

The Review Crew



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 10 Number 4

December 2013

Fiction

If You Want to See a Whale

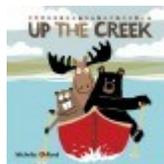
By: Julie Fogliano
Illus. by: Erin Stead
Roaring Brook Press, 2013
ISBN: 9781596437319
Curriculum: *Whales; Friendship; Patience*



This poetic story and accompanying vivid illustrations tell about a boy and his trusty dog who patiently await the sighting of a whale. Along their journey, they witness many things that are first perceived as a whale but are really only in the boy's imagination. In the end the boy's patience pays off and he and the dog encounter the whale.
Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
Green Valley Elem.

Up the Creek

Written and illus. by: Nicholas Oldland
Kids Can Press, 2013
ISBN: 9781894786324



Curriculum: *Friendship; Working together; Canoeing*

A bear, moose, and a beaver were the best of friends, though they often disagreed. One day they decided to go canoeing, and are so busy arguing, they don't notice the rapids ahead. This is a good story on

friendship and working together to get out of a tight spot.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni

The Three Little Pigs and the Somewhat Bad Wolf

Written and illus. by: Mark Teague

Orchard Books, 2013
ISBN: 9780439915014



Curriculum: *Three little pigs; Fractured fairytale*

The three little pigs are paid their earnings and sent packing after they're not needed on the farm anymore. After building their respective homes, the wolf shows up, and he is hungry. This humorous twist on the classic tale is likely to be a favorite for all ages.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni

The Favorite Daughter

Written and illus. by: Allen Say
Arthur A. Levine, 2013
ISBN: 9780545176620



Curriculum: *Japanese-Americans; School; Artists*

Yuriko is being teased at school for her unusual name and the fact she doesn't

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.)

look Asian, so she decides she would rather be called Michelle. Her father accepts that, but through a trip to a Japanese neighborhood with its special food and unique art forms, Yuriko sees the beauty of her heritage. Allen Say has taken another experience from his life and, with his own artistic style, made it a teachable moment for students who need to revel in their individuality.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

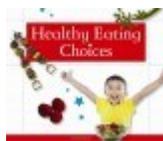
Nonfiction

Healthy Eating Choices

By: Megan Bailey

The Child's World,
2014

ISBN:
9781623235406



Curriculum: Diet; Nutrition; Health

This title provides young 1st-3rd grader readers with valuable and accurate information about eating healthy and offers them a solid foundation for making wise dietary choices. Topics included are the benefits of a balanced diet, the detriments of too much junk food, and how to read nutrition labels. The title concludes with a "Healthy Cooking Challenge" to make a tasty vegetable pizza. All reviewed books in the *Healthy Kids* series offer good advice and instruction to young independent readers. These titles would be great for a health unit and could be used to teach children how to outline and take notes.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Helen Keller's Best Friend Belle

By: Holly M. Barry

Illus. by: Jennifer
Thermes

Albert Whitman, 2013

ISBN: 9780807531983

Curriculum: Helen Keller; Pets; Biography



When a childhood illness left her deaf and blind, Helen Keller could often only be comforted by her dogs. After her miracle breakthrough into language, one of the first things she did was try to teach her Irish setter Belle how to fingerspell. Other anecdotes about her affection for dogs are included in this unusual book that shows a different aspect of her life and will draw young readers into her story. Simple but warm watercolor illustrations also show the Braille and sign language alphabets.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than it's opposite."

-Nelson Mandela



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

Who Stole New Year's Eve

By: Martha Freeman

Holiday House, 2013

ISBN:
9780823427505



Curriculum: Christmas; New Year's Eve; Ice sculptures; Carnivals

Alex and Yasmeen are back in this newest mystery involving the theft of the town's ice sculptures. Their friendship is strained, though, when new girl Eve moves to town. To complicate matters, one of the missing ice sculptures was in her yard when stolen. Is it possible that Eve's father, a research professor bent on beating the competition to the creation of grassoline, has anything to do with this? Join the gang as the clues start piling up and they solve this mystery. While it might be more fun to read them in order, enough backstory is given to read them individually. 3rd to 5th grade sleuths and mys-

tery fans will happily devour this newest *Chickadee Court Mystery*.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Hunter Moran Hangs Out

By: Patricia Reilly Giff
Holiday House, 2013
ISBN: 9780823428595

Curriculum: *Mystery;*
Twins; Kidnapping;
Family



This second book in the Hunter Moran series finds the twin boys involved in another mystery. One of their friend's reports that she overheard someone in their family was going to be kidnapped. It would be someone small enough to fit in a cage. Hunter and Zack deduce that it must be their five year old brother, Steadman. The boys decide to build a tree house to spy on their street and keep a watch on their house. This is a fun, lighthearted adventure and readers will enjoy the twin's quick wit and ingenious ideas to protect their little brother.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Nonfiction

How to Face Paint

By: Megan Atwood
Illus. by: Kelsey Oseid
The Child's World,
2013

ISBN: 9781623235604

Curriculum: *Face painting; Arts and crafts*

This is a book of basic projects with step-by-step instructions to get children started on the hobby of

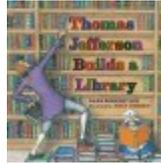


face-painting. A table of contents, glossary, index, and a short list of additional print and online resources complete the book. Colorful cartoon-like illustrations add interest as well.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
Green Valley Elem.

Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library

By: Barbara Rosen
Illus. by: John O'Brien



Calkins Creek, 2013

ISBN: 9781590789322

Curriculum: *Thomas Jefferson; Libraries*

Thomas Jefferson loved books and loved to read. This colorful biography shows Jefferson from a young boy through his presidency and how he loved to collect different kinds of books in many languages. It also tells the story of how he began the Library of Congress, and hired the first national librarian. Books played an important part of all of Jefferson's achievements. The colorful illustrations really bring this book to life.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Handel: Who Knew What He Liked

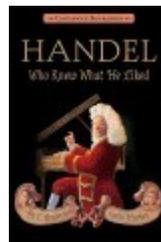
By: M.T. Anderson
Illus. by: Kevin Hawkes

Candlewick, 2013

ISBN: 9780763665999

Curriculum: *Composers; George Handel*

George Friderick Handel was born



in Germany in 1685. His father wanted him to be a doctor and make a lot of money, but young George knew what he wanted and what he wanted was to make music. He moved to Hamburg and then to Italy where he discovered Italian opera. He was successful, for a time, in London with the Italian opera but when it fell out of favor, so did he. Eventually he wrote *Messiah* which remains his best known work even today. The illustrations are humorous and there are sidebars that explain briefly some concepts. Young readers will be entertained by some of George's antics; he was very determined to do what he liked.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening

Robert Frost

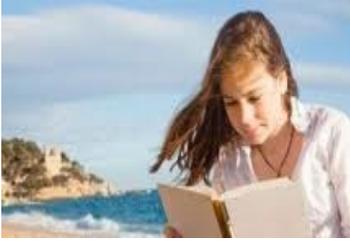
Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Fiction

The Hero's Guide to Storming the Castle

By: Christopher Healy
Illus. by: Todd Harris
Harper Collins, 2013



ISBN: 9780062118455

Curriculum: Fairy tales; Princes; Heroes

The "Princes Charming" are again trying to save their fractured fairy tale world. Eleven-year-old villain Deeb Rauber, or The Bandit King, has joined forces with evil Lord Rundark to take over the neighboring kingdoms. But an even worse event will occur if the magic Sword of Erinthia falls into hands of a renegade princess. Helped or hindered by Cinderella, Snow White, and Rapunzel, the four princes are hilarious as they bumble and brag their way to victory. Great dialogue and cartoon illustrations add to the fun and adventure.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

Romeo Blue

By: Phoebe Stone
Arthur A. Levine, 2013
ISBN: 9780545443609



Curriculum: Identity; World War II; Spies; Foster children; Maine

While Flissy is safely living with her American relatives in Maine, her parents are spies working deep behind enemy lines in Europe. Flissy worries, but her crush on the Bathburn's adopted son, a mysterious stranger who asks too many questions, and the Nazi uniform hanging in her uncle's room keep her busy mind occupied. This quiet, humorous, coming-of-age story provides a touch of mystery and intrigue, while offering a glimpse of World War II era America.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen
TJ HS

The Laura Line

By: Crystal Allen
Balzer+Bray, 2013
ISBN: 9780061992742



Curriculum: Family; Slavery; Self-Image

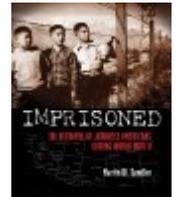
Laura has always been embarrassed by the fact that there is a slave shack on her family's property. She sees it as a shameful reminder of the past of black Americans. It isn't until she starts trying to come up with reasons for her class not to take a fieldtrip there that she finds the actual value in the shack and adjoining cemetery. This is a book of empowerment. Upper elementary and middle school readers will find value here. The mean girls are still mean and the cute but unreachable boy is still cute and maybe unreachable, and the moral of the story is, to believe in yourself against all

odds.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

Nonfiction

Imprisoned : the betrayal of Japanese Americans during World War II



By: Martin W. Sandler
Walker Books for Young Readers, 2013

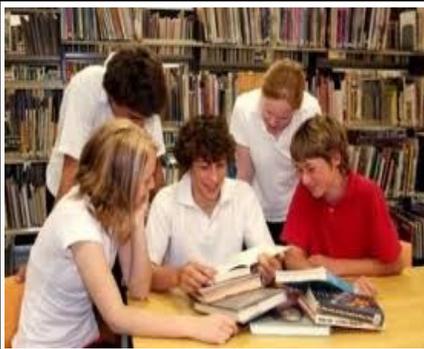
ISBN: 9780802722775

Curriculum: Japanese American evacuation and relocation

Photos on every page help document this historical narrative of the experiences of over 100,000 Japanese Americans who, as a result of Executive Order 9066, were deprived of their property and rights, and sent to inland internment camps for the duration of World War II. Other topics include Japanese Americans in the military, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 (apology and restitution by the U.S. government), and efforts to ensure that this never happens to another group of citizens - particularly Arab Americans after the bombings at the World Trade Center. This is a must for every school library.

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





Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Fiction

Fangirl

By: Rainbow Rowell
St. Martin's Griffin,
2013

ISBN: 9781250030955

Curriculum: Individuality; Coming of Age; College; Fanfiction

When introverted Cath's twin sister decides not to room with her during their first year at college, Cath is devastated and must face life outside her comfort zone. She feels as abandoned and alone as she did when their mom left and their dad had a break down. Cath is unsure she can get through the year but uses her Simon Snow fanfiction writing to try to ground herself (or does this make her a freak?) and survive a strange roommate, boys, classes, and a father and twin on the edge. Cath's story of finding her own way and a terrific, sweet, sexy, PG love story make this a great read for HS girls.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.



Have a Nice Day

By: Julie Halpern

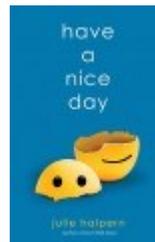
Feiwei and Friends, 2012

ISBN: 9780312606602

Curriculum: Mental illness; Self-perception; Friendship; Marital conflict

In this sequel to *Get Well Soon* (2007) Anna Bloom returns from a forced, three-week stay at Lakeland Mental Hospital ("Lake Shit") where she was treated for depression and anxiety. With honest and raunchy teen-age humor, Anna narrates her quest for normalcy as she returns to school, best friend Tracy, and her parents in marital crisis. Though a sequel, the book can stand on its own.

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



Nonfiction

Open Mic

Edited by: Mitali Perkins

Ata-Boy Productions, 2010

ISBN: 9780763658663

Curriculum: Race; Social issues; Humor; Short stories

Open Mic is a collection of stories by ten diverse YA authors exploring what it means to be caught between cultures. Each story explores racial and social issues. One story focuses on a Korean student who tries to fit into his new high school by eschewing all things Asian, only to find that he is more popular when he embraces as many Asian stereotypes as possible. Another story relates the experiences of a biracial American girl living in Berlin. This compact collection provides plenty of material of which readers can ponder about how we relate to others.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen
TJ HS



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