

The Review Crew



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

Brought to you by the Denver Public Schools Book Review Committee.

Volume 8 Number 8

April 2012

Fiction

Arthur's Dream Boat

Written and illus. by: Polly Dunbar

Candlewick Press, 2012

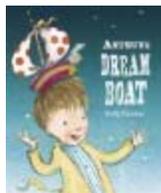
ISBN: 9780763658670

Curriculum: Dreams; Imagination; Listening

Arthur had the most amazing dream about a pink-and-green boat, but no one in his family will listen to his tale. When he finally gets their attention, the whole family is engulfed in his dream.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



Cookie Monster's Busy Day

By: Sesame Workshop

Illus. by: Ernie Kwiat

Candlewick Press, 2012

ISBN: 9780763657772

Curriculum: Cookie Monster; Sesame Street; Daily routine

Four short books follow the familiar *Sesame Street* character, Cookie Monster, on what he does on his busy day. The series, *Brand New Readers*, includes notes on how to best use the books with a independent student to help foster comprehension, independent



reading, and confidence.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni

Z is for Moose

By: Kelly Bingham

Illus. by: Paul O. Zelinsky

Greenwillow Books, 2012

ISBN: 9780060799847

Curriculum: Alphabet books; Behavior; Animals; Humorous stories

"Zebra is absolutely certain he'll be able to direct everyone to appear on the correct page, at the appropriate time, without any mishaps, hurt feelings, or unnecessary drama." He did not anticipate Moose! Everything runs smoothly through the letter G and then everything falls apart. Moose is impatient for the letter M to appear so he can have his turn on the stage. He clowns his way through the letters H-N; destroys the ambiance of the letters O-S; and snuffles through the letters T-Y. Zebra finally has a solution when he announces that "Z is for Zebra's friend, Moose."

Reviewed by: Irene Bell

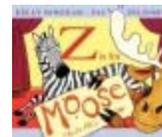
Alumni

Sometimes

By: Rebecca Elliot

Lion Children's; 2011

ISBN: 9780745962979



Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.
- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETL5, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

Curriculum: Brothers and sisters; Children with disabilities; Medical care

"Clemmie is the best sister." so says her little brother. When she has to stay in the hospital the two of them *sometimes* play doctor, *sometimes* sneak in a pet bug, and *sometimes* sail off to a distant island on her hospital bed. But, no matter what, he loves her all the time.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Edison Elem.

Nonfiction

Step-by-Step Experiments with Magnets



By: Gina Hagler

Child's World, 2012

ISBN: 9781609735890

Curriculum: Scientific method; Magnetic poles; Compasses

While introducing students to the scientific method, this book provides experiments that teach students about magnets and their properties. Minimal adult assistance is needed. Students will discover if paper clips can become magnetized, whether different materials are magnetic, the effects of opposite poles on each other, and whether compass needles pull towards Earth's poles. Kids also make a compass during this last one! The *Step-by-Step Experiments* series does a super job of introducing 2nd-3rd graders to the process of experimentation with easily executable tasks and clearly observable results.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Kate & Pippin

By: Martin Springett

Illus. by: Isobel Springett

Holt and Company,
2012

ISBN: 9780805094879

Curriculum: Fawns; Great Dane; Dogs; Deer

Kate is a Great Dane who immediately befriends Pippin, a fawn, in a most unlikely of relationships. They sleep, eat, and play together until Pippin is able to do these things on her own. Even after time passes and Pippin grows up, they will always be "the best of friends." The touching photos really bring this special friendship to life. What a great example of accepting the differences in others and the gifts it can bring when we do this.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
CMS Community School

I've Lost My Hippopotamus

By: Jack Prelutsky

Illus. by: Jackie Urbanovic

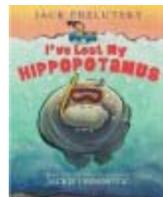
Greenwillow Books,
2012

ISBN: 9780062014573

Curriculum: Animals - poetry; Humorous poetry

Whether it's a spellican (a pelican who spells), penguinworms creeping along, or peeling a banana, Prelutsky brings humor to both the everyday and the fantastical. More than 100 poems of various styles fill his newest volume which is sure to be a hit with young poetry fans looking for a good laugh. Urbanovic's black and white illustrations for each poem add to the fun and pure silliness.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
CMS Community School

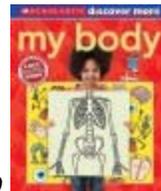


My Body

By: Andrea Pinnington

Scholastic; 2012

ISBN: 978054534149



Curriculum: Human body; Human anatomy

Multiethnic kids are pictured throughout. While the photographs show the outside of the kids, simple yet complete drawings show what is happening inside the kids; circulation, digestion, respiration. The heavy pages will hold up to the repeated readings it is bound to receive.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Edison Elem.



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

Many of these books will work in middle school, too.!

Fiction

My Hands Sing the Blues : Romare Bearden's Childhood Journey

By: Jeanne Walker



Harvey

Illus. by: Elizabeth Zunon

Marshall Cavendish, 2011

ISBN: 9780761458104

Curriculum: Artists; Blues (Music); Stories in rhyme

Romare Bearden was a preeminent 20th century American artist. Like Bearden's art and life, the text in this picture book biography about his childhood is loosely based on the blues. Illustrations incorporating fabric, paper and photo techniques and a reproduction of one of Bearden's pieces, gives readers an appreciation for his style. This is an excellent introduction to a unique, important artist.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8

What the Dog Said

By: Randi Reisfeld

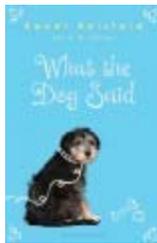
Bloomsbury, 2012

ISBN:

9781599907024

Curriculum: Grief; Dogs - Training; Fathers; Human-animal communication

Thirteen-year-old Grace Abernathy is in tough shape after her police officer father is killed in the line of duty. Her life has not been the same: she pulls away from her friends; refuses to turn in her homework assignments; fails tests; does not participate in class; and her grades plummet to where she almost has to repeat 8th grade. Her older sister (Regan) wants to adopt a dog to train as a service dog for a handicapped child. Grace is the one who ends up taking Rex to obedience school. She listens as Rex talks to her (she wonders if she is going crazy), finds out who killed her



Father, and trains Rex so well that he is paired with a girl who has Cerebral Palsy. "Some angels have wings, others have tails."

Reviewed by: Irene Bell

Alumni

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again

By: Frank Cottrell Boyce

Illus. by: Joe Berger

Candlewick Press, 2011

ISBN: 9780763659578

Curriculum: Automobiles; Adventures

This sequel to the book by Ian Fleming finds the Tooting family setting off on a family adventure in what they think is merely a re-stored camper van. But the engine they installed has a mind of its own, as well as an evil previous owner who wants it back. From France to Africa, with Mum behind the wheel as driver/pilot, the adventures are exciting and the family hilarious. And with Chitty's Chronojuster, maybe even time travel is possible!

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8



The Shadow Collector's Apprentice

By: Amy Gordon
Holiday House, 2012

ISBN:

9780823423590

Curriculum: Families; Shadows; Mystery

Twelve-year-old Cully Pennyacre has just gotten a job at Batty's Antiques. Cully begins to realize that Batty really is not in the business of antiques, but he is



really stealing peoples shadows. When a person's shadow is stolen, his personality changes for the worse. With the help of Isabel, Batty's granddaughter, Cully is determined to find out why Batty is stealing shadows and how to stop him.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Monkey Fist

By: Sandy Fussell

Candlewick Press, 2009

ISBN: 9780763658274

Curriculum: Kidnapping; Rescue; Overcoming adversity

The Samurai kids from the Cockroach Ryu are traveling across China on their way home to Japan. One night they are drugged and Kyoko, the six-fingered, white-haired girl, is kidnapped. Agents of Lu Zeng, a former rival of Sensei, take her to the Forbidden City. The mysterious forest dwellers, the Lin, offer to help the young Samurai but, as with all things, they expect a payment for their help.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

Kepner M.S.



Nonfiction

The Czech Republic

By: Walter Simmons

Belwether Media, 2012

ISBN: 9780531206829

Curriculum: Czech Republic; Prague; Vltava River

This title explores the beautiful country of the Czech Republic. Explained are the land, wildlife, and food as well as what adults and school children do in their daily lives. Also discussed are the



Czech Republic's holidays and the Prague Castle, the largest castle in the world. Some simple Czech language is presented along with some "Fast Facts" providing basic country information. The Level 5 *Blast Off! Readers* are designed for 3rd-7th grade students. Students looking for concise information on countries will appreciate the 50 titles available in the *Exploring Countries* series.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

**The Worst Case-
Scenario Survive-O-
Pedia, Junior Edition**

By: David Borgenicht,
et al.

Chronicle Books, 2011
ISBN: 9780811876902

Curriculum: Survival; Natural disasters; Wilderness

For readers fascinated by the range of disasters that can befall us, such as airplane crashes, falling rocks, and runaway horses, this is a humorous and informative manual on how to cope. Each of the seventy unfortunate events has a colorful two-page spread with photos, illustrations, and sidebars. Most students will never encounter most of the situations, but at least they have a heads-up on how to keep their heads!

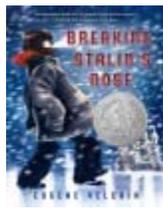
Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

Breaking Stalin's Nose

By: Eugene Yelchin
Henry Holt Press,
2011

ISBN:
9780805092165

*Curriculum: Soviet
Union; Communism;*



Fathers and sons

Sasha's joining the Young Pioneers and his father, head of the Soviet secret police, will perform the initiation. Sasha's father, however, is arrested the night before and held as a traitor. Determined, Sasha's nerves overwhelm him just before the ceremony and he accidentally bumps into a statue of Comrade Stalin breaking Stalin's nose. This atrocity, destruction of government property, is a crime punishable by death. Will Sasha be brave and face the turmoil or succumb to human nature and run?

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton
South H.S.

"It's spring fever. That is what the name of it is. And when you've got it, you want - oh, you don't quite know what it is you do want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so!"

Mark Twain



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

Many of these books will
work in high school, too.!

Fiction

The Amazing Adventures of John Smith, Jr. AKA Houdini

By: Peter Johnson
Harper, 2012

ISBN:
9780061988905

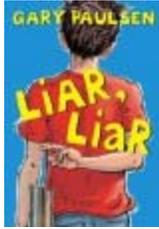
Curriculum: Interpersonal relationships; Moneymaking projects; Authorship

A visiting author inspires middle schooler John "Houdini" Smith to write his own novel. Advised to write about what you know and love, Houdini chronicles the trials, tribulations and successes of himself, his family and friends. Subplots include his father's worry over losing his job, a Vietnam War vet who may lose his home, and Houdini's brother's return from the war in Iraq. Give to reluctant readers and budding writers.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco
Skinner M.S.



Liar, Liar: the Theory, Practice and Destructive Properties of Deception



By: Gary Paulson
Wendy Lamb Books,
2011

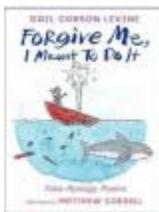
ISBN: 9780385740012

Curriculum: Honesty, Interpersonal relationships, Middle schools

Eighth grader, Kevin, has always been adept at lying, but in the best sense; he stretches the truth and fibs in order to make others feel better and to make his life easier - or so he thinks. When his lies get out of control and begin to hurt others, Kevin must rethink his strategy, get things under control, and make amends. Fast-paced, often funny, story that will appeal to middle school boys.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco
Skinner M.S.

Forgive Me, I Meant to Do It



By: Gail Carson Levine

Illustrated by: Matthew Cordell

Harper, 2012

ISBN: 9780061787256

Curriculum: Poetry

This is the perfect book for anyone who's ever apologized, but would love to insert just one final jab that divulges the underlying motive for behavior! Gail Carson Levine casts her trademark fairy tale characters in roles of deviant perpetrators; Matthew Cordell adds yet another delightful layer to the tongue-in-cheek poetry form that is sure to become a favorite for middle-school fans (not!) of a

standard Language Arts unit.

Reviewed by: Cheryl Joseffy
Henry World School

The False Prince



By Jennifer A. Nielsen
Scholastic Press, 2012
ISBN: 9780545284134

Curriculum: Impersonation; Princes; Orphans; Courts and courtiers; Secrets

The royal family of Carthya has been murdered. With no heir to the throne, civil war is imminent. To prevent war, Connor, a court regent decides to take matters into his own hands. He purchases four orphans with the hopes that one will be able to impersonate the dead King's long lost son. Sage, one of the orphans, has little interest in learning the skills needed to impersonate the lost prince. Yet he realizes Conner's motives may not be entirely altruistic and the game they are playing could very well have deadly consequences unless he does Conner's bidding.

This is an interesting, complicated, and sometimes humorous story.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

The Goblin War



By: Hilari Bell
Harper Teen, 2011
ISBN: 9780061651052

Curriculum: Fantasy; War; Relationships; Goblins; Magic

In the third and final book about the Goblin Wars, Tobin has finally succeeded escaping the Otherworld and back to his own. He was then captured by the barbarians, bent on conquering his world. Jeriah, his younger brother, was having his own adventures. When the hedgewitch, Makenna also returns to the realm, she has ideas that may save

Review Crew Staff

Committee Chair:

Nancy Lucas
JFK High School

Secretary:

Sudi Stodola
CEC Early College

Editor:

Chris Coble
Kepner Middle School

Reviewers:

Gretchen Allgeier
Edison Elementary
Irene Bell
Alumni
Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy
Cat DeRose
Trevista@Horace Mann

Cheri Hilton
South High School

Michelle Jensen
T.J. High School

Cheryl Joseffy
Henry World School

Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Peggy Obert
Waller ECE—8

Janice Pacheco
Skinner Middle School

Karyn Pocernich
CMS Community School

Leah Rounds
Alumni

From ETLs:

Dave Sanger
Karen Shannon
Antonio Nicotera

them all. These three along with the goblins, and the other humans, must find a way to work together. A fun tale of adventure, politics, goblins and magic, this final book brings everything together.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

This Dark Endeavor

By: Kenneth Oppel
Simon & Schuster,
2011
ISBN:
9781442403154



*Curriculum: Fantasy;
Murder; Family; Alchemy; Death*

Victor and Conrad are two brothers of the Frankenstein family. While exploring, they find the almost hidden Dark Library. It holds secrets of alchemy and ancient remedies. The room is forbidden to them, but when Conrad falls ill, Victor is determined to find a cure. He finds a formula in the Dark Library for an Elixir of Life. He gets his friends Elizabeth and Henry to help him gather the ingredients and find the alchemist who knows how to make it. There are many perils, adventures and Victor is drawn into the mysteries of life and death.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Same Sun Here

By: Silas House
Candlewick Press,
2012
ISBN:
9780763656843



*Curriculum: Friends;
Pen pals;
Family*

Born in India, Meena lives in a tiny one bedroom apartment with her

parents and brother. Her father works in New Jersey and only comes home on weekends. Her mother is a nanny. Meanwhile, River lives with his mother in rural Kentucky while his father has had to move far away to find work. River's mother is depressed and doesn't get out of bed. Her main support is his grandmother who is an activist. The two become pen pals through a school program and begin to exchange letters. Despite the cultural differences the two help each other navigate through difficult situations confronting them. Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Bewitching

By: Alex Flinn
HarperTeen, 2012
ISBN: 9780062024152



*Curriculum: Witches;
Fairytales; Families*

Kendra is a witch. She watched her family die in the plague in 1666 and then found herself possessed of strange powers. One thing about being a witch is that you live forever, unless you are unlucky enough to get caught and burned, but as she says, a witch never gets caught. Throughout the years Kendra has had the opportunity to meddle in many lives, always hoping for a positive outcome, but, with magic, more often than not, something backfires.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

**Reading gives us someplace
to go when we have to stay
where we are.**

Mason Cooley

Nonfiction

Who Do You Think You Are?: Be a Family Tree Detective

By: Dan Waddell

Illus. by: Warwick
Johnson Cadwell

Candlewick, 2010

ISBN: 9780763655471

Curriculum: History; Genealogy

Who is shakin' in your family tree? Are you the descendant of a queen or a slave? Where did you get your curly hair or your blue eyes? This volume, inspired by the TV show of the same name introduces genealogy to elementary and middle school students interested in taking their first steps on the road to discovering their roots.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8



BASE Jumping

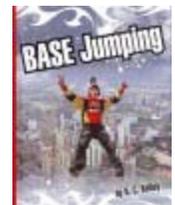
By: K.C. Kelley

The Child's World,
2012

ISBN: 9781609732059

Curriculum: Sports; Risk-Taking

When it comes to extreme sports, one that surpasses the true meaning of "extreme" is BASE jumping! BASE: Buildings, Antennas, Spans and Earth are the platforms from which jumpers take off with only a parachute to avert an otherwise sure death plummet to the ground. Not only are the jumps considered extreme; the climb, hike or risk of arrest to reach a take-off point can also offer a fair adrenaline rush to participants. Perfect pick for reluctant readers!



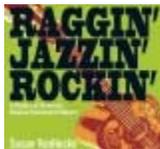
Reviewed by: Cheryl Joseffy
Henry World School

Raggin', Jazzin', Rockin'

By: Susan VanHecke

Boyd's Mill Press,
2011

ISBN:
9781590785744



Curriculum: Musical Instrument Makers

Musical instruments have a fascinating history. Cymbals were used to frighten the enemy in ancient wars long before they created dramatic appeal for Beethoven. One of the most prestigious piano manufacturers, Steinway, switched their construction skills from making pianos to airplanes during World War II. Additional featured instruments such as Conn Cornets, Martin and Fender Guitars and Ludwig Drums are featured along with their history and some of the most legendary global music talents of all time.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton
South H.S.

60% of America's
prison inmates are
illiterate and 85%
of all juvenile of-
fenders have read-
ing problems.

U.S. Department
of
Education



Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Fiction

Scarlet

By A. C. Gaughen
Walker & Company, 2012

ISBN:
97480802723468

*Curriculum: Robin Hood;
Friendship*



Will Scarlet is an invaluable part of Robin Hood's band. Small, nimble and an excellent thief, Will is as quick to pick up useful information for Robin Hood as to pick a nobleman's pocket. But even more impressive is Will's ability to handle knives. More than one of Hood's men has been saved by a skillfully thrown dagger. Many adore the indomitable Will Scarlet, but few know that Will is really a girl. As tensions rise between the sheriff and the people of Nottingham, Scarlett must guard her other secrets even more carefully, because if exposed no one will be safe.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.

The Butterfly Clues

By: Kate Ellison
Edgmont, 2012
ISBN: 9781606842638
*Curriculum: Mystery;
Coping with death; OCD*



Penelope (Lo) and her family are coping with her brother's death in very different ways. When, Lo is nearly hit by a stray bullet from the murder of a local stripper, she is unable to shake the sense that she and the girl are connected. Lo insinuates herself into the underground culture of Neverland, visiting strip clubs and flea markets as she attempts to track down clues about Sapphire's killer. Along the way, she makes an unusual friend who accepts her kleptomaniacal OCD and loves her for it instead of despite it.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

When the Sea is Rising Red

By: Cat Hellison
Farrar, Straus, &
Giroux, 2012
ISBN:
9780374364755



*Curriculum: Class wars;
Fantasy; Magic;*

Felicita's family is the richest in her small seaside town, but privilege comes with a price. When her best friend kills herself to avoid an arranged marriage, Felicita fakes her death to avoid the same fate. Now, she must create a new life for herself in the slums. Living in a condemned shack with a group of orphans led by the charismatic Dash, Felicita must choose which life she really desires. Filled with solid characters and palpable magic in a richly detailed setting, this is a book that readers will savor.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College