

The Review Crew



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 9 Number 8

April 2013

Fiction

A Is For Musk Ox

By: Erin Cabatingan & Matthew Meyers

Roaring Book Press, 2012

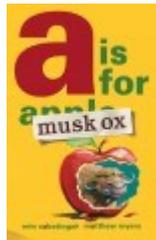
ISBN: 9781596436763

Curriculum: Muskoxen; Zebras; Alphabet

This isn't your typical A is for Apple alphabet book. The self-involved Musk Ox is tired of being found only in the middle of each alphabet book, so he decides to take over the entire alphabet. A is for musk ox, because they are awesome and live in the Artic. While Zebra objects to the new arrangement, Musk Ox makes his case with each letter as to why it should represent musk oxen. Filled with humorous illustrations and lively banter, this title is a wonderful read-aloud and is sure to be a giggler for those students well-versed in the alphabet.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

TJ H.S.

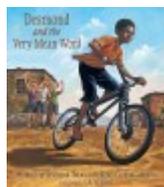


Desmond and the Very Mean Word

By: Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams

Illus. by: A.G. Ford

Candlewick Press, 2013



ISBN: 9780763652296

Curriculum: Forgiveness; Prejudices; Racism

Joyfully riding his bike through the streets of his South African township, young Desmond's heart is pained when he is repeatedly called a very mean name by a group of boys. Crestfallen, he shares his hurt with his priest and the wise man suggests forgiveness. When he is finally able to forgive one of his tormentors, he is set free from a terrible burden. Based on an incident in the life of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, this touching story examines the ugliness of racism and the power of compassion and pardon.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Alum

You Can Do It!

Written and illus. by: Betsy Lewin

Holiday House, 2013

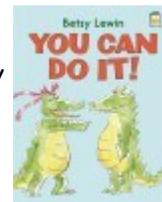
ISBN: 9780823425228

Curriculum: Confidence; Bullying

"I can win," announces the little alligator to his friend. "No, you can't!" retorts a big bully. The little alligator works hard and maintains a good attitude, in the end wins first place in the race, ignoring the taunting from the bully throughout.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.

What we do!

- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ This publication consists of the best books we review each month.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETLs, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

Nonfiction

Spanish!

Healthy Foods from A to Z/Comida sana de la A a la Z

By: Stephanie Maze

Illus. by: Renee Comet

Moonstone Press, 2012

ISBN: 9780983498315

Curriculum: Alphabet; Healthy food; Nutrition

A is for Apple (manzana in Spanish), A is for Apio (celery in English), and many other healthy "A" foods are photographed and creatively turned into faces with a wide range of emotions. Instructions are included for making your own projects with healthy food, and an excellent chart with extra information on each healthy food that was highlighted in the book is included.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

Emily and Jackson Hiding Out

By: Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Delacorte Press, 2012

ISBN:

9780385740975

Curriculum: Family; Orphans; Inheritance; Kidnapping

Emily and Jackson are two orphan children. Emily is taken in by her aunt, who also adopts Jackson. They both find a loving home there. However, there are evil forces out to take the children. The Catchum Child-Catching Service is after Jackson to send him to a factory to work. Emily's evil Uncle Victor is after her for her mother's inheritance. They even stoop to kidnapping the children in order to get what they want. The children's quick wits and Aunt Hilda are up to the task of foiling the evil-doers, often in a humorous fashion.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy



Ostrich and Lark

By: Marilyn Nelson

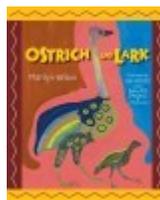
Illus. by: San Artists of the Kuru Art Project

Boyd Press, 2012

ISBN: 9781590787021

Curriculum: Ostriches; Larks; Birds; Friendship; Africa

Friends Ostrich and Lark spend their days together. Lark sings the first song of the day but ostrich is silent. One day, Ostrich finds his voice, "part lion's roar, part foghorn, part old man trumpeting into his handker-



chief." Illustrations by artists of the Kuru Art Project of Botswana employ earthy browns, mustard, purple, grays, greens and blue to portray the landscape and animals of Southern Africa. The descriptive poetic language is perfectly suited to this original folktale.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Alumni

The Hunters

By: John Flanagan

Philomel, 2012

ISBN:

9780399256219

Curriculum: Friendship; Courage; Seafaring

Hal and the young warriors from the Heron are out to find Zavac. Zavac the pirate who stole the Andomal, the most prized and sacred treasure of Skandia. They track him across the trackless oceans until they meet in one last stunning battle. This is the "climax to the first Brotherband story arc". Hopefully, that means there will be many more adventures to follow. The non-stop action and compelling characters leave the reader wanting more and more. This is a great read for upper elementary through high school readers (and beyond) who love a good adventure.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

Kepner M.S.



Mark of Athena

By: Rick Riordan

Hyperion, 2012

ISBN:

9781423140603

Curriculum: Adventure; Friendship; Greek and Roman gods and goddesses

Annabeth and Percy have been apart



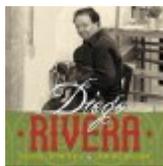
for six months. Percy has been training in the Roman Camp, Jupiter, and Annabeth training the Romans at Camp Half-Blood. Now, seven of the demigods, both Greek and Roman, are setting out on a mission to close the Doors of Death. Annabeth also has another mission, to avenge her mother Athena. Sometimes dark and scary but always riveting, *The Mark of Athena* earns its place with all the other adventures of Rick Riordan. This is a great adventure filled with mythology, both Greek and Roman, which will appeal to readers from upper elementary through high school.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

Diego Rivera: An Artist for the People

By: Susan Goldman Rubin
Abrams, 2013
ISBN: 9780810984110



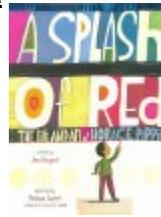
This biography uses full-page photos and examples of Rivera's works to provide visual anchors for the text. Special attention is given to the murals, including his inspiration from poor laborers, his process and technique, and his desire to educate the world about the history of Mexico through art. The target audience for the book is upper elementary, but it is perfectly suitable for all ages interested in the topic.

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



A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin

By: Jen Bryant
Illus. by: Melissa Sweet
Alfred Knopf, 2013
ISBN: 9780375867125



Curriculum: Pippin, Horace; African American painters

Born in 1888 as the grandson of a slave, Horace Pippin worked hard with his large hands, but also loved to draw. His friends and family would beg, "Make a picture for us!" Hardships in life, including having to help support his family as a young boy and being wounded in World War I, did not deter him from becoming a famous painter after being "discovered" by N.C. Wyeth. Beautiful and bold illustrations in combinations of gouache, watercolor, and collage help make this a perfect addition to picture book biographies about African American artists.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

Coyotes

By: Sheila Griffin Llanas
ABDO, 2013
ISBN: 9781617835704



Curriculum: Coyotes; Folklore

Though maligned as a pest and subjected to attempts at extermination, the resilient coyote now covers most of North America. In addition to the usual fare of descriptions, diet, behaviors, etc., this well-organized offering includes examples of Native American cultures that respect this wily creature and the traits that make

it an animal icon. This attractive, photo-rich series includes other volumes on armadillos, bald eagles, buffaloes, gray wolves and grizzly bears.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Alumni

The Fantastic Jungles of Henri Rousseau

By: Michelle Markel
Illus. by: Amanda Hall
Eerdmans, 2012



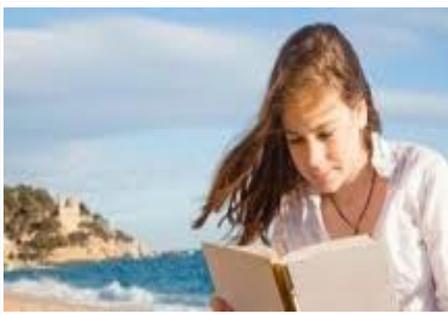
ISBN: 9780802853646

Curriculum: Henri Rousseau; French painters

French artist Henri Rousseau did not start painting until he was in his forties and already employed as a toll collector. Year after year, his paintings were ridiculed at shows by the "experts", amusingly portrayed here as monkeys, until finally his genius was recognized by the likes of Pablo Picasso. Rousseau's perseverance and imagination are underscored in this colorful, simple book that will inspire young and old artists alike.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

"The rain to the wind
said,
You push and I'll pelt.'
They so smote the garden
bed
That the flowers actually
knelt,
And lay lodged--though
not dead.
I know how the flowers
felt."
Robert Frost



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Fiction

Dark Lord: The Early Years

By: Jamie Thomson

Walker & Co., 2011

ISBN:

9780802728494V

Curriculum: Identity; Magic; Fantasy; Humorous stories



The Dark Lord of the Iron Tower of Despair at the Gates of Doom wakes up in a supermarket parking lot on Earth - in a human teenager's body no less. He tries to tell the policemen hovering over him that his name is Dark Lord, but they don't understand, and take his name to be Dirk Lloyd. Thus begins the saga of the Dark Lord's travails as he is placed in a foster home, and made to attend middle school. Is this a delusional boy, or is it really a being with magical, evil powers? Fun read for MS boys.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco Skinner M.S

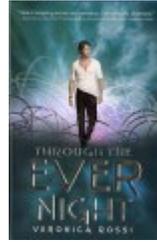
Through the Ever Night

By: Veronica Rossi

Harper, 2013

ISBN: 9780062072061

Curriculum: Fantasy; Loyalty; Relationships; Leadership; Love



Aria and Peregrine have been apart for months. There have been many changes to deal with. Aria's mother is dead and there are rumors that Reverie is failing and the people are afraid to go to the outside. Peregrine is now the Blood Lord of the Tides clan. The mantle of leadership is difficult for him. The two reunite, but things are difficult and they must separate as each has a separate task to perform. They are trying to find the Still Blue away from the violent Aether storms so everyone can survive. Aria and Perry wonder if their love is strong enough to survive. This is part two of the *Under the Never Sky* trilogy.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

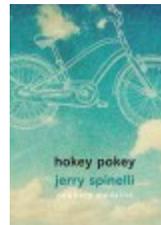
Hokey Pokey

By: Jerry Spinelli

Alfred Knopf, 2013

ISBN: 9780375931987

Curriculum: Growth; Coming-of-age



Jack lives a kind of Peter Pan existence in a place called Hokey Pokey, until one day he wakes up to find his beloved bicycle, Scramjet, has been stolen, and his whole world begins to change. As he and his two Amigos, chased around by the pesky thief Jubilee, try to figure out what is happening, they are astonished to find that Jack is starting to leave the world of childhood behind. In this beautifully

told story, middle school readers will recognize elements of their own not-so-immediate pasts, and will enjoy the jolt at the end of the book.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8



Young Adults Deserve

Fiction

One Shot Away: A Wrestling Story

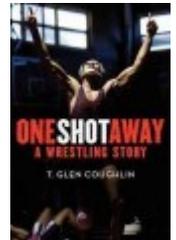
By: T. Glen Coughlin

Harper Teen, 2012

ISBN:

9780062083234

Curriculum: Wrestling; High schools; Family relationships



At the beginning of their senior year, Diggy, Jimmy, and Trevor are determined to prove themselves to be the school's top wrestlers. With school pride, scholarships, and the opportunity to leave behind troubled home lives, they will push themselves and each other to the limits. As the pressure mounts, choices are made that may destroy the team and the

future of each wrestler. This gritty, realistic tales does not provide readers with a happy ending; instead it provides a glimpse into how one's choices can have far-reaching consequences.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.

John Dies at the End

By: David Wong
Thomas Dunne
Books, 2009
ISBN:
9780312555139



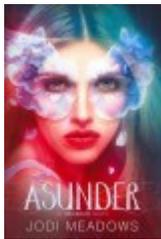
Curriculum: *Horror; Demons; Apocalypse;*

When David and his friend John have a gig at a local party in their small town, they meet a Jamaican with magical powers. David scoffs, but by morning, he and John find themselves immersed in a world filled with demons, ghosts, and body-invading creatures that none of their friends can see. It's up to these hapless party-mongering losers to save the world and it's highly doubtful that they can pull it off. The title says it all. Laugh-out-loud funny but with mature themes, this is a great book for your precocious teen readers who want something different.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

Asunder

By: Jodi Meadows
Katherine Tegen
Books, 2013
ISBN:
9780062060785



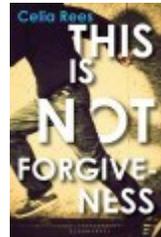
Curriculum: *Fantasy; Reincarnation; Romance;*

In this sequel to *Incarnate*, Ana is still dealing with the fear and prejudice of the other residents of Heart who believe her status as a *newsoul* threatens their own existence as souls who have been reincarnated over and over for 5,000 years. Ana is struggling with her own identity as well; nobody but her realizes how much danger the town was in during the Templedark incident and she is in love with Sam, but there are many reasons for their love to fail. She finds by accident that she can control the sylphs with music. Despite their fear and prejudice against her, Ana wishes to save the other residents of Heart, but her plan may cost her her life.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

This is Not Forgiveness

By: Celia Rees
Bloomsbury, 2012
ISBN: 9781599907765
Curriculum: *Brothers; Emotional problems; Veterans*



There are scars on Caro's wrists and everyone knows she is trouble, but Jamie cannot help but be infatuated with her. Jamie's teenage eager-to-please personality is exactly what Caro is looking for. Caro has participated in numerous demonstrations around London. She is determined to prove herself to a group of revolutionaries, "They want change - big change. *Global* change. And they are prepared to take action to get it." Rob, Jamie's older brother, is recently back from Afghanistan where his leg was irreversibly damaged and with a troubling case of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. He has a past history with Caro and is similarly drawn to her. Caro uses Rob's unstableness and Jamie's eagerness to please to plan a stunt that will get her recognized by

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the revolutionary group.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA

Paradise

By: Joanna Nadin

Candlewick Press
Press, 2012

ISBN:
9780763657130

*Curriculum: People with disabilities;
Friendship; High school*

Sixteen-year-old Billie inherits her estranged grandmother's seaside house. She knows nothing about her grandmother or her mother's life growing up in this house. When she moves into this house with her mother and her little brother, she begins to put pieces together about her mother's childhood, her grandparents and the father she never met. As she begins to unravel bits and pieces about each of them she begins to reveal a family history that is both sad and stirring.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA



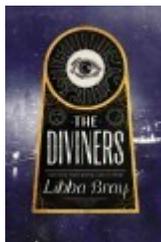
The Diviners

By: Libba Bray
Little, Brown & Co,
2012

ISBN:
978036126113

*Curriculum: 1920s;
Occult; Murder*

After some trouble, Evie, 16, gets sent away to her uncle's in NY. Her uncle runs a creepy occult museum, but it's the 1920s and Evie is loving the speakeasies and clubs. When killings start happening, Evie suspects her secret psychic talent, the very talent that got her shipped to NY, could be



used to help stop the murders. From the Ziegfeld girls to the language and characters, the details are so rich and authentic; readers will feel like they are in the 20s. Recommend this to HS girls who like a little depth in their novels.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Also Known as Rowan Poho

By: Ralph Fletcher
Clarion Books, 2011
ISBN: 9780547572086

*Curriculum: Private
school; Identity; High
school*

Bobby, Marcus, and Big Poobs decide to apply to a prestigious local private school as the fictitious Rowan Poho (IHOP backwards). Rowan amazingly gets accepted and Bobby, trying to live down the shame of his father's recent incarceration, decides to enroll as Rowan. How long until people discover who he really is? Although a bit implausible at times (school never asks to meet Rowan's father) readers will be rooting for Rowan Bobby. Funny, sad, and hopeful, recommend to HS (a few curse words) students looking for a short engaging novel.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.



"I think that I shall
never see
A poem lovely as a
tree.

A tree whose hungry
mouth is pressed
Against the earth's
sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at
God all day
And lifts her leafy
arms to pray;

A tree that may in
summer wear
A nest of robins in
her hair;

Upon whose bosom
snow has lain;
Who intimately lives
with rain.

Poems are made by
fools like me,
But only God can
make a tree."

Joyce Kilmer