

The Review Crew

Early Elementary Fiction

Hello, My Name is Octicorn

By: Kevin Diller

Illus. By: Justin Lowe

Balzer + Bray, An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2016

ISBN: 9780062387936

Topics: Friendship; Acceptance; Mythical creatures; Individuality

In this simply illustrated book, readers are introduced to Octicorn, half octopus, half unicorn. Octicorn is very good at games like ring toss and juggling, but he is lonely - there's no one else in the world like him. He urges readers to be his friend. Children and adults alike will enjoy the humor.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.



Carlos & Carmen: The Wobbly Wheels

By: Kirsten McDonald

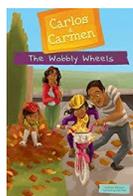
Illus. by: Erika Meza

ABDO Publishing, 2017

ISBN: 9781624021442

Topics: Twins; Bicycles

From the Calico Kid *Carlos & Carmen* series, readers will jump back into the life of twins Carmen and Carlos and their adventures as they learn to ride a bicycle. Visual supports are still present, Spanish terms are included throughout the text, and there is a Spanish to English page in the back to translate. Wonderful lighthearted story about what happens when children learn how to ride a bike, and that sometimes adults (like



their Papa) have to learn new things too. The illustrations truly add to the story without taking away imagination prospects for the reader.

Reviewed by: Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.

Shapes at Play

Written and illus. by: Silvia Borando

Candlewick Press, 2014

ISBN: 9789763690380

Topics: Shapes

Red triangles form into a bigger triangle. Yellow squares rush to make a bigger square. But when blue circles become bouncing balls and the different shapes begin to combine, creativity flies in the window. Houses small and tall, castles with flying flags, cars that race and trucks that block the way—these are just part of the fun. When circles, triangles, and squares form a rocket ship that lands on Mars, strange new shapes—a pentagon, a rhombus, and a pentagram—welcome them! Borando's short phrases, active prose, and charming illustrations invite the reader to play. A website features activity sheets to download and an inexpensive app to further the fun.

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.



I'm a Girl!

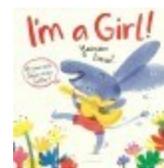
Written and illus. by:

Yasmeen Ismail

Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2016

ISBN: 9781619639751

Topics: Friendship; Acceptance; Individuality; Gender Roles



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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 twelve 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.)

Little Donkey is energetic, loud, strong, brave, and messy - traits that lead to her being mistaken as a boy. Throughout the book, she yells, "I'm a girl!" after each case of mistaken identity. She meets Lion, a little boy who plays with dolls and wears skirts and an instant friendship is formed. A great story to discuss gender norms. Reviewed by: Denise Cushing Carson Elem.

Christmas for Greta and Gracie

Written and illus. by: Yasmeen Ismail
Candlewick Press, 2016
ISBN: 9780763689438



Topics: Sisters; Christmas

Greta is the overbearing older sister of young rabbit Gracie, and as Christmas rolls around, Greta has plenty to say about Santa's habits, the best way to ice skate, and all holiday decisions. Honestly, Gracie is just too slow, too quiet, and too little! Gracie uses these qualities to surprise Santa on Christmas Eve, and after that encounter, Gracie is the loquacious expert; for once, Greta does not say a single word. Digitally rendered illustrations have the feel of bright watercolors, and the big speech bubbles (pink for Greta and yellow for Gracie) take center stage. This is a fun and different holiday story for reading aloud and discussion. Review by: Peggy Obert Alumni

Please Say PLEASE!

Written and illus. by: Kyle T. Webster
Scholastic Press, 2016
ISBN: 9780545844857



Topics: Manners; Rhyming text; Courtesy

A snobby little girl learns from a well-dressed gentleman that if she says "please", she will get what she asks for in abundance. When she asks for a giant, they negotiate with "pretty please with a cherry on top". She in turn teaches the giant manners. An endearing read for Kindergarten and Preschool students. Reviewed by: Denise Cushing Carson Elem.

Upper Elementary Fiction

The Christmas Eve Tree

Written by: Delia Huddy
Illus. by: Emily Sutton
Candlewick Press, 2015
ISBN: 9780763679170



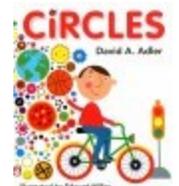
Topics: Christmas; Fir tree; City life; Hope; Gratitude
Late Christmas Eve, the man from the tree lot, was going to throw out the last tree. It was crooked and spindly and no one wanted it. A boy comes along and rescues the tree, and takes it to his cardboard box where he sleeps. He planted the tree in a small box and cared for it. Someone dropped coins in the boy's box, and he bought candles and a box of matches to decorate his tree. A street performer came over and started playing Christmas songs with his accordion. Before long, a crowd gathered on the street singing along. The little tree was so happy that for one night, he brought the boy happiness. After the holidays, the boy moved on and a street sweeper picked it up. He saw a green sprout and planted the tree in the nearby park where it grew and was happy for all the people who came to

visit. Reviewed by: Karen Burns Place Bridge Academy

Upper Elementary Nonfiction

Circles

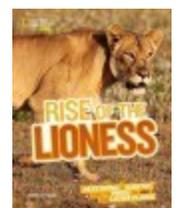
By: David A Adler
Illus. by: Edward Miller
Holiday House Inc, 2016
ISBN: 9780823436422



Topics: Geometry; Circles
A comprehensive accounting of circles and their parts, Adler's book begins by excluding from further discussion many round things that aren't circles—cones, spheres, cylinders, ovals, and spirals. From there he turns to diameters, radii, chords, segments, sectors, and circumference. Adler ends his tome with an inviting piece on pi and another on the key role circles play in our world. Miller's clever illustrations, quizzes, and a number of hands-on activities help keep the learning fun. Adler and Miller have combined their talents on a number of math books for kids. Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley Cheltenham Elem.

Rise of the Lioness

By: Bradley Hague
National Geographic, 2016
ISBN: 9781426325328



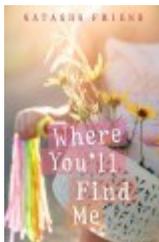
Topics: Lions; Zambia
Zambia is a country in Africa that has suffered through many devastating changes, all of which have had a dramatic effect on the country's animal population. This book is the story

of Lady, the last remaining lioness, and how a dedicated group of native people and scientists have worked to restore ecological balance in Western Zambia. Rebuilding the ecosystem required government intervention, agricultural renewal, and reintroduction of animal species. Large, colorful photographs highlight the land, its history, and animals, especially Lady and her new family. This is a fascinating book to use as a cautionary case study during an ecology unit. Reviewed by: Peggy Obert Alumni

Middle School Fiction

Where You'll Find Me

By: Natasha Friend
Farrar Straus
Giroux, 2016
ISBN:
9780374302306



Topics: Depression; Divorce; Friendship; Stepfamilies; Suicide; Middle-School
The week thirteen-year old Anna starts middle-school, her best friend dumps her, her mother attempts suicide and she has to go live with her father and his 24-year-old wife and baby stepsister. Anna thinks things can't get any worse. She finds herself eating lunch with other outcast girls at school: Sarabeth - the strangely pale Irish step dancer; Shawna - the girl who compulsively pulls out her eyebrows and draws them back on as daggers; and two wanna be wiccans. Anna finds hope in her new reality through these new friendships and by mending family relationships. Reviewed by: Denise Cushing Carson Elem.

Love Bomb

By: Jenny McLachlan
Feiwei and Friends, 2015
ISBN: 9781250061492

Topics: High School; Friendships; Relationships



Betty never really missed her mother until her world turns upside down with boys, her dad's girlfriend, and friendship woes. As a high school teacher, McLachlan's knowledge of high school students shows through as Betty tackles the day-by-day struggles of a fifteen-year-old. Young girls will relate to her experiences, whether their mother is alive or gone--but especially if their mom is gone. Additionally, her father begins dating and anyone dealing with either parent beginning to date after death or divorce will relate to Betty as she wrestles with the jealousy, frustration, and connection that occurs during. A great text for any middle or high school library. Reviewed by: Emily Rubin Barnum Elem.

27 Magic Words

By: Sharelle Byars Moranville
Holiday House, 2016
ISBN: 9780823436576

Topics: Death; Family Relationships; Magic



Before Kobi's parents disappeared on an oceanography expedition, her mother gave her 27 "magic" words which Kobi uses to cope with situations, and thinks she can even see her parents on a deserted island when she uses the word, "Avanti!" For four years Kobi and her older sister Brook have been living with their grandmother in Paris, but things change when they go to stay with their uncle in Des Moines and have to deal with bullying, strange food, and people who seem to know more about their lives than they do. All the stress triggers Brook's OCD and

Review Crew Staff

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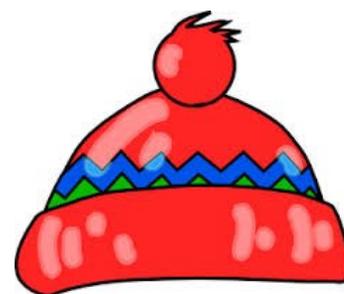
Peggy Obert

Alumni

From ETLs:

Karen Shannon

Antonio Nicotera



Kobi starts to tell lies. The truth about everything comes out dramatically in this affecting story about how we deal with loss.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni

The Wardens

By: Stuart Daly
Random House, 2015
ISBN: 9780857983275

Topics: *Adventure;*
Treasure hunting; Magic;
Brotherhood



Caspan lives his life as a street thief. He is unhappy with his lot in life, although he is very skilled at it. He is given a chance to try out for a place in the Brotherhood, a secret order sanctioned by the king. The task of the Brotherhood is to find lost magical weapons of an ancient race. They need these weapons to fight the Roon, an army bent on occupying their country. The five recruits are from totally different background and must hone their skills, and learn to trust each other if they are to succeed. Caspan is pleased to be a part of this mission since it allows him to develop the skills he has and makes some solid friends he can now trust. The five set out riding the magical beasts called Wardens to begin their quest. Will they find the first of the weapons?

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Applesauce Weather

By: Helen Frost
Illus. by: Amy June Bates
ISBN: 9780763675769

Topics: *Novel in verse;*
Family; Grief



It is apple season! The first apple has fallen from the tree that Arthur and Lucy planted when they were married. Lucy passed away last year and Arthur lives in town. Now Peter

and Faith live in Lucy and Arthur's house with the apple tree. Faith is sure that he will come to harvest the apples. And Uncle Arthur does come, but the twinkle in his eye is missing now. This is a sweet, poignant story of lives well lived. This slim novel is written in verse and illustrated with pencil sketches that bring the story and people to life.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College

High School Fiction

Love, Lies and Spies

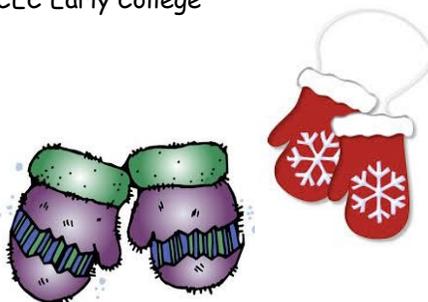
By: Cindy Anstey
Feiwel and Friends,
2016
ISBN: 9781250084033

Topics: *Romance; Spies;*
19th Century



Juliana will do anything to get her manuscript about the fascinating Lady Beetles published. This is absolutely not what young ladies of her day are supposed to do. They are supposed to "come out": Attend balls and reviews. Wear amazing gowns and spend the "season" hunting for the man who she will make a successful match with. One day, when she is wandering around her uncle's estate, she falls off a cliff. As she is dangling precariously, she meets Spencer, who pulls her up. Spencer is a spy for the war department and he is watching one of the neighboring estates.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College



High School Nonfiction

Misunderstood

By: Rachel Toor
Farrar, Straus, Giroux,
2016

ISBN:
9780374303082

Topics: *Rats; Pets*



Rats may be one of the most misunderstood, maligned animals on the planet: possibly only in contention with cockroaches. They are seen to be carriers of diseases, remember the plague in Europe? actually not caused by rats but they are blamed nonetheless. Rachel Toor presents us with her first person, nonfiction, views on being a rat parent. Her seemingly stream-of-conscious conversations with her readers are actually very intentional. Her humorous tone and snarky comments engage the reader and they are forced, gently, to listen to her amazing amount of knowledge and insight about having a rat for a pet.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College



Warm Mittens

(unknown)

I wiggle my left hand,
I wiggle my right,
inside of my mittens,
so warm and so tight.

I wiggle my pinkie.
I wiggle my thumb,
so when I make snowballs,
my hands don't get numb.