

The Review Crew

Early Elementary Fiction

Elecopter

Written and illus. by: Michael Slack

Henry Holt, 2013

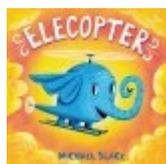
ISBN: 9780805093049

Curriculum: Elephants; Helicopters

This bright blue elephant/helicopter hybrid is on patrol to keep the African savannah safe. With her fire-hose nose at the ready she can douse grass fires or pull a lion from the brink of a cliff, as well as use her landing skids to rescue baboons or rhinos. "Working for peanuts, she's quite the contraption. A helicopter elephant always ready for action!" Cheerful digitally created illustrations and simple rhyming text will please the primary crowd.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8



Upper Elementary Fiction

Meri Mercer Doesn't Lie, Mostly

By: Jan Fields

Illus. by: Tracy Bishop

Magic Wagon, 2014

ISBN: 9781624020094

Curriculum: Friendship; Magic; Lying; The Secret Garden

Meri's reading group at school is reading *The*



Secret Garden. Meri has a magic mirror at home that allows her to see the characters of the book. She has become friends with Mary Lennox of the novel and has daily conversations with her. Then Meri decides to have a party and invite all the students from the reading group to share her secret about the magic mirror, however, no one but Meri can see the girl in the mirror. Our main character is embarrassed and the other kids think she is lying. Readers learn about saving face and the importance of maintaining friendships in this early chapter book.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer

Green Valley Elem.

Upper Elementary Nonfiction

The Hoover Dam

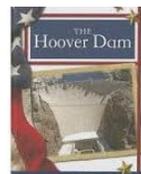
By: Luke Gabriel

Child's World, 2014

ISBN: 9781623239565

Curriculum: Hoover Dam; Landmarks; U.S. history

The Hoover Dam, completed in 1935, is a significant feat of engineering and an amazing landmark. Built to help control flooding of the Colorado River, the dam also produces enough hydroelectric power to serve 1.3 million people. This title details the construction process, the town of Boulder City, and Lake Mead and provides a nice, concise overview of this historical and significant U.S. landmark. Many photos enhance the text. While 3rd-



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Schools Book
Review Committee.

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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!

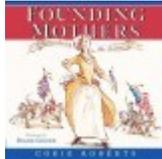
- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ This publication consists of the best books we review each month.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETLs, where DPS teachers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

5th grade readers will find enough information for basic report writing, they are provided with a list of books and a publisher-sponsored website to learn more.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

**Founding Mothers:
Remembering Ladies**

By: Cokie Roberts
Illus. by: Diane Goode
Harper Collins, 2014
ISBN: 9780060780029



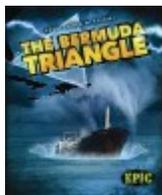
*Curriculum: Women, United States;
American Revolution*

Remarkable women who not only encouraged their famous husbands, but also were patriots in their own right are celebrated in this book. First ladies Dolley Madison, Martha Washington, and Abigail Adams are included as well as poets, warriors, and other women keeping the home fires burning. Illustrations in soft antique tones suit the text with a formal portrait and recreated signature for each woman. The unusual information is well researched and accessible for upper elementary students studying the history of the U.S.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

The Bermuda Triangle

By: Ray McLellan
Bellweather Media,
2014
ISBN: 9780531292273



*Curriculum: Bermuda
Triangle; Mysteries*

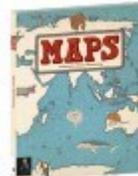
This book is a good introduction to the topic of the Bermuda Triangle. The text is simple and photographs are engaging. Highlighted vocabulary is summarized in a glossary in the

back of the book, which also includes an index, websites for additional information and other recommended books on the topic. Students who enjoy this book may be interested in some of the other titles in the *Unexplained Mysteries* series, such as *Haunted Houses, Alien Abductions, Ghosts, and UFO's*.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
Green Valley Elem.

Maps

Written and illus. by:
Aleksandra and Daniel
Mizielinska
Big Picture Press, 2013



ISBN: 9780763668969

Curriculum: Atlases; Human geography

This atlas presents 52 maps depicting the continents and some of their respective countries. This oversized title presents each map on heavy matte paper with an old time look and muted hues. Each page is a visual feast as it explores geographical features, major cities, historical landmarks and figures. Each map provides information about the country's capital, languages, population, and area. Illustrations of the flora, fauna, local people, and industry of the region are also included. While this title is not comprehensive, children and adults alike will enjoy pouring over each map and just might be inspired to extend their investigations through individual research.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.



Middle School Fiction

Neptune's Tears

By: Susan Waggoner
Henry Holt and Co.,
2013
ISBN:
9780805096774



*Curriculum: Science Fiction; Romance;
Time Travel; Empaths*

Travel to the future where technology is advanced, there is space travel and there are "aliens." Zee is an intern empath. She is able to help those injured or traumatized. When asked to help a new patient, David, she discovers he is unlike anyone she has met before. As the story unfolds, the two continue to be attracted to each other through dangerous times when their world is being attacked. Zee discovers that, with her talent, she can predict the attacks. She trains to be a diviner in order to help, and finds that David has a secret that will affect their future. An interesting read with adventure and romance, and travel between time and space.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Burning Sky

By: Sherry Thomas
Balzer + Bray, 2013
ISBN:
9780062207296



Curriculum: Magic, Rebellions; Relationships; Survival

The first book of a new Elemental trilogy starts with a bang. Teenage

Iolanthe is upset because her guardian ruins her potion. So she goes to the nearest rooftop and calls lightning from the sky to try and save it. This starts a whole series of events foretold by prophecy. The young prince Titus has been watching for the sign in order to reclaim his kingdom. Those against the prince want Iolanthe because of her elemental power. The characters are fun to watch as they both have to find a way to work together in order to save the Realm.

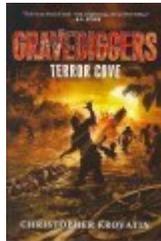
Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Terror Cove

By: Christopher Krovatin

Katherine Tegen Books, 2013

ISBN:
9780062077431



Curriculum: Zombies; Friendship; Supernatural

Middle school students Ian, PJ and Kendra, having been identified by unknown powers of the universe as "Gravengers" charged with defending the world against zombies, find themselves washed up on Isla Hambrienta (Hunger Island) where they are immediately attacked by a horde of the undead that has been released from a nearby sunken cruise ship. Plenty of gory zombie descriptions ("...vacant eyes, his open black mouth, his fish-chewed ears and nose, the black scabby goo trailing from behind him.") will have readers both repelled and horribly engaged.

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

Raven's Mountain

By: Wendy Orr
Allen&Unwin, 2010
ISBN:
9781742374659



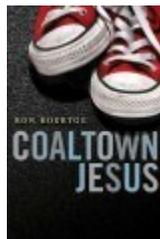
Curriculum: Survival; Sisters; Bears

Raven is climbing a mountain for the first time. She is with her older sister Lily and her new stepdad, Scott. At the very last, when her sister is struggling, and they are almost at the top she races ahead. The top of the mountain! Her feet just start dancing. But suddenly the rock she is dancing on slips and she falls. Not only does she fall but so do a lot of rocks. When Raven manages to make her way back to Scott and Lily she realizes they are behind the wall of rocks that fell off the top. Raven is alone on the mountain and it is up to her to get help.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

Coaltown Jesus

By: Ron Koertge
Candlewick Press,
2013
ISBN:
9780763662288



Curriculum: Grief; Families; Devine intervention

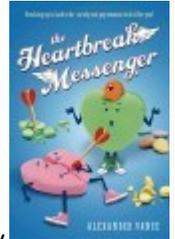
How do you go on when your brother is dead? For Walker the answer was to pray; not for himself, but for his mother who hasn't quit crying for two months. Imagine his shock when Jesus shows up in his bedroom the next day. Jesus turns out to be irreverent and human while still being God. It turns out that there are no easy answers and change comes slowly and from with-

in. This is the latest offering from Ron Koertge and is written in his inimitable verse. Funny, warm and heartening this is a great read.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

The Heartbreak Messenger

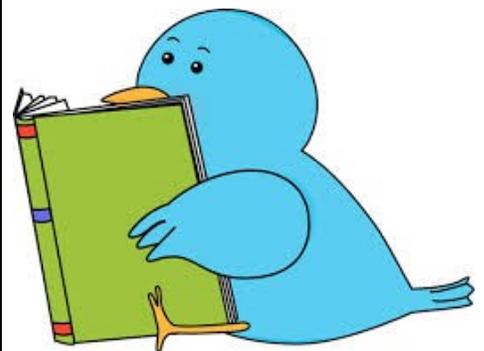
By: Alexander Vance
Feiwel and Friends, 2013
ISBN: 9781250029690



Curriculum: Interpersonal relations; Boys; Dating; Emotions

When Quentin is offered \$20 to deliver a break up message for his best friend's brother, he readily takes the job. Soon other high school boys are requesting Quentin's services. He delivers the message and even offers the girls flowers and chocolates to soften the blow. But the Heartbreak Messenger did not count on angering his other best friend Abby, getting punched in the face by a girl, or having to use a dead rat as a break up gift. Dating, breaking up, and sometimes just being a good friend can be very complicated. This quick read will appeal to both boys and girls and is a welcome addition for collections needing some comic relief.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.



High School Fiction

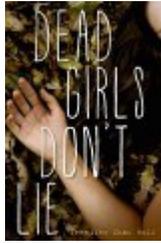
Dead Girls Don't Lie

By: Jennifer Shaw Wolf

Walker Books, 2013

ISBN:

9780802734495



Curriculum: Murder; Trust; Friendship; Gangs

In this suspenseful mystery, a small town has two suspected Mexican gang-related murders in a year's time. The murdered Rachel was Jaycee's best friend until they had a falling out, but Rachel tried to contact Jaycee the night of her murder and left mysterious clues for Jaycee if she, Rachel, was killed. As evidence leads her in multiple directions, Jaycee doesn't know who to trust, but she's determined to find out what happened to Rachel. Violence and racial prejudices (character driven) make this appropriate for HS students who enjoy a good who-done-it. Give to fans of Lois Duncan and Caroline Cooney.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

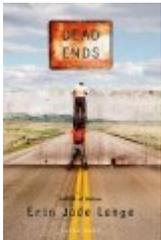
Dead Ends

By: Erin Jade Lange

Bloomsbury, 2013

ISBN: 9781619630802

Curriculum: Friendship; Down syndrome; Bullies



Intelligent but a bully, Dane is near expulsion and must mentor Billy D., a classmate with Down syndrome, to escape further punishment. The boys have a lot in common

as both have missing fathers and strange mothers. Billy D. is determined to find his dad, who left him clues to his whereabouts in an old atlas. Dane and skateboarder Seely get pulled into the search until a secret about Billy D.'s real relationship with his dad throws them into confusion. With a little romance and themes about victims, anger, and friendship, this is a thoroughly believable read for high school students.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

Jumped In

By: Patrick Flores-Scott

Christy Ottaviano Books, 2013

ISBN: 9780805095142

Curriculum: Friendship; Poetry; High school; Gangs



Reeling from parental abandonment that also took him from his childhood buddies, sixteen-year-old Sam decides never to make friends again, but rather to take comfort from grunge rock band Nirvana, and to stay under the radar at his new school. Things go according to plan until his English teacher pairs him with Luís (reputed gangbanger sporting a large scar on his neck) for a poetry-slam assignment. The unlikely duo forms a bond as they work on the project, but Sam will be left to take comfort in his friend's poems as a tragic secret is revealed.

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

How To Love

By: Katie Cotugno

Balzar+Bray, 2013

ISBN: 9780062216359



Curriculum: Romance; Family; Teen mothers

Reena has always loved Sawyer. They have known each other forever. Their parents are friends and share ownership of a restaurant. Reena has also always planned on leaving the town in Florida where she is growing up. Graduating a year early from high school and being accepted to the University seems to be the first steps in achieving her dream. Then Reena gets pregnant and Sawyer disappears. Now Reena has a new love in her life, her baby girl, but her dreams will never be achieved. Or will they? This is a good look at the realities of having a baby instead of being able to follow your dreams.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

Famous Last Words

By: Jennifer Salvato Dottorski

Christy Ottaviano Books, 2013

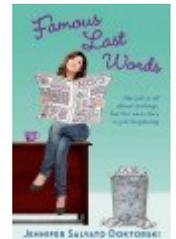
ISBN:

9780805093674

Curriculum: Journalism; Internships

Sam's parents are lawyers and they want her to have an "important" job during the summer before her senior year. So Sam is doing a summer internship at the local newspaper. She is the obituary writer along with AJ, who also plays in a band called Love Gas - a fairly scruffy gig. So instead of hanging out at the beach with her best friend she is learning how to make phone calls to bereaved families in order to write obituaries. This is a great summer read. It is filled with angst and romance in equal doses.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College



[in Just-]

By e.e. Cummings

in Just-
spring when the world is
mud-
luscious the little
lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring

when the world is puddle-
wonderful

the queer
old balloonman whistles
far and wee
and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-scotch and jump-rope
and

it's
spring
and

the

goat-footed

balloonMan whistles
far
and
wee



Today

By Billy Collins

If ever there were a spring day so perfect,
so uplifted by a warm intermittent
breeze

that it made you want to throw
open all the windows in the house

and unlatch the door to the canary's
cage,
indeed, rip the little door from its
jamb,

a day when the cool brick paths
and the garden bursting with peonies

seemed so etched in sunlight
that you felt like taking

a hammer to the glass paperweight
on the living room end table,

releasing the inhabitants
from their snow-covered cottage

so they could walk out,
holding hands and squinting

into this larger dome of blue and
white,
well, today is just that kind of day.

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