy your local summer fest or your local county fair, and the Illinois State Fair. So grab your favorite summer beverage, relax, and enjoy the remaining days of summer.



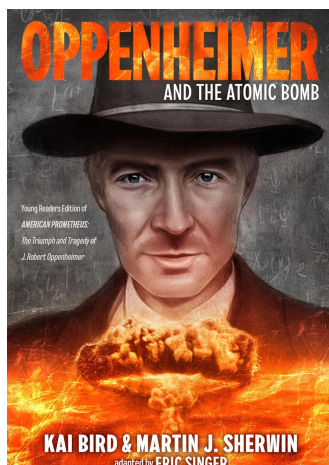
The new school year is about to begin. Students of all ages feel a bit nervous about what the new year will entail. A delightful book to share with students is [First Day Jitters](#) by Julie Danneberg. This is the story of Sarah Jane Hartwell who doesn't want to get out of bed and get ready to start a new school year. With a little convincing from her dad Sarah gets ready, eats breakfast, gets in her dad's car, and heads to school. When they arrive at the school Sarah is met by the principal, Mrs. Burton. She welcomes Sarah and tells her that she will take her to her new classroom. As they walk through the halls Mrs. Burton tells Sarah that most students are nervous and anxious on the first day. When they arrive at her classroom Mrs. Burton introduces Sarah to her classmates and teacher. To discover who her teacher is read *First Day Jitters*. The

delightful and colorful illustrations add a bit of humor to the story which makes a nice read aloud on the first day of school. The back of the book includes a Certificate of Courage that can be copied and given to students on this exciting day for students and teachers. This book can also be partnered with the book *A Letter from your Teacher on the First Day of School* by Shannon Olsen.



Every August 4th is U.S. Coast Guard Day, honoring this branch of the military that protects America's waters and coastlines. To learn about one of the duties the Coast Guard does read the story [The Finest Hours: The True Story of a Heroic Sea Rescue](#) by Michael J. Tougias and Casey Sherman. The Young Readers Edition recounts what took place on the night of February 18, 1952 during a terrible winter storm known as a nor'easter, which is common along the New England coastline and Cape Cod. On this night two oil tankers, *The Pendleton* and *Fort Mercer*, were heading for port when they encountered the nor'easter. Battling blinding icy winds and waves over 60 feet the tankers split in half about 50 miles from Cape Cod. With the bow and stern of the ships drifting apart and their crew helpless, they were able to get off a distress signal to the local Coast Guard station. With only a small lifeboat the Coast Guard headed out to sea as they were the only hope for the stranded sailors. Encountering many

incredible obstacles the Coast Guardsmen risked their lives to save the sailors. *The Finest Hours* is a true story of survival and heroism but also helps the reader learn about the Coast Guard and will be enjoyed by middle grade students and above. *The Finest Hours* is also a major motion picture from Disney.



Each August we are reminded of Japan's surrender during World War II after the dropping of the Atomic bomb on Japan. How did this weapon of destruction come about? Who were the men/scientists involved with its development? Read the book [Oppenheimer and the Atomic Bomb: Young Reader's Edition of American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer](#) by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin and adapted by Eric Singer. This is the story of Robert Oppenheimer who is considered the Father of the Atomic Bomb. It begins with Robert's childhood. He was a very intelligent student and often wrote poetry and read books well above his age level. He also developed a real interest in chemistry and physics and eventually became a physicist and went on to work and study with well known physicists of that time. During World War II he did secret

work and led America's effort to build the atomic bomb. After the war Robert was involved in the Cold War but began to have reservations about the moral consequences of the bomb he helped to create. Through his trials and tribulations Robert remained loyal to America and President Johnson presented him with the prestigious Enrico Fermi Award, Medal, and Prize for public service. *Oppenheimer* includes many photographs that enhance the biography of this iconic and global figure of the 20th century. It also provides many opportunities for classroom discussion for students in middle school through high school. It makes an excellent addition to all libraries.

Looking Ahead

August 1: Francis Scott Key Birthday – Writer of America's National Anthem
August 4: U.S. Coast Guard Day – Find out how they protect America's waters and coastlines
August 5: Campfire Day/Night – Make some S'mores to enjoy with family and friends
August 9: Book Lovers Day – Enjoy reading a good book on the patio or a favorite spot
August 12: World Elephant Day – Read about elephants and how we can protect them
August 14: V-J Day – World War II ends with Japan's surrender
August 19: Aviation Day – Attend an air show or read a book about planes
August 21: National Senior Citizen Day – Send thanks with a card, phone call, or email
August 26: National Dog Day – Give an extra hug or read a story to your pet



UPCOMING PD EVENTS

Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **August 14, 2026: Dana Marie Miroballi**, Illinois Reads Author of *Inventions to Count On: A Celebration of Black Inventors: A Picture Book*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 15, 2026: Nicole M. Hewitt**, Illinois Reads Author of *The Song of Orphan's Garden*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 15, 2026: Darcy Day Zoells**, Illinois Reads Author of *Smithy and Me*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 15, 2026: Illini Reading Council and Vermilion Valley Reading Council** will co-host Responding to the Visual: The Juxtaposition of Image and Text in Picture Books and Graphic Books with Karla Möller and Ashley Dawson from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm at the Barnes & Noble Bookstore, Marketview Shopping Center, 65 E Marketview Dr, Champaign, Illinois.
- **August 16, 2026: Kate Hannigan**, Illinois Reads Author of *Rachel Carson's Wonder-Filled World: How the Scientist, Writer, and Nature Lover Changed the Environmental Movement*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 16, 2026: Jacob Grant**, Illinois Reads Author of *Turtle Slept In*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.

- To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](#).

ILLINOIS READS:

CELEBRATE READING AT THE STATE FAIR!

AUGUST 14-23, 2026 **SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**



READING IS FOR EVERYONE

COME AND MEET THE ILLINOIS READS AUTHORS IN THE TENT OF ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE HONORARY CHAIR OF ILLINOIS READS, ALEXI GIANNOULIAS!

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 15 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 15 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	MONDAY, AUGUST 17 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	TUESDAY, AUGUST 18 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM
 by Dana Marie Miroballi Ages Birth-4	 by Nicole M Howitt Grades 5-8	 by Darcy Day Zeelis Grades K-2	 by Kate Hamigan Grades 3-5	 by Jacob Grant Grades K-2	 by Jeffrey Brown Grades 3-5	 by Chelsea Tornotto Grades K-2

SEVERE AND RUSKY WEATHER by Jessie Ann Foley Grades 5-8	EMILIAS CORTE by Juliana Espinoza & Veronica Castillo Grades K-2	AVA PLATE SLEEP-OVER SUPERHEROES by Lisa Maggione Grades 3-5	EL MUNDO by Zach von Zerk Ages Birth-4	scott fenwick diaries by Kristin Nilson Grades 5-8	MAKE by Gene Ha Grades 9-12	POP! DOES THE HIGHEST RUFF! by Betsy Bird Ages Birth-4
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 SECRETARY of STATE
ALEXI GIANNOULIAS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
CENTER FOR THE BOOK
 ILLINOIS AFFILIATE


 Visit illinoisreads.org
for more info!



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit articles at any time to irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

#WhatIAmReading: Share a book that you are reading, in 3 to 4 sentences. Creative pictures of you and your book in your favorite reading spot are encouraged.

IRC Highlight Reels: Share snapshots of successes in your classrooms in 100 to 300 words. Remember no success is too big or too small to share and pictures welcomed!

Other Literacy Topics:

- Books the Kids Loved This Year
- My New Favorite Professional Books and Resources
- Skills and Strategies
- Current Research in Literacy
- And any other literacy topics that interests you!

Thank you for helping to inspire your fellow educators! Posts will be shared on social media too!

QUICK LINKS

Visit the IRC Website

Full IRC Events Calendar

Latest on the IRC Conference

Available IRC Awards and Grants

Bring IRC PD to your School District

Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:

