

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 4

December 2012

Fiction

Amazing ABC

Written and illus. by: Sean Kenney

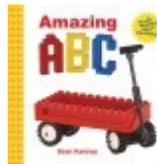
Christy Ottaviano Books, 2012

ISBN: 9780805094640

Curriculum: ABCs; Legos

Detailed Lego models highlight this simple ABC book, with simple objects representing each letter of the alphabet in this board book. A is for apple, B is for building, C is for cake... and Z is for zipper.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni



Mice on Ice

By: Rebecca Emberley

Illus. by: Ed Emberley

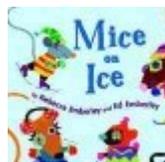
Holiday House, 2012

ISBN: 9780823425761

Curriculum: Ice skating; Mice; Cats; Stories in rhyme

"Mice walk on snow. Mice skate on ice. Mice on ice look nice." Soon the cavorting rodents are joined by an orange tabby cat. Short rhyming sentences and color-saturated digital and cut paper illustrations will entice beginning readers. Emberley's starry-eyed mice, brilliant hues, and easy vocabulary are sure to be a hit.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Alumni



Counting Birds

Written and illus. by: Jing

Jing Tsong

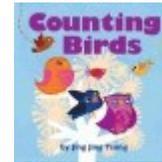
Tiger Tales, 2012

ISBN: 9781589256385

Curriculum: Counting; Birds

"One bird singing in the tree. Tweet, come sing with me!" And so, nine more birds join this one in the tree, each adding their own song, "Tikka-ka-ka! Cool! Chee-chee! Wee!" This simple board book teaches the basics of counting from one to ten, while following the uniquely illustrated birds as they sing their songs.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni



Black Dog

Written and Illus. By: Levi

Pinfold

Candlewick Press, 2011

ISBN: 9780763660970

Curriculum: Dogs; Family life

As various members of the Hope family view a black dog outside their home, the beast grows along with their descriptions and fears. Only Small, the youngest Hope, courageously confronts the creature and effectively shrinks it down to size. Subtle colors and the stylized realism of the tempera illustrations lend a steam punk or gothic feel to this modern folktale.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
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.)

Just Right for Christmas

By: Birdie Black
Illus. by: Rosalind
Beardshaw



Candlewick Press, 2012
ISBN: 9780763661748

Curriculum: Christmas; Gifts

After a king has a piece of red cloth made into a cloak for his daughter, the remnants are gathered by a kitchen maid to make a jacket for her mother. Further leftover pieces trickle down through a variety of woodland creatures, producing other "just right" presents. The illustrations in mixed media are bursting with bright colors and show the happiness of making a gift for a loved one. This is a wonderful read-aloud about generosity and ingenuity.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

Santa on the Loose!

By: Bruce Hale
Illus. by: Dave Garbot
HarperFestival, 2012
ISBN:



9780062022622

*Curriculum: Christmas;
Santa; Picture puzzles;*

Someone has stolen

Santa's toys and readers must find Santa in each picture to find clues. Each clue narrows the suspect list down until the thief is discovered and Christmas is saved. With its amazingly busy but terrific double-page spreads, cool new things are found during every perusal. A list of items at the end of the book encourages readers to go back into each picture for even more fun! Although targeted for PreK-2 children, people of all ages will enjoy this festive offering.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Nonfiction

Lenore Finds a Friend : A True Story from Bedlam Farm

Written and Illus. by:
Jon Katz
Henry Holt and Co.,
2012



ISBN: 9780805092202

Curriculum: Working dogs; Farm life; Social behavior in animals; Emotions in animal; Animal communication; Bedlam Farm (West Hebron, N.Y.)

Lenore, a young black lab, has trouble making friends at Bedlam Farm. "The rooster crowed at her. The donkey tried to kick her. The goats just jeered." Undeterred, she pursues a friendship with Brutus, a grumpy ram, and succeeds. This true story is chronicled in colorful photographs. Young readers will learn a valuable lesson on the power of perseverance in this sweet tale.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Alumni

The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

Ava and the Real Lucille

By: Cari Best
Illus. by Madeline Valentine
Farrar Straus Giroux,
2012



ISBN: 9780374399030

Curriculum: Contests; Sisters; Parakeets; Pets

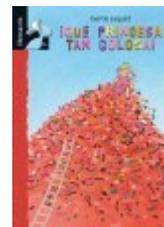
Ava and her sister Arlie enter a poetry contest that offers a pet as the prize. Ava has always wanted a dog. She imagines all the fun things she will do with her dog. She even has a name picked out: Lucille. When Ava and Arlie win the contest, they can't wait to welcome Lucille. But when they open the very large animal crate, Ava is disappointed to find that their new pet is a 'dumb old bird'.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.

Spanish!

Que Princesa Tan Golosa

Written and illus. by:
Gertie Jaquet
Macmillan, 2009
ISBN:
9788479429072



*Curriculum: Royalty;
Over-weight; Exercise*

Once upon a time there was a princess who loved candy. There were sweets on every floor of the immense palace in which she lived. One day the young princess realized that none of her beautiful dresses fit her anymore. She was very sad. So her parents sent a message across the kingdom offering a reward for the person who could make their daughter thin again. The people came from far and wide with notions and potions and pills and even mirrors. Would anything work to make the princess thin and happy again? This sweet story is a variation on an old tale. This book is adorably illustrated with lots of color. As a caution, the book is deep in the Spanish of Spain and more of a challenge for our readers than most of

the books by this publisher.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

Nic Bishop: Snakes

By: Nic Bishop
Scholastic, 2012

ISBN:

9780545206389

Curriculum: Snakes

Snakes are predators.

Some snakes silently

stalk their prey while

others lie in wait for them, some-

times for as long as a year. The

largest snake is over 400 pounds

while the smallest one could be mis-

taken for an earthworm. Explore

the vast variety of snakes in the

pages of this beautiful book.

Nic Bishop is an excellent wildlife

photographer. Each double page

spread features an amazing, colorful

photograph and text to explain to

the reader what they are seeing.

This book is appropriate for all ages

but the text is aimed at upper ele-

mentary age students.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

Kepner M.S.



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Fiction

Charlie Joe Jack- son's Guide to Extra

Credit

By: Tommy Greenwald

Illus. by: J.P. Coovert

Henry Holt, 2012

ISBN:

9781596436923

Curriculum: Middle schools; Rela-

tionships; Theater

Charlie Joe's parents are threaten-

ing to send him to a reading camp

unless he can bring up his grades,

so he decides that extra credit will

give him the A's he needs. Unfortu-

nately, his art and drama teachers

want him to do things like pose in

lederhosen for a painting and try

out for a musical about the inventor

of the paper towel. Can he make it

all happen? Look for a surprise end-

ing. Charlie Joe's funny tips for

completing extra credit activities

are sprinkled throughout the book,

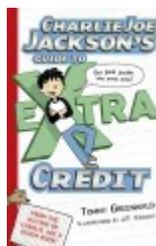
along with black and white illustra-

tions. This is a hilarious read about

a typical middle schooler.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8



Freakling

By: Lana Krumwiede

Candlewick, 2012

ISBN:

9780763659370

Curriculum: Fantasy;

Dystopia; Psychic

powers

In the city of Deliverance, every-

one uses their telekinetic abilities

to do everything, but when Taemon

loses his *psi* powers in a traumatic

accident, he is exiled to the power-

less colony at the same time his

spoiled, murderous brother is put in

power by the elders who believe

him to be the chosen one. Taemon's



exile soon proves more of a blessing
than a punishment, but he also discov-

ers that the powerless colony holds a
powerful secret that is either the sal-

vation or destruction of Deliverance.

He must face his brother to protect

the city that turned its back on him. Is

it worth it, or will the bully win?

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola

CEC Middle College

Curriculum: Historical

fiction; Crime; Mystery;

Humor

Seventeen-year-old

Dodger is a tosher, meaning he search-

es the sewers for money. One rainy

night, he rescues a young woman from

two men who beat her so badly she los-

es her child. It is soon discovered that

she is the reluctant wife of a shamed

prince who has decided that killing her

is easier than a divorce. To avoid an

international incident, Tosher and his

new friends, Charlie Dickens and Henry

Mayhew must find a way to keep her

safe, while ensuring that she is no long-

er being hunted down. In the process,

the unassuming hero finds himself

climbing the social ladder almost too

quickly for his taste, but if it will win

him a princess, he is willing to do any-

thing.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola

CEC Middle College

Curriculum: Families;

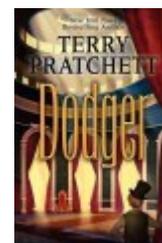
Rules of friendship;

Boating

Clem, short for Clemen-

tine, broke one of the first rules of

friendship. Even though she didn't do



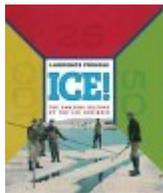
anything wrong, she is never going to forgive herself for losing her best friend. Even though it takes two, she is taking all the blame. Summer on a boat with her unquenchable younger sister and her mom and dad is stretching long. Can Clem learn to forgive herself? Filled with eccentric "boat people" and nautical action, readers in middle school as well as high school will relate to the drama and the broken rule.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

Ice: The Amazing History of the Ice Business

By: Laurence Pringle
Calkins Creek, 2012
ISBN:
9781590788011



Curriculum: Ice industry; Refrigeration

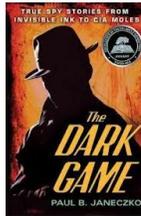
Ice cream on demand is something we take for granted, but not long ago, refrigeration did not exist. Less than 100 years ago, keeping things cold required regular delivery of blocks of ice harvested during winter. Also, like farming, the industry was dependent on proper weather and much physical labor. This fascinating book details the history of the ice business and its decline with the advent of refrigeration. This MS and HS appropriate book with its terrific period photos and illustrations captures the attention. Pringle's extensive research is fully documented.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.



The Dark Game: True Spy Stories from Invisible Ink to CIA Moles

By: Paul Janeczko
Candlewick Press, 2012
ISBN: 9780763660666

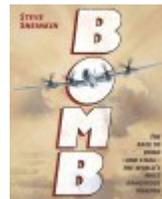


Curriculum: Espionage; Spies; American history
Espionage has always been a part of U.S. history and this book is a story collection that includes heroes of the American Revolution who misled the British, female spies of the Civil War, and the "Choctaw code talkers" of World War I. Interspersed among the stories are explanations of technological advances in spying, including early inks and codes, as well as more modern gadgets and satellites. Fans of Anthony Horowitz's *Alex Rider* series would be fascinated by the thrilling stories in this book.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

Bomb

By: Steve Sheinkin
Roaring Book Press,
2012
ISBN: 9781596434875



Curriculum: Atomic bomb; World War II; Secret service; Operation Freshman; Commando operations; Germany

While conducting an experiment in December 1938, Otto Hahn accidentally discovered how to split the uranium atom. He realized that his discovery provided the means to building the most powerful bomb ever constructed - the atomic bomb. Sheinkin chronicles through superb storytelling, the race to build the weapon that will change physics and the world. With the emphasis on espionage, this suspenseful, well-crafted title will keep readers hooked.

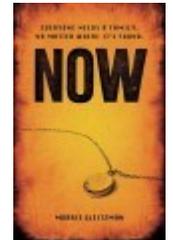
Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.

Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Fiction

Now

By: Morris Gleitzman
Henry Holt, 2012
ISBN:
9780805093780



Curriculum: Holocaust survivors; Grandfathers; Australia

In the third book of the trilogy following the books *Once* and *Then*, Felix is now a grandfather. He is a retired doctor and his youth as a young Jewish boy hiding from the Nazis still haunts him. His best friend Zelda perished during the Holocaust at the age of six. Felix still carries the guilt of not being able to save her. Felix now lives in Australia and is temporarily caring for his ten-year-old granddaughter. When the bushfires sweep through their town, Felix must once again put his survival skills to use when the flames trap him and his granddaughter.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

52 Reasons to Hate my Father

By: Jessica Brody
Farrar, Straus and
Giroux, 2012
ISBN:
9780329966010



Curriculum: Father and daughters; Conduct of life; Work

17-year-old Lexie Larrabee will turn

18 in a few days. She has led a life of luxury and has never worked a day in her life. She lives a life of parties of extravagance. She has just crashed her new \$500,000 Mercedes but is not worried about it; she knows her father will take care of everything. Life is getting even better because in a few days she will turn 18 and will receive control of a 25 million dollar trust. When she gets the money she is planning to leave home to get away from her father who is rarely home and has immersed himself in his job ever since his wife was killed in a car accident years before. Lexie gets a surprise when she goes to collect her trust fund money. Instead of getting the money she finds a stipulation has been placed on the trust and she must complete a week's worth of work in 52 different low paying jobs.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

The Phoenix Files:

Arrival

By: Chris Morphew
Kane Miller, 2012

ISBN:

9781610670913

Curriculum: High

school; Australia; Doomsday; Divorce

After his parents' divorce, Luke's mom takes a job in Phoenix, a new company town in the Australian bush. This town, however, is not what it seems: no cars, no TV, no internet, no telephones. When Luke and his new friends start getting strange messages from Crazy Bill, the town's homeless man, the mystery deepens. The company appears set on destroying the human race in 100 days. Luke and his friends must prevent it. This exciting book covers days 100-88 but



sequels are already published. This book is middle school appropriate as well.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Carnival of Souls

By: Melissa Marr

Harper, 2012

ISBN: 9780061659287

Curriculum: Magic;

Witchcraft; Fantasy;

Kidnapping;



In the years after the war between witches and daimons, the daimons have rebuilt the City where they live in their realm, having forced the witches to retreat to the human world. Before their retreat, however, the witches stole the daughter of Marchosias, ruler of the City. Now, the only chance for a daimon to move out of his caste is through the deadly gladiator games that take place in the Carnival of Souls. Kaleb is a cur fighting for a better life for his pack. He has been hired to locate Marchosias's daughter. Aya is a ruling-caste girl who is battling to achieve independence so she can keep her terrible secret hidden. When their paths cross with Mallory, each of the three learns something terrible about the others. They must form a pact so they can all achieve their goals, but first, they must learn to trust each other.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College



Review Crew Staff

Committee Chair:

Nancy Lucas
JFK High School

Secretary:

Sudi Stodola
CEC Early College

Editor:

Chris Coble
Kepner Middle School

Reviewers:

Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Cat DeRose

Alumni

Cheri Hilton

South High School

Michelle Jensen

T.J. High School

Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA

Peggy Obert

Waller ECE—8

Janice Pacheco

Skinner Middle School

Leah Rounds

Alumni

From ETLs:

Dave Sanger

Karen Shannon

Antonio Nicotera