

ENTERING 1st-2nd GRADE GEOGRAPHY CHALLENGE TITLES

(Any book set in a country within the continent, relating its folklore, or a non-fiction book about the country or continent would work. Titles below are ideas to get you started)

North America

The Amazing Mexican Secret by Jeff Brown. (MEXICO) 4.1: When Stanley's mother needs the secret ingredient for a special recipe, Stanley mails himself to Mexico to track down its mysterious maker.

Babar Comes to America Laurent de Brunhoff (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) 4.2: Babar pays an official visit to Washington, D.C. and then travels around the United States, receiving an honorary degree from Harvard University, fishing in Lake Michigan, and touring California with his family.

Elena's Story by Nancy Shaw (GUATEMALA) 2.8: Elena lives with her mother and siblings in a small village in Guatemala and tries to make time to improve her reading as she helps her mother with daily chores.

Forest by Laura Godwin (CANADA) 2.0 : A young girl hears a noise in the forest near her family's farm in Canada, and when she and her mother go to investigate, they find a small fawn that seems to be all alone.

Hurry and the Monarch Antoine Flatharta (MEXICO/CANADA) 4.6: Hurry the tortoise befriends a monarch butterfly when she stops in his garden in Wichita Falls, Texas, during her migration from Canada to Mexico.

The Intrepid Canadian Expedition Jeff Brown (CANADA) 4.2: Stanley Lambchop and his family are in British Columbia, Canada, for some skiing and winter fun. But when Stanley and his new friend Nick go snowboarding—with Stanley as the snowboard, of course—they take a midair tumble just as the wind picks up . . . and find themselves floating in an amazing Canadian cross-country journey that might just be Stanley's wildest adventure yet!

Laundry Day by Maurie J. Manning (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) 2.2: This picture book is in a graphic novel format for very young readers. In a turn of the last century New York tenement, a Jewish boy tries to find the owner of a red scarf in his diverse neighborhood. There's a nearly wordless flow to the story, as he makes his way through alleys and across rooftops with agile grace and greets neighbors from Poland, Ireland, and Jamaica, among other places. The book is appended with a set of vocabulary words from many cultures.

Locomotive by Brian Floca (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) 4.7: It is the summer of 1869, and trains, crews, and families are traveling together, riding America's brand-new transcontinental railroad.

The Loon's Necklace by Dennis Lee (CANADA) 3.3: According to Tsimshian legend, when an old man's sight was restored by Loon, he gave the bird his precious shell necklace as a reward, and that is why loons have white collars

Off We Go to Mexico by Laurie Krebs (MEXICO) 2.9 : Swim in turquoise seas, admire grey whales and monarch butterflies, trek to native villages and sing and dance to the music of Mariachi bands. Along the way, you can learn Spanish words and phrases and discover Mexican culture. Enjoy your journey!

Saturday Market by Patricia Grossman (MEXICO) 4.2: Ana and Estela sell their handmade goods at a Saturday market in Mexico.

Voyage with the Vikings by Marianne Hering (GREENLAND) 2.7: Beth and Patrick travel in Mr. Whittaker's invention, the Imagination Station, to 1000 A.D. Greenland, where they meet Erik the Red and Leif Eriksson and witness the spread of Christianity in that country. The coauthor is Paul McCusker.

South America

Ada's Violin: The Story of the Recycled Orchestra of Paraguay by Susan Hood (PARAGUAY) 4.6 : Ada Ríos grew up in Cateura, a small town in Paraguay built on a landfill. She dreamed of playing the violin, but with little money for anything but the bare essentials, it was never an option...until a music teacher named Favio Chávez arrived. He wanted to give the children of Cateura something special, so he made them instruments out of materials found in the trash. It was a crazy idea, but one that would leave Ada—and her town—forever changed. Now, the Recycled Orchestra plays venues around the world, spreading their message of hope and innovation.

Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia by Jeanette Winter (COLOMBIA) 3.4: Based on a true story, Luis has so many books in his little house in Colombia that he buys two donkeys and travels throughout the land bringing the joy of reading to children.

Carolina's Gift: A Story of Peru by Katacha Diaz (PERU) 4.1: Today is a very important day! It is market day, and Carolina and her mother are going to the plaza to find a birthday gift for Carolina's grandmother.

The Rainforest Grew All Around by Susan K. Mitchell (AMAZON RAINFOREST) 4.4: Imaginations will soar from the forest floor, up through the canopy and back down again, following the circle of life. The jungle comes alive as children learn about the creatures lurking in the lush Amazon rainforest in this clever adaptation of the song "The Green Grass Grew All Around."

The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet! By Carmen Deedy (BOLIVIA) 3.1: La Paz is a happy, but noisy village. A little peace and quiet would make it just right so the villagers elect the bossy Don Pepe as their mayor. Before long, singing of any kind is outlawed. Even the teakettle is afraid to whistle! But there is one noisy rooster who doesn't give two mangos about this mayor's silly rules. Instead, he does what roosters were born to do.

The Sock Thief: A Soccer Story by Ana Crespo (BRAZIL) 2.8: Brazilian boy Felipe wants to play soccer, but he doesn't have a soccer ball. So, when it's his turn to take one to school, he uses a little bit of creativity... and a few socks. Felipe is the sock thief, but finding socks is not that easy and the neighborhood pets make it even harder. "Au, au, au!" a dog barks in Portuguese. Felipe wonders if he'll play soccer with his friends today or if he will be caught by a tattle-tale parrot? Along the way, Felipe leaves delicious mangoes in exchange for the socks he steals. After he swipes each pair, he twists and turns them into an ever-growing soccer ball. At the end of the day, he returns each pair of socks with a note to say thank you.

Up and Down the Andes: A Peruvian Festival tale by Laurie Krebs (PERU) 6.7: Children from many areas of southern Peru use different forms of transportation to travel to the Inti Raymi festival in the city of Cusco. The book also includes facts about Peru's people and culture, the Andes Mountains, and the Inti Raymi Festival.

Europe:

The Ballymara Flood by Chad Stewart (IRELAND) 3.8: Pandemonium reigns when a boy's bathtub overflows and floods the Irish town of Ballymara.

Blueberries for the Queen (NETHERLANDS) 3.4: In the summer of 1942, when Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands lives down the road from his family's house in Massachusetts, young William decides to take her some of the blueberries he has picked. The coauthor is Katherine Paterson.

Boxes for Katje by Candace Fleming (THE NETHERLANDS) 3.5:

After World War II there is little left in Katje's town of Olst in Holland. Her family, like most Dutch families, must patch their old worn clothing and go without everyday things like soap and milk. Then one spring morning when the tulips bloom "thick and bright," Postman Kleinhoonte pedals his bicycle down Katje's street to deliver a mysterious box – a box from America! Full of soap, socks, and chocolate, the box has been sent by Rosie, an American girl from Mayfield, Indiana. Her package is part of a goodwill effort to help the people of Europe. What's inside so delights Katje that she sends off a letter of thanks – beginning an exchange that swells with so many surprises that the girls, as well as their townspeople, will never be the same.

Carnival at Candlelight (ITALY) 3.9: Jack and Annie must go and save Venice, Italy from a flood disaster

Charlotte in Giverny by Joan MacPhail Knight (FRANCE) 4.6: While living in Giverny, France, in 1892, Charlotte, a young American girl, writes a journal of her experiences among the artists there.

The Cat Who Walked Across France by Kate Banks (FRANCE) 3.6: After his owner dies, a cat wanders across the countryside of France.

Dodsworth in Paris by Tim Egan (FRANCE) 2.7: When Dodsworth and the duck vacation in Paris, they have a grand time despite running out of money and accidentally riding their bicycles in the Tour de France.

Flicka, Ricka, Dicka and Their New Skates (SWEDEN) 3.1: In Sweden while visiting their aunt and uncle at Christmas, triplets Flicka, Ricka, and Dicka are trying out their new ice skates when their dog, Mike, and new friend, Bertie, fall through thin ice.

Framed in France by Jeff Brown (FRANCE) 4.5: Stanley Lambchop is whisked away to Paris, where he must help catch a mastermind art thief at the historical Louvre museum by posing a painting

Goran's Great Escape by Astrid Lindgren (SWEDEN) 4.2: It is a sunny Easter Sunday in Sweden, and the farmer's family is having breakfast. Suddenly their angry bull, Goran, breaks loose, and an unlikely hero steps forward to try to tame him.

Isabel Saves the Prince: Based on a True Story of Isabel I of Spain by Jane Holub (SPAIN) 3.1: Young Isabel and her brother, Alfonso, are summoned by the king to live with him. When the king's men accuse Alfonso of treason, Isabel knows she must step up and do what's right for her brother and for Spain.

Katje the Windmill Cat by Gretchen Woelfle (THE NETHERLANDS) 3.1: When a dike breaks during a violent storm, flooding a little Dutch town, Nico and Lena's baby is saved by Katje, Nico's heroic cat.

Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot by Margot Raven (GERMANY) 4.7: A True Story of the Berlin Airlift and the Candy that Dropped from the Sky. This is the true story of a seven-year-old girl named Mercedes who lived in West Berlin during the Airlift and of the American who came to be known as the Chocolate Pilot.

Minette's Feast: The Delicious Story of Julia Child and Her Cat by Susanna Reich (FRANCE) 5.1: A story about Julia Child's cat in France.

The Mitten by Jan Brett (THE UKRAINE): In this classic Ukranian folktale, when Nicki drops his white mitten in the snow, he goes on without realizing that it is missing. One by one, woodland animals find it and crawl in; first, a curious mole, then a rabbit, a badger and others, each one larger than the last. Finally, a big brown bear is followed in by a tiny brown mouse and what happens next makes for a wonderfully funny climax.

Monday with a Mad Genius by Mary Pope Osborne (ITALY) 3.8: Jack and Annie travel back in the Magic Tree House to Florence, Italy, to find the second of four secrets of happiness. To do this, they must help Leonardo da Vinci all day, "morning, noon, and afternoon, till the night bird sings its song."

Night of the New Magicians by Mary Pope Osborne (FRANCE) 4.0: Jack and Annie travel to the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889 in the Magic Tree House. They have to save four new magicians (Alexander Graham Bell, Louis Pasteur, Thomas Edison, and Gustave Eiffel), before an evil sorcerer kidnaps them and steals the secrets of their magic. As it turns out, there is no evil sorcerer and the only one that shows up is Merlin himself who had wanted Jack and Annie to meet the four.

On a Mission for Her Majesty by Jeff Brown (UNITED KINGDOM) 4.1: Stanley and his family receive an unexpected phone call from Scotland Yard. Stanley has been invited to London to help with a top-secret case. One of the crown jewels was stolen years ago. The Queen has long suspected Lady Laura, her distant cousin, of the theft, and Lady Laura will be in London to attend a formal ball at Buckingham Palace. If she has the jewel, this will be the perfect time to wear it. And that's where Stanley comes in.

The Story of Ferdinand by Munro Leaf (SPAIN) 3.7: Ferdinand is a little bull who would rather just sit and smell the flowers than fight.

A Walk in London by Salvato Rubbino (UNITED KINGDOM) 3.9: London is calling! Come along on a mother-daughter day trip as they wend their way past the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, through Trafalgar Square, and on to Covent Garden. Listen closely and you might just learn a secret about the Whispering Gallery in Saint Paul's Cathedral. Then it's on to the Tower of London and the river Thames, where a fold-out surprise awaits. Readers will be enchanted by Salvatore Rubbino's cheerful, sophisticated illustrations and abundant trivia about the one and only city of London. Cheerio!

Zoe Sophia's Scrapbook: An Adventure in Venice by Claudia Maunder (ITALY) 4.0: Nine-year-old Zoe Sophia travels with Mickey, her dachshund, from New York City to Venice, Italy, for a visit with a famous author--her great-aunt Dorothy. The coauthor is Elisa Smalley.

Africa

Akimbo and the Lions (BOTSWANA) 5.0: When Akimbo and his park ranger father unintentionally capture a lion cub near an African game park, Akimbo wants to keep the cub.

Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti by Gerald McDermott (GHANA) 2.8: In trying to determine which of his six sons to reward for saving his life, Anansi the Spider is responsible for placing the moon in the sky.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind Picture Book Edition by William Kamkwamba (MALAWI) 5.3: William Kamkwamba details how he ignored naysayers and was able to bring electricity and running water to his desperately poor village in Africa when he built a makeshift windmill out of scrap metal and spare parts. The coauthor is Bryan Mealer.

Chirchir is Singing by Kelly Cunnane (KENYA) 3.2: Chirchir, a young girl in Kenya, wants to be useful, but her botched attempts at helping send her looking for the one thing she does best.

Give Up Gecko: A Folktale from Uganda by Margaret Read McDonald (UGANDA) 1.7: “Elephant! Elephant! Heavy! Heavy! Heavy! Elephant! Elephant! STOMP! STOMP! STOMP!” Elephant was shouting and stomping. But could he stomp a hole deep enough to reach water for the thirsty animals? Maybe...maybe not. All the animals tried until tiny Gecko Gecko takes a turn. He is small...but he is determined. And he's not going to give up! Kids will love to chant and stomp along to this Ugandan folktale.

The Great Egyptian Grave Robbery by Jeff Brown (EGYPT)4.2: Ever since Stanley was flattened by a bulletin board, there are places he can get to that no one else can. So when Stanley receives a letter from an archaeologist, he travels by airmail to Egypt to help find an ancient treasure deep in the heart of a great pyramid. But what if even the flattest boy on Earth can't wriggle out of this dark tomb—and the terrible mess he finds himself in?

Head, Body, Legs: A Story from Liberia by Won-Ldy Paye (LIBERIA)2.3: In this tale from the Dan people of Liberia, Head, Arms, Body, and Legs learn that they do better when they work together. The coauthor is Margaret H. Lippert.

The Herd Boy by Niki Daly (SOUTH AFRICA) 3.6: While doing a good job of caring for his grandfather's sheep and goats on the grasslands of South Africa, young Malusi dreams of everything from owning his own dog to becoming president one day.

The Lion's Whiskers by Nancy Day (SUDAN) 4.0: In this tale from the Amhara people of Ethiopia, a patient woman uses her experience with a wild lion to win the love of her new stepson.

I Lost My tooth in Africa by Penda Diakite (MALI) 3.0: While visiting her father's family in Mali, a young girl loses a tooth, places it under a calabash gourd, and receives a hen and a rooster from the African Tooth Fairy.

Lions at Lunchtime (KENYA) 3.0: Jack and Annie are whisked off to the vast plains of Africa, where they must solve Morgan le Fay's third magical riddle. But that's only the beginning! Once the riddle is solved, they still have to get past a pride of lions, a humongous herd of rampaging wildebeests, and one very hungry Masai warrior.

Muktar and the Camels by Janet Graber (KENYA/SOMALIA) 3.3: Muktar, an eleven-year-old refugee living in a Kenyan orphanage, dreams of tending camels again, as he did with his nomadic family in Somalia, and has a chance to prove himself when a traveling librarian with an injured camel arrives at his school.

Mummies in the Morning by Mary Pope Osborne (EGYPT) 2.7: In Ancient Egypt, Jack and Annie help Queen Hutepi find her missing Book of the Dead.

My Heart Will Not Sit Down by Mara Rockcliff (CAMEROON)4.4: In 1931 Cameroon, young Kedi is upset to learn that children in her American teacher's village of New York are going hungry because of the Great Depression, and she asks her mother, neighbors, and even the headman for money to help.

My Rolls and Piles of Coins by Tololwa Mallel (TANZANIA) 3.8: A Tanzanian boy saves his coins to buy a bicycle so that he can help his parents carry goods to market, but then he discovers that in spite of all he has saved, he still does not have enough money.

Pretty Salma: A Red Riding Hood Story from Africa by Niki Daly (GHANA) 3.2: In this version of LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD set in Ghana, a young girl fails to heed Granny's warning about the dangers of talking to strangers.

We all Went on Safaria by Laurie Krebs (TANZANIA) 1.9: Friends embark on an exciting counting adventure through the grasslands of Tanzania.

Asia

Aani and the Tree Huggers by Jeannine Atkins (INDIA) 3.3: Based on true events in India in the 1970s, young Aani and the other women in her village defend their forest from developers by wrapping their arms around the trees, making it impossible to cut them down.

The Archer and the Sun: A Tale from China by Rob Cleveland (CHINA) 3.2: This book is a folktale from China that explains why the sun goes away at night and comes back again in the morning.

Day of the Dragon King by Mary Pope Osborne (CHINA) 3.3: Jack and Annie travel to China as it was 2,000 years in their past. The Dragon King is also known as Emperor Qin.

The Elephant's Friend and Other Tales from Ancient India by Marcia Williams (INDIA) 3.9: This collection of eight stories are well-known Indian folktales, Hitopadesha tales, Jataka tales, and Panchantra tales and are presented with cartoonlike illustrations.

The Empty Pot by Demi (CHINA) 3.8: When Ping admits that he is the only child in China unable to grow a flower from the seeds distributed by the Emperor, he is rewarded for his honesty.

The Firekeeper's Son by Linda Sue Park (KOREA) 3.0 : Set in Korea this interesting book about a firekeeper and his son is fascinating. This story is a great introduction to discussing doing the right thing even if you don't want to. If the Emperor sees that the chain of bonfires has made it from the sea to his castle then he knows all is well. If not, he will send soldiers. Sang – he wants to see soldiers. Should he light the fire or not?

The Girl Who Wore Too Much: A Folktale from Thailand by Margaret MacDonald (THAILAND): 2.4 Aree cannot decide which of her many silken dresses and lavish jewels to wear to the dance, so she wears them all.

A Grain of Rice by Helena Pittman (CHINA) 4.9: A clever, cheerful, hard-working farmer's son wins the hand of a Chinese princess by outwitting her father the Emperor, who treasures his daughter more than all the rice in China.

Grandma and the Great Gourd Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Susy Pilgrim Waters (INDIA)3.9: On her way to visit her daughter on the other side of the jungle, Grandma encounters a hungry fox, bear, and tiger, and although she convinces them to wait for her return trip, she still must find a way to outwit them all.

The Japanese Ninja Surprise by Sarah Pennypacker (JAPAN) 4.2: Flat Stanley mails himself to Japan to visit his hero, movie star ninja Oda Nobu, and becomes his personal ninja. Based on characters created by Jeff Brown.

Lon Po-Po by Ed Young (CHINA) 3.5: Three sisters staying home alone are endangered by a hungry wolf who is disguised as their grandmother.

Monsoon by Uma Krishnaswami (INDIA) 3.4: A child describes waiting for the monsoon rains to arrive and the worry that they will not come.

Night of the Ninjas by Mary Pope Osborne (JAPAN) 2.7 : In ancient Japan, Jack and Annie encounter ninjas and samurai and get a moonstone.

The Story of Little Babjai by Helen Bannerman (INDIA) 3.9: Little Babaji faces a succession of huge, luxuriously supple tigers whose eventual meltdown provides him, Papaji, and sari-clad Mamaji with a supper of pancakes.

Tigers At Twilight by Mary Pope Osborne (INDIA) 3.0: Jack and Annie explore the Indian jungle to find a gift from a forest far away. Along the way, they work together to save a tiger from a steel trap.

The Umbrella Queen by Shirin Bridges (THAILAND)4.2: In a village in Thailand where everyone makes umbrellas, young Noot dreams of painting the most beautiful one and leading the annual parade as Umbrella Queen, but her unconventional designs displease her parents.

Yasmin's Hammer by Ann Malaspina (BANGLADESH)3.4: In Dhaka, Bangladesh, as two girls work hard all day to help support their family by chipping bricks into small pieces, older sister Yasmin seeks a way to attend school and learn to read so that she can one day have a better life.

Where the Winds Meet Mi-hwa Joo (MONGOLIA) 4.7: This is the story of a wind that wanders over Mongolia, a country that is well known for its deserts and grasslands. Travel with the wind and discover traditional Mongolian life.

Oceania/Australia

Are We There Yet? By Alison Lester (AUSTRALIA) 4.1: Join Grace and her family on an adventure as they camp and experience many places that make up Australia.

The Australian Boomerang Bonanza by Jeff Brown (Australia) 4.1: Stanley and his brother, Arthur, have just won a trip to Australia! They fly down under on a private jet and go diving in the Great

Barrier Reef. But when Arthur launches him into the air for a game of boomerang, Stanley is accidentally sent spinning into an amazing adventure deep in the heart of the Australian outback!

The Biggest Frog in Australia by Susan Roth (AUSTRALIA) 3.3: When a thirsty frog drinks up all the water in Australia, the other animals must think of a way to make him give it up.

Diary of a Wombat by Jackie French (AUSTRALIA) 2.5: In his diary, a wombat describes his life of eating, sleeping, and getting to know some new human neighbors.

Dingoes at Dinnertime by Mary Pope Osborne (AUSTRALIA) 3.2: The magic tree house whisks Jack and Annie away to Australia, where they must save some animals from a wildfire.

Elizabeth, Queen of the Seas by Lynne Cox (NEW ZEALAND) 4.5: This book contains the incredible story of Elizabeth, a real-life elephant seal that made her home in the Avon River in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand.

Inky's Amazing Escape by Sy Montgomery: How a very smart Octopus found his way home (NEW ZEALAND) 3.6: Inky had been at the New Zealand aquarium since 2014 after being taken in by a fisherman who found him at sea. Inky had been getting used to his new environment, but one night he escaped back to the sea.

Kangaroos by Kate Riggs (AUSTRALIA) 1.2: Through simple text and photographs, emergent readers are introduced to kangaroos, covering their growth process, behaviors, their home in Australia, and such defining features as their big back feet.

Old Shell New Shell: A Coral Reef Tale by Helen Ward (AUSTRALIA) 3.0: A hermit crab who has outgrown his shell searches for a new one among the creatures of Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

Watch out Snail by Gay Hay (NEW ZEALAND) 2.5: A Powelliphanta, a large but rare carnivorous snail from New Zealand, spends the night searching for food and trying to avoid the many animals that prey on snails.

Antarctica

The Adventures of Marco and Polo by Dieter Wiesmülle (ANTARCTICA) 3.4: Marco Monkey grew up in a land of rain forests. Polo Penguin had never left Antarctica. But the two adventurers share a curiosity about the world around them that leads them on a globe-spanning expedition.

Antarctica by Helen Cowcher (ANTARCTICA) 3.2: A brief introduction to the Antarctic and the animals that make this their home.

Eve of the Emperor Penguin by Mary Pope Osborne (ANTARCTICA) 3.7: Jack and Annie arrive on the one continent they haven't visited before: Antarctica! What can they hope to learn about happiness in such a barren place? Only the penguins know for sure...Jack and Annie are about to find out!

Little Penguin: The Emperor of Antarctica by Jonathan London (ANTARCTICA) 4.0: In Antarctica, Little Emperor grows from a hatchling that depends on his parents for food and warmth to an adult, ready to live in the sea on his own.

Polar Opposites by Erik Brooks (ANTARCTICA) 1.1: Ambrose, a polar bear, and Zina, a penguin, are very different but can still find a way to meet in the middle

The Story of the Samson by Kathleen Duple (ANTARCTICA) 3.9: Sam's grandfather, once a sailor on the ship "Samson," retells Sam the stories of his time at sea, including rescuing Shackleton's men and exploring Antarctica.

Tom Crean's Rabbit: A True Story from Scott's Last Voyage by Meredith Hooper (ANTARCTICA) 3.9: Robert Scott, captain of the "Terra Nova," and Tom Crean, a sailor, travel across Antarctica with many animals on board their ship, but when Tom finds a rabbit, he tries to find it a safe nest to have her babies. This story is based on actual events.

A Trip to the Bottom of the World with Mouse by Frank Viva (ANTARCTICA) 1.0: A boy and a mouse take a bumpy sea journey to the majestic expanses of the Antarctic, where they see the sights and meet new friends.