How many books should a 7-year-old read over winter break?

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How many books should a 7-year-old read over winter break? Peabody's challenge says ten in sixteen days, read-alouds counting, plus ideas to get there without a fight.

Peabody's answer is ten: on its Winter Break challenge a 7-year-old is in the 5-to-7 group, whose finish line is ten books in the sixteen days from Saturday 19 December 2026 to Sunday 3 January 2027, and books read aloud to them count. That is a number I chose for the challenge, not a rule from a study, and below is how it was sized and how to reach it. The challenge is free, like the rest of Peabody through the end of 2026, and nothing a child logs leaves the device.

Start the Winter Break challenge, or read on.

The three finish lines

The tracker asks a reader's age once, with three big boxes, and sets the finish line from it:

- Age: 5 to 7 · Books to the top of the mountain: 10, and books read aloud to them count
- Age: 8 to 10 · Books to the top of the mountain: 6
- Age: 11 and up · Books to the top of the mountain: 4

A child who is signed in to Peabody is not asked: their grade decides instead. Each book climbs the reader one step up a snowy mountain on the screen.

What ten books in sixteen days looks like

Ten books in sixteen days is about one every day and a half. For a 7-year-old, many of those will be short. Here is what a book can be on Peabody's own shelf, read aloud at about 120 words a minute, the pace Peabody's club kits use:

- A book: Duck Says Sorry · Level: 7 · Words: 276 · Read aloud, about: 2 minutes
- A book: Look at Ants (a true book) · Level: 7 · Words: 273 · Read aloud, about: 2 minutes
- A book: Little Red Riding Hood · Level: 7 · Words: 367 · Read aloud, about: 3 minutes
- A book: Eeyore's Birthday · Level: 8 · Words: 815 · Read aloud, about: 7 minutes
- A book: Cinderella · Level: 9 · Words: 1,069 · Read aloud, about: 9 minutes

Level 7 is Peabody's 2nd-grade level and level 8 its 3rd. A 7-year-old is often in 2nd grade, but pick the level that fits your child, not their birthday. A picture book from the library shelf at home counts just the same, and so does a chapter book read together over a week.

Why ten, and not more

A finish line works when a child can see it from the start. Ten is a number a 7-year-old can count on their fingers, and with read-alouds counting it is reachable in a holiday that also has visits, travel and a cold or two. A bigger number would turn the break into homework; a smaller one would be over by Christmas.

If ten is wrong for your child, set your own number at home. The paper weekly reading log has a row for each day, a column for pages or minutes, and a line for a grown-up to sign, so it works for any goal you agree together.

Ideas to get to ten

- A book at bedtime every night. Read-alouds count for ages 5 to 7, so this alone can get there.
- Mix short and long. A long chapter book is one book; a run of short ones keeps the mountain moving in the same week.
- Try a true book. Look at Ants, above, or a book about the weather from home.
- Use the bingo squares as prompts. Book Bingo has twenty-five kinds of books, including snow, rain or wind, a story at night and a book read aloud to someone. Any of them is a good reason to pick the next one.
- Let the tracker choose. What should I read next asks three questions with three big boxes each and picks one: a free Peabody story, a book from one of the kids' lists, or a series.
- Borrow from a list. Winter books for kids and the top 25 books for a 2nd grader are Peabody's kids' lists, with buy links that are plain searches and no affiliate tag.
- Print before you travel. The chart prints with empty steps to colour by hand and a table for the titles.
- One face each. Brothers and sisters each pick an animal face on the same device, up to six, so nobody's count gets mixed up with a sibling's.

After the break

There is no certificate for half way. If the mountain stalls at six, January is a fresh start: the January challenge colours one square for each day with a finished book or twenty minutes of reading, twenty days out of thirty-one finish it, and a missed day just stays empty. For a longer goal with no end date, 100 Books is a ten-by-ten chart.

Every book on the challenge can come from Peabody's library: 425 free stories on 19 levels, each with a to read it aloud.

Questions parents ask

Does a book I read aloud to my 7-year-old count?

Yes. For ages 5 to 7, books read aloud to the child count towards the ten.

Is there a prize at the top?

The certificate, which prints at the finish line and not before. There are no prizes and no leaderboards, so nobody is ranked against a classmate or a sibling.

What does Peabody see?

That a book was logged in the Winter Break challenge, and whether it was that reader's first book in it or a later one. Never the book, the title, the face or the age. The tracker needs no account.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/how-many-books-over-winter-break