



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Fiction

First Snow

By: Bernette Ford

Illustrated by: Sebastien Braun

Holiday House, Inc.

ISBN: 0-8234-1937-1

Curriculum: Rabbits - Fiction; Snow - Fiction

The first cold snow of the season draws six little bunnies into a meadow for a nighttime of frolicsome fun. One by one they creep out of their lair to find the snow "falling faster - swirling, blowing, twirling down to cover the meadow." Racing across the sparkling meadow, they leave paw prints until they come to a series of high rocks. Here they can be seen "hopping, stumbling, rolling and tumbling." Descriptive and imaginative vocabulary will create pictures in a reader's or listener's mind. Tender and touching illustrations combine with a warm and affectionate text to attract young readers to delve into this wintry book.

Reviewed by: Irene W. Bell
Byrant Webster K-8 School

Imagine

By: Norman Messenger

Candlewick Press, 2005

ISBN : 0763627577

Curriculum: Art; Creative Thinking
Imagine will not stay long on the library shelves. Once the art teacher discovers it, or students see the intriguing cover or are introduced to the "wild, wacky and wonderful" pages within, there will be an instant waitlist. The design of the book, the visual puzzles, the funny suggestions, the intricate, colorful illustrations all encourage the reader to step "out of the box" and open his eyes and his mind and his creativity. The author's constant pleas to "Imagine a place where animals look like this", or "Imagine being able to live here", etc. all accompanied by fold-over pages or a spinning circle will enchant and intrigue readers. Solutions to the 14 puzzles that appear on the corners of many pages are given in the fold over page at the end of the book. Imagine is a book that has to be seen to be understood. It is a book of few words, yet many

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Review Crew Vol. 2 No. 2

December 2005

Who are we?

- ☺ More than a dozen teacher librarians from elementary schools through 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 ERS, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 303-405-8131 to order.)

Want to read more reviews? See the instructions on page 4.

The Best for Upper Elementary Readers! Many of these books will work in middle school, too.!

Fiction

Help Wanted: Stories

By: Gary Soto

Harcourt, Inc., 2005

ISBN: 0152052011

Curriculum: Short Stories; Mexican-Americans; Growing up

Gary Soto speaks to young people in his stories. He talks about things that are important to them as they grow and learn: family, friends, relationships, sports, school and more.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner Middle School



Fiction

Listening for lions

By: Gloria Whelan

HarperCollins Publishers, 2005

ISBN: 0060581751

Curriculum: Fiction; Africa; Self-Realization

Rachel Sheridan lives in Africa with her missionary parents. Valerie

Nonfiction

I Can Make a Difference

By: Marian Wright Edelman

Illustrated by: Barry Moser

HarperCollins Publisher, 2005

ISBN: 0060280514

Curriculum: Heroes; Motivation

There are far too few inspirational books for students that could be purchased for a public school library. Edelman has compiled an optimistic, historical treasury that

includes ageless stories, poems, songs, quotations and folktales of many cultures. Her introduction sets the stage for her twelve principles of how children can make a difference in the world. She includes love, courage, determination and peace among her recommendations for a happy fulfilling life. The pastel, realistic illustrations are beautifully woven throughout the printed text. Whenever the book is reprinted or revised, I would suggest the inclusion of short biographical material on the featured authors and characters; some of them may not be known to students. I Can Make a Difference is a book that will be treasured by kids of all ages. It would make a wonderful

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Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Pritchard also lives in Africa and is rich and spoiled. In 1919 an influenza epidemic strikes the community. Valerie dies in the epidemic as do Rachel's parents. Rachel is taken into the Pritchard house. As with all of Gloria Whelan's books, *Listening for lions* transports the reader to a different place and time. Rachel finds her strength by telling the truth when lies would be so much easier.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner Middle School

Under the Jolly Roger

By: L. A. Meyer

Harcourt, Inc., 2005

ISBN:015205345X

Curriculum: Adventure Fiction; Pirates; Seafaring Life

This is the third adventure of Bloody Jack. Jacky Faber has escaped the girl's school and is off to find her true love. She is pressed into service on a Navy ship with a cruel captain. Through unusual circumstances, he dies and Jacky takes control of the ship. Imagine

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her surprise when she finds that she is being hunted as a pirate. Readers will enjoy the adventure through her eyes.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Hill Middle School

Best Foot Forward

By: Bauer, Joan
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2005
ISBN: 0399234748

Curriculum: Business ethics; Family problems; Alcoholism

In *Best Foot Forward* Jenna Boller returns to her job at a local shoe store, guided by her boss and mentor. When her boss's son tries to change things in the family business, Jenna steps in to help put things right. The character serves as an excellent role model for a teen who is hard working, smart and thoughtful.

Reviewed by: Laurie Bell
Brown Elementary

Marie, Dancing

By: Carolyn Meyer
Harcourt, 2005.
ISBN:0152051163

Curriculum: Ballet dancing, historical fiction, Edgar Degas

Edgar Degas sculpture *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen* was the inspiration for this novel about the model who typified the young dancers of the ballet school of Paris Opera. Meyer paints a harsh but realistic picture of a dancer's life in France in the 1800s.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer
Grant Middle School

Whisper in the Dark

By: Joseph Bruchac
HarperCollins, 2005
ISBN: 0060580887

Curriculum: Scary Stories; Native American Legends

Bruchac has once again inserted a Native American legend into the life of a contemporary teen. Maddy

knows the story of the Whisperer who calls his victims four times before killing them and drinking their blood. Now something or someone is calling her, and Maddy is sure it is the Whisperer. Don't read this one at night!

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham
Valdez Elementary

Nonfiction

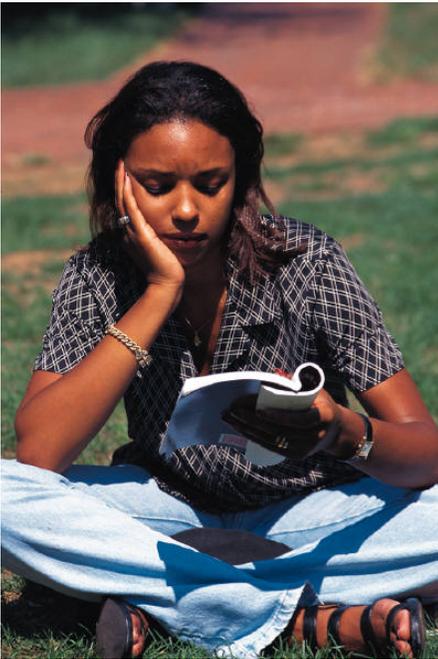
Guys Write For Guys Read

By: Jon Scieszka (ed.)
Viking Books, 2005
ISBN: 0670060275

Curriculum: Reading; Male Authors; Books for Boys

"Boys' favorite authors write about being boys." A collection of short stories and illustrations is presented by male authors and artists. They cover many different

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Young Adults Deserve the Best!

A Student's Guide to Emily Dickinson

By :Audrey Borus
Enslow, 2005
ISBN: 0-7660-2285-4

Curriculum: Dickinson, Emily; Women's Literature; Literary Criticism

This is an accessible entry into literary biography and criticism for the upper middle/high school set. Text boxes clarify unfamiliar terms such as "class distinctions" and "Mount Holyoke College." Text provides scaffolding through sections on "How to Read a Poem" and "Dickinson's Literary Devices and Conventions." Also includes rich, concise historical background on Civil War references and the anti-slavery movement.

Reviewed by: Beth Kenny
Career Education Center Middle College H.S.

questions. The author's suggestion of making copies of the puzzles before trying them is a good one, but perhaps difficult to do in the world of a school library. If you do decide to purchase this book, you and your students will not be disappointed

Reviewed by: Andrea Antico
Westerly Creek Elem.

Carrie esta a la altura

[Carrie Measures Up]

By: Linda Williams Aber.

Illustrated by: Joy Allen

Kane Press, 2001.

ISBN:1575651610

Curriculum: Measurement

Carrie is obsessed with two to things: knitting and measurement. When thinking about her grandmother's birthday present, she is able to utilize both interests in a great way. She applies her knowledge of measurement and her knitting skills by knitting a scarf to her grandmother! Excellent book to show the application of math concepts to real life.

Reviewed by: Ana M. Silva
Valdez Elementary School.

Spanish!

The Journey of the One and Only Declaration of Independence

By: Judith St.George

Illustrated by: Will Hillenbrand
Philomel, 2005

ISBN: 0399237380

Curriculum: Declaration of Independence, American History

This is an engaging story of how the Declaration of Independence found its way from Thomas Jefferson's desk in 1775 to the National Archives in 1952. The whimsical illustrations and highly readable text make this an excellent read aloud and first introduction to one of our country's founding documents. In addition, the sources for this chronicle are listed in the bibliography. The citations serve both to authenticate the facts embedded in the story and as a springboard for further research.

Reviewed by: Cheryl Sage
Cheltenham

El Dia de los Muertos, una celebracion de la familia y la vida [Day of the Dead: A Latino Celebration of Family and Life]

By: Carol Gnojewski

Enslow Publishers, Inc, 2005.

ISBN: 0766026159

Curriculum: Social Studies; Holidays

In this series the author does a fabulous work in portraying important festivities from the American culture as well as the Hispanic culture. In this case, the author focuses on the Day of the Souls festivity which is celebrated by the Mexican culture. The author informs

Spanish!

Reviewed by: Andrea Antico
Westerly Creek Elem.

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Want more?

To read longer reviews of these books and hundreds of others:

- ◆ Go to LION, our online library catalog, at <http://lion.dpsk12.org>
- ◆ Click on "ERS Home" on the menu at the left side of the screen.
- ◆ Click on "Review Committee" on the menu at the left side of the screen.
- ◆ Under "Link to Review Database," click on "Review Database."
- ◆ **Ignore the member log-in boxes.** Click on "Advanced Search"
- ◆ You can search for words in the title, author, curriculum connections, and more. (To see your choices, click on the blue down arrow at the end of the box that says "Title." Use as few as one search criterion or as many as four, one in each box.
- ◆ Once you have a list of titles, click on a title to see a full review.

Reviews from other sources such as School Library Journal and Horn Book are now available through LION, our online library catalog. Check it out!

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- ◆ Search for a book by title, subject, or however you want.
- ◆ When you get to the book records, if there is a dark blue button called "More About This Book", click on it.
- ◆ You will see a list of available features for that book, which may include books reviews, excerpts, and summaries. Click on any or all.

To learn more about the other great new features of your library catalog, ask

about the origins, the history as well as the modern aspects of this festivity. Colorful pictures and great illustrations add to keep the reader's interest in this topic.

Reviewed by: Ana M. Silva
Valdez Elementary School.

D is for Dahl: A Glorumptious A-Z Guide to the World of Roald Dahl

Compiled by Wendy Cooling
Illustrated by: Quentin Blake
Viking, 2004

ISBN: 0670060232

Curriculum: Author Study

This entertaining A to Z book is packed with tantalizing chunks of information about Roald Dahl and his books. Browsers will discover that he used to make a monthly bonfire out of discarded pages of handwritten manuscript, see a picture of the gypsy wagon that helped inspire *Danny, the Champion of the World* and learn about the Roald Dahl Club, the Roald Dahl Foundation, and the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre.

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham
Valdez Elementary

topics including what they did growing up, books they enjoyed and illustrations they especially like. Boys will enjoy reading this as well as anyone working with boys and books.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Hill Middle School

Are We Alone?: Scientists Search for Outer Space

By: Gloria Skurzynski

Illustrated by:

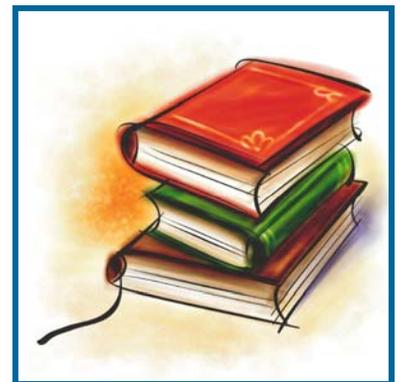
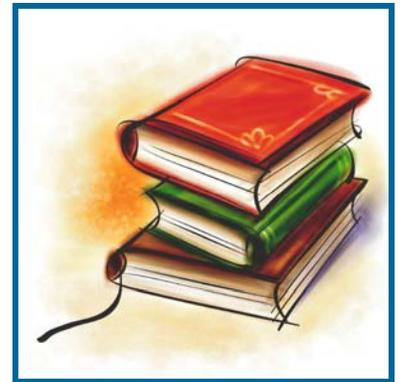
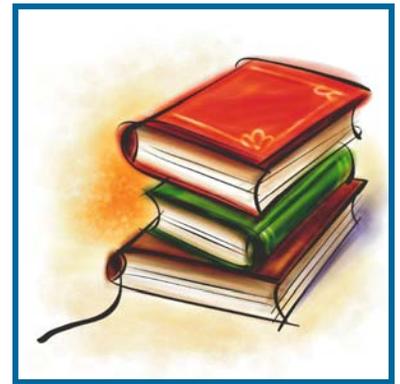
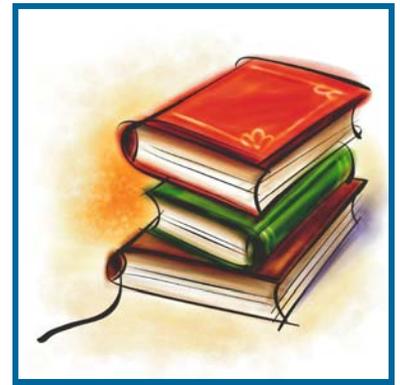
National Geographic, 2004

ISBN:079226567Z

Curriculum: Life on other planets, UFOs, Milky Way

Skurzynski separates what is fact from fiction as she explores aliens, UFOs and life in outer space. The author adeptly handles the complex subjects and technical jargon and moves smoothly through the various disciplines that work in the search for life beyond Earth. Wonderful color photographs help readers envision the scientific imaginings of researchers.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer
Grant Middle School



Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him.

Richard McKenna