FREE LIBRARY RESOURCE

AWE Learning 2026 Summer Reading Guide

Unearth Discovery Through Play, Exploration, and Digital Learning

Inspired by the 2026 Collaborative Summer Library Program theme: Unearth a Story™

❗ **Additional Digital & Printable Resources Included at the End of This Guide to Help Support and Extend Your Summer Reading Programs.**

Designed for public library summer programming

Welcome to Summer Learning with AWE

Summer is one of the busiest and most exciting times of year for public libraries. Families visit more often, children spend more time exploring, and libraries become important community hubs for discovery, creativity, and continued learning.

AWE Learning workstations can help libraries support summer engagement while also helping combat summer learning loss through structured, skill-building digital learning experiences.

Unlike passive screen time, AWE workstations encourage children to actively participate through touchscreen, mouse, and keyboard interaction while building confidence in reading, STEM, coding, problem-solving, creativity, and digital literacy.

This guide is designed to help libraries:

- Increase workstation engagement during summer programming
- Encourage repeat visits and independent exploration
- Connect AWE activities to summer reading themes
- Support school readiness and digital literacy development
- Make promotion simple and easy for library staff

Each section includes featured AWE experiences tied to discovery, exploration, storytelling, science, coding, and creativity.

Libraries following the 2026 CSLP theme “Unearth a Story™” can easily tie these ideas into their existing summer programming. Libraries using independent summer themes can still use the flexible alternate recommendations throughout the guide.

Before Summer Begins: Set Up PEPs

Personalized Education Plans

One of the best ways libraries can encourage repeat engagement during summer learning is by setting up Personalized Education Plans (PEPs) for returning users.

PEPs allow libraries to create more personalized workstation experiences while helping track learning progress, interests, and activity over time. They can also help encourage repeat visits throughout summer reading programs by giving children a more consistent and individualized experience.

Benefits of using PEPs during summer learning include:

- Encouraging children to return to the workstation
- Supporting personalized learning experiences
- Helping track progress and interests over time
- Encouraging independent exploration
- Making workstation learning feel rewarding and consistent

To create a PEP, librarians can access the workstation's Admin Panel and select the Personalized Education Plan (PEP) feature. From there, staff can build customized learning experiences by choosing specific titles, STREAM categories, age groups, languages, and learning topics that align with summer reading themes or program goals. Libraries can create themed PEPs focused on areas such as dinosaurs, storytelling, coding, STEM exploration, bilingual learning, or early literacy. Once saved and activated, the selected activities will appear for users assigned to that PEP, helping create a more personalized and consistent learning experience throughout the summer.

PEPs can be especially valuable during summer programming because they help children continue exploring literacy, STEM, coding, and digital learning activities throughout the season. They can also be tailored around weekly themes, learning goals, age groups, or special summer reading focuses such as dinosaurs, discovery, storytelling, science, coding, or bilingual learning.

Librarian Tips

- Offer to create PEPs for frequent workstation users
- Align PEP recommendations with weekly summer reading themes or events
- Encourage children to return weekly to continue progress
- Use PEPs to recommend new games and learning paths
- Mention PEPs during summer reading sign-ups or family programs
- Place simple signage near the workstation encouraging caregivers to ask staff about Personalized Education Plans

Discovery Path 1

Fossils & Dinosaur Discoveries

Theme Connection

Dinosaurs, fossils, excavation, and prehistoric exploration naturally connect to the "Unearth a Story™" theme by encouraging children to uncover the past through science, storytelling, and discovery. These activities help transform the workstation into a digital discovery zone where children can explore ancient worlds, investigate fossils, and build foundational STEM and literacy skills.

Featured AWE Experiences

ABC Dinos (Ages 2–5)

Children practice letters, vocabulary, visual memory, letter sounds, and early writing skills through dinosaur-themed literacy activities. The dinosaur setting makes early reading practice feel playful and connected to the summer theme.

Why it fits:

- Strong "dinosaur discovery" connection
- Early literacy + vocabulary building
- Great for younger summer readers
- Reinforces letter recognition and phonics

Dino Tim (Ages 3–6)

Children explore colors, shapes, sequencing, coordination, and fine motor development through dinosaur-based activities and prehistoric adventures.

Why it fits:

- Direct fossil/dinosaur connection
- Encourages exploration and discovery
- Strong preschool and kindergarten fit
- Supports early STEM concepts and spatial reasoning

Earth Science (Ages 7–13)

Includes learning modules about sedimentary rocks, fossils, volcanoes, tectonics, weather, and Earth systems.

Why it fits:

- Closely aligns with excavation, fossils, and geology themes
- Supports older elementary and middle-grade learners
- Excellent connection to museums, paleontology, and scientific discovery
- Reinforces science vocabulary and observation skills

Flexible Alternate Picks

Find It: Animals Around the World (Ages 2–6)

Children explore rainforests, oceans, grasslands, and polar environments through interactive discovery-based storytelling.

Best for libraries focusing on:

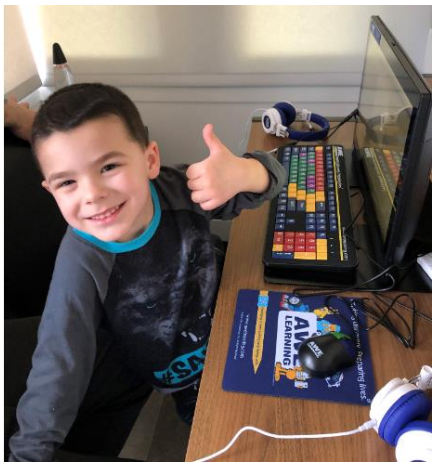
- Nature themes
- Animal discoveries
- Environmental exploration
- Adventure-based summer programming

Life Science (Ages 7–13)

Explores food chains, plants, butterflies, ecosystems, and living organisms.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Biology
- Nature and ecosystems
- Outdoor discovery themes
- Science-centered summer learning



Skill Focus

- Early literacy
- Vocabulary development
- STEM learning
- Observation skills
- Sequencing
- Digital literacy
- Fine motor coordination

Why It Matters

Discovery-based learning helps children stay engaged during summer months while continuing to build literacy, STEM, and digital learning skills outside the classroom. Dinosaur and fossil themes naturally encourage curiosity, imagination, and independent exploration.

Try This on AWE

Encourage children to:

- “Dig” for a new dinosaur game
- Explore a fossil or Earth science activity
- Complete a dinosaur-themed learning challenge
- Compare prehistoric animals and habitats

Librarian Tip

Create a small “Discovery Dig Site” near the workstation using dinosaur footprints, fossil visuals, or excavation-themed signage to help attract attention to the workstation area.

Discovery Path 2

Hidden Worlds & Exploration

Theme Connection

Every map, mystery, hidden location, and journey helps children become explorers discovering new stories, places, and cultures. This pathway supports curiosity-driven learning and aligns perfectly with the idea of uncovering stories around the world. Children are encouraged to investigate unfamiliar environments, solve puzzles, navigate new spaces, and build confidence through exploration-based learning experiences.

Featured AWE Experiences

Geography Games (Ages 5–10)

Children explore countries, continents, maps, flags, landmarks, and world geography through interactive activities and puzzles.

Why it fits:

- Strong “exploration” connection
- Encourages curiosity about the world
- Reinforces map-reading and geography skills
- Great tie-in to discovery and travel themes
- Supports independent learning and digital navigation

Geo Flags Academy (Ages 6–10)

Children learn capitals, country flags, geography concepts, and global locations through quiz-style challenges and memory-building activities.

Why it fits:

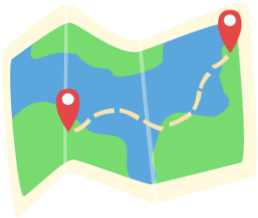
- Encourages world exploration and cultural discovery
- Strengthens memory and critical thinking skills
- Supports geography and social studies learning
- Excellent for older elementary learners looking for challenge-based activities

Find It: A Trip to the City (Ages 2–6)

Children explore museums, transportation systems, neighborhoods, stores, parks, and city environments through interactive storytelling and hidden-object discovery.

Why it fits:

- Encourages discovery through observation and exploration
- Strong fit for younger learners and preschool audiences
- Introduces children to community spaces and environments
- Builds vocabulary, attention to detail, and curiosity



Flexible Alternate Picks

Contraption Maker (Ages 5–12)

Children build inventions, engineer chain reactions, solve puzzles, and experiment with creative problem-solving tools.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Engineering and makerspace themes
- Creative experimentation and invention
- Problem-solving and critical thinking
- Hands-on exploration and discovery

Graphing Puzzle (Ages 10–13)

Children uncover hidden mystery images using graphing, coordinates, logic, and math-based problem-solving activities.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Mystery and hidden-image discovery themes
- Math enrichment and logic-building
- Independent exploration and puzzle-solving
- Upper elementary and middle-grade learners

Skill Focus

- Geography
- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Exploration
- Reading comprehension
- Digital navigation
- Observation skills
- Independent learning

Why It Matters

Exploration-based learning supports curiosity, independent thinking, and digital confidence while helping children discover new places, cultures, environments, and ideas. These activities encourage children to actively investigate the world around them while strengthening literacy, geography, logic, and digital learning skills during the summer months.

Try This on AWE

Encourage children to:

- Explore a new country or landmark
- Solve a mystery or hidden-image challenge
- Navigate through a city or geography game
- Try an exploration-themed activity they have never played before

- Complete a world discovery challenge during their visit

Librarian Tip

Create a small “Explorer Station” near the workstation with maps, signs, arrows, globes, or travel-themed visuals to encourage children to begin their own discovery journey.

Discovery Path 3

Unearth New Stories

Theme Connection

Every community, folktale, book, and imagination holds stories waiting to be discovered. This pathway focuses on literacy, storytelling, creativity, and interactive reading experiences that help children build confidence while exploring stories independently. Through narration, sequencing, vocabulary-building, and read-aloud support, children are encouraged to uncover new adventures, connect with characters, and strengthen foundational literacy skills throughout the summer.

Featured AWE Experiences

Beginning Reading (Ages 2–6)

Children engage with interactive read-aloud stories, vocabulary support, early phonics activities, and foundational literacy games designed to strengthen early reading confidence.

Why it fits:

- Supports early literacy and school readiness
- Encourages independent story exploration
- Builds vocabulary and phonics skills
- Strong fit for emerging readers and preschool learners

Goldilocks & the Three Bears (Ages 3–8)

Children interact with classic storytelling through narration, sequencing, music, reading support, and creative story-building activities.

Why it fits:

- Strong connection to storytelling and folktales
- Encourages listening comprehension and sequencing
- Makes reading interactive and engaging
- Supports imagination and creativity

Little Red Riding Hood (Ages 3–8)

Children explore a familiar story through interactive reading, narration, visual storytelling, and hands-on literacy activities.

Why it fits:

- Encourages story discovery and imaginative play
- Supports comprehension and sequencing skills
- Builds confidence with independent reading exploration
- Excellent fit for summer reading engagement

Flexible Alternate Picks

Billy Goats Gruff (Ages 2–8)

Children interact with storytelling, sequencing, narration, and literacy-focused activities inspired by the classic tale.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Fairy tale and folktale themes
- Read-aloud experiences
- Story sequencing and comprehension
- Younger literacy audiences

Mia Reading (Ages 5–9)

Children strengthen vocabulary, phonics, comprehension, sentence structure, and reading confidence through narrative-driven literacy activities.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Independent reading growth
- Summer literacy support
- Vocabulary development
- Reading intervention and reinforcement

Bilingual Story & Language Titles (Various Ages)

Interactive stories and literacy activities support multilingual learners through read-aloud experiences, vocabulary development, and language exploration.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Multilingual communities
- Family literacy engagement
- Language-learning support
- Inclusive summer reading programming

Skill Focus

- Reading comprehension
- Vocabulary development
- Story sequencing
- Listening skills
- Independent learning
- Creativity
- Phonics
- Early literacy confidence

Why It Matters

Interactive storytelling experiences help children continue building literacy skills during the summer months while encouraging imagination, confidence, and independent exploration. Read-aloud support, narration, and engaging story-based activities help make reading feel approachable, exciting, and rewarding for learners at different developmental stages.

Try This on AWE

Encourage children to:

- Listen to a new interactive story
- Complete a read-aloud activity
- Retell a favorite story using sequencing activities
- Explore a folktale or fairy tale they have never tried before
- Practice independent reading during each library visit

Librarian Tip

Create a small “Story Discovery Corner” near the workstation using books, speech bubbles, storytelling signs, or themed visuals to encourage children to explore interactive reading activities.

Discovery Path 4

STEM Investigators

Theme Connection

Science, experimentation, coding, engineering, and problem-solving are all part of discovering how the world works. This pathway encourages children to investigate patterns, solve challenges, test ideas, and explore STEM concepts through hands-on digital learning experiences. Activities focus on curiosity-driven exploration while helping children strengthen logic, sequencing, math, and critical thinking skills.

Featured AWE Experiences

Connect the Dots (Ages 6–12)

Children practice coding logic, sequencing, and pattern recognition through interactive puzzle-solving challenges.

Why it fits:

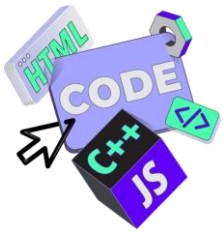
- Strong coding and logic connection
- Encourages problem-solving and sequencing
- Builds STEM confidence through play
- Excellent for upper elementary learners

Fox Factory (Ages 7–11)

Children explore coding fundamentals while rebuilding and organizing a world through logic, sequencing, automation, and experimentation.

Why it fits:

- Introduces coding in a playful, approachable way
- Supports computational thinking and STEM exploration
- Encourages experimentation and strategic thinking
- Strong “discovery through technology” connection



Flexible Alternate Picks

Geometry Shapes – Kindergarten (Ages 4–7)

Children practice identifying, tracing, sorting, comparing, and exploring 2D and 3D shapes through interactive math and geometry activities.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Early STEM development
- Math readiness and spatial reasoning
- Hands-on geometry exploration
- Preschool and kindergarten learning

Math Doodles (Ages 5–12)

Children solve problems involving fractions, geometry, logic, patterns, measurement, and visual math challenges through interactive activities.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Math enrichment
- Logic and reasoning challenges
- STEM summer learning
- Independent problem-solving

Skill Focus

- STEM learning
- Coding
- Logic
- Sequencing
- Scientific thinking
- Problem-solving
- Math skills
- Critical thinking

Why It Matters

STEM-focused activities help children continue practicing important academic and digital learning skills while school is out. Exploration-based STEM experiences encourage curiosity, persistence, experimentation, and confidence through interactive, hands-on learning.

Try This on AWE

Encourage children to:

- Complete a coding challenge
- Try a new STEM activity each visit
- Solve a logic or sequencing puzzle
- Explore a math or engineering game
- Build confidence through experimentation and discovery

Librarian Tip

Create a small “STEM Investigation Station” near the workstation using gears, lightbulbs, coding signs, or science-themed visuals to encourage exploration and experimentation.

Discovery Path 5

Around the World

Theme Connection

Every culture, language, community, and tradition has stories waiting to be discovered and shared. This pathway encourages children to explore global cultures, languages, geography, and communication through interactive literacy and learning experiences. Activities help children build cultural awareness while supporting language development and curiosity about the world around them.

Featured AWE Experiences

Bilingual Spanish Literacy Activities

Children strengthen literacy and vocabulary skills through interactive Spanish-language learning activities designed to support multilingual learners and language exploration.

Why it fits:

- Supports bilingual literacy development
- Encourages language discovery and exploration
- Excellent for multilingual communities
- Strengthens vocabulary and reading confidence

Bilingual French Literacy Activities

Children explore early literacy, vocabulary, pronunciation, and language development through engaging French-language activities.

Why it fits:

- Encourages cultural and language exploration
- Supports multilingual and bilingual learning goals
- Strong fit for diverse communities and family engagement
- Builds confidence with language learning through play

Learning Languages with Emma (Ages 5–10)

Children practice vocabulary, pronunciation, language recognition, and communication skills through interactive multilingual learning activities.

Why it fits:

- Introduces children to multiple languages and cultures
- Supports listening comprehension and vocabulary growth
- Encourages global curiosity and exploration
- Excellent fit for language discovery themes

Flexible Alternate Picks

Little Pim Language Titles (Ages 2–6)

Children explore animals, colors, numbers, emotions, and everyday vocabulary through immersive language-learning experiences.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Early language immersion
- Family literacy programs
- Preschool bilingual learning

- Younger learners and caregivers

USA Map (Ages 8–12)

Children explore geography, states, landmarks, and community connections through interactive map-based learning activities.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Community and cultural exploration
- Geography and map-reading skills
- American landmarks and regions
- Travel and discovery themes

Skill Focus

- Language development
- Cultural awareness
- Vocabulary
- Reading skills
- Listening comprehension
- Geography
- Communication skills
- Global exploration

Why It Matters

Language-rich learning experiences help children build communication skills, cultural awareness, and confidence while encouraging curiosity about the world around them. Interactive bilingual and geography-based activities also help libraries create inclusive, welcoming learning environments for diverse communities.

Try This on AWE

Encourage children to:

- Learn a new word in another language
- Explore a different country or culture
- Try a bilingual literacy activity

- Practice geography and map-reading skills
- Discover a story from another part of the world

Librarian Tip

Create a small “Around the World” display near the workstation with maps, flags, globes, or multilingual signs to encourage cultural exploration and language discovery.

Discovery Path 6

Future Discoveries & Coding Adventures

Theme Connection

Discovery is not only about uncovering the past — it is also about building the future through technology, coding, engineering, and digital creativity. This pathway encourages children to explore computer science, sequencing, logic, and problem-solving through interactive learning experiences that help prepare them for future digital environments.

Featured AWE Experiences

RoboGarden Coding

Children explore coding concepts through guided, play-based learning journeys focused on sequencing, logic, debugging, and problem-solving.

Why it fits:

- Strong connection to future-ready learning
- Introduces coding in an approachable, guided format
- Builds computer science and sequencing skills
- Encourages creativity and experimentation through play

Connect Diagonally (Ages 6–12)

Children strengthen logic, sequencing, and coding-style thinking through puzzle-solving and pattern-recognition activities.

Why it fits:

- Encourages strategic thinking and problem-solving
- Supports computational reasoning and sequencing
- Great for independent STEM exploration
- Builds digital confidence through interactive challenges

Flexible Alternate Picks

MathPup Draw Coordinate (Ages 8–12)

Children practice graphing, coordinate plotting, sequencing, and math problem-solving to reveal hidden images and complete interactive challenges.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Math and coding connections
- Logic and sequencing skills
- Technology-based problem-solving
- Upper elementary STEM learning

Kids Telling Time (Ages 6–10)

Children strengthen time-telling, sequencing, navigation, and problem-solving skills through interactive activities and games.

Best for libraries focusing on:

- Digital navigation and mouse skills
- Independent learning practice
- Problem-solving and sequencing

- Foundational math and logic development

Skill Focus

- Coding
- Sequencing
- Logic
- Problem-solving
- Computer science
- Digital literacy
- Strategic thinking
- Technology confidence

Why It Matters

Coding and digital learning experiences help children build real computer confidence while strengthening problem-solving, sequencing, and logical thinking skills. These activities prepare children for future learning environments while making technology feel creative, approachable, and engaging.

Try This on AWE

Encourage children to:

- Complete a coding journey or challenge
- Try a new logic or sequencing activity
- Solve a digital puzzle
- Explore a technology-based learning game
- Practice mouse, keyboard, and navigation skills

Librarian Tip

Create a small “Future Inventors Lab” near the workstation using coding signs, gears, robots, or technology-themed visuals to encourage curiosity about digital learning and innovation.

Why AWE Supports Summer Learning

AWE Learning workstations are designed to provide structured, purposeful screen time in a safe and distraction-free environment.

Unlike passive entertainment experiences, AWE encourages children to actively engage with learning through:

- Touchscreen interaction
- Mouse control
- Keyboard familiarity
- Navigation skills
- Problem-solving activities
- Independent exploration

These interactions help children develop:

- Fine motor skills
- Hand-eye coordination
- Early typing confidence
- Digital literacy
- School readiness skills
- Real computer confidence

AWE also helps libraries provide:

- No ads
- No open browsing
- No logins required
- Safe, child-friendly digital learning
- Minimal staff oversight
- Consistent experiences in shared public spaces

Quick Promotion Ideas for Libraries

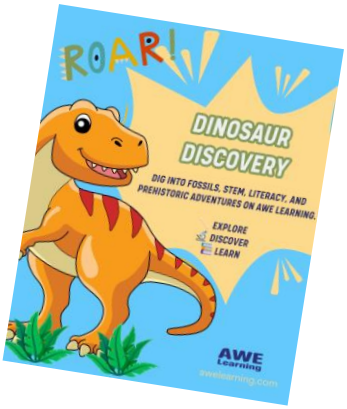
Simple visibility changes can dramatically increase workstation engagement during the summer months.

Easy Ways to Promote AWE

- Place signs near children's areas
- Mention the workstation during summer reading sign-ups
- Add bookmarks near circulation desks
- Include workstation reminders in family programming
- Encourage repeat visits through PEPs
- Feature weekly discovery themes near the workstation

Simple Staff Prompt Ideas

- "Have you explored the AWE workstation yet today?"
- "This week's discovery theme is dinosaurs!"
- "Ask us how to set up a Personalized Education Plan."
- "Try a coding game before you leave today!"



AWE Discovery Tracker

Encourage children to complete summer learning challenges throughout the season.

Try To:

☐ Explore a dinosaur-themed activity

☐ Complete a coding challenge

☐ Listen to an interactive storybook

☐ Try a bilingual learning game

☐ Complete a STEM activity

☐ Visit the workstation 5 times this summer

☐ Try a new game every week

☐ Create a Personalized Education Plan

Librarian Tip

Offer stickers or recognition for children who complete multiple discovery challenges.

Appendix

Printable Resources

Included Materials

- Summer Learning Flyer
- Summer Discovery Path Flyer
- “Try AWE This Summer” Signage
    - Vertical Sign
    - Horizontal Sign
- Summer Discovery Bookmarks
    - BOOKMARK #1
    - BOOKMARK #2
    - BOOKMARK #3
- Family Handout
- How to Use AWE Learning Station with Your Child
- Dinosaur Discovery Flyer
- Social Media Graphic & Caption
    - Social Media #1
    - Social Media #2
    - Social Media #3
    - Social Media #4
    - Social Media #5
    - Social Media #6
- Tabletop Sign

Closing Message

Summer learning should feel exciting, engaging, and accessible.

AWE Learning helps libraries create safe, structured, and meaningful digital learning experiences that encourage children to explore, discover, and build confidence all summer long.

Thank you for supporting early learning and digital literacy in your community.

For additional support, promotional materials, or implementation ideas, contact your AWE Learning representative or visit:

www.awelearning.com

AWE Learning Inspiring discovery. Preparing lives. ®