

The Review Crew

Early Elementary Fiction

This Little Piggy

Written and illus. by: Tim Harrington

Balzer and Bray, 2013

ISBN: 9780062218087

Curriculum: Toes; Counting; Nursery rhymes

Each "this little piggy" on one foot has followed the traditional route with marketing and roast beef, but the toes on the other foot sell hot dogs, dance, and build rockets. The first piggies realize their lives could be so much more, so they race go-karts, wear costumes, and one even becomes Super Toe. Tired at the end of the day, each piggy bathes, brushes its teeth, and goes "Z-Z-Z" all the way to sleep. The bored faces on the toenails of the first foot are contrasted in colorful digital illustrations with the exciting exploits of the other foot. This is a cheerful, clever story which will be enjoyed by young and old readers alike as a welcome addition to the fractured tale genre.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8



Train

Written and illus. by: Elisha Cooper

Orchard Books, 2013

ISBN: 9780545384957

Curriculum: Trains; Travel; Railroads

This beautifully illustrated story shares the



travels of a commuter train, a passenger train and a freight train. Climb aboard and see the sights, sounds, and smells as each train journeys to its destination over mountains and through cities, during day time and night time. Children fascinated with trains or travel, or those who just love good books, will enjoy these lovely, quiet treks of the trains. Even in the city scenes, soft-colored illustrations give readers a sense of a slower-paced, gentler, pastoral America.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Unpoppable

Written and illus. by: Tim Hopgood

Macmillan Children's Books, 2012

ISBN: 9780330517209

Curriculum: Balloons; Imagination

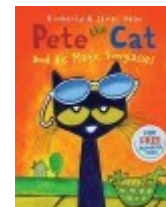
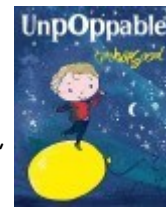
A little boy's yellow balloon is unpoppable and unstoppable as it floats into space. This book is fun and dreamy, with unique illustrations that tell more of the story than just what is in the simple text. It would make a good read aloud to for all ages, portraying a whimsical world of wonder and imagination.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni

Pete the Cat and His Magic Sunglasses

By: Kimberly and James Dean

Illus. by: James Dean



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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.)

Harper, 2013

ISBN: 9780062275561

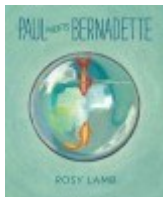
Curriculum: Cats; Sunglasses; Positive attitude

Pete the Cat woke up grumpy, but his friend Frog lets him try his cool new magic sunglasses, and Pete sees the world in a whole new light! Staring the familiar Pete the Cat, this is a book about looking on the bright side of things in life.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni

Paul Meets Bernadette



Written and illus. by: Rosy Lamb

Candlewick Press, 2013

ISBN: 9780763661304

Curriculum: Friendship; imagination; creativity

Paul is a realist. He is also a goldfish. His world consists of a round tank in which he swims around and around all day long. He is tired of this boring existence. But then, along comes Bernadette, who shows him a whole new world in which her imagination brings a new perspective and passion to his life. He will never see the world the same again.

This is a charming picture book that will appeal to both children and adults alike. Imagination can transform a bouquet of flowers into a forest of trees of every color; a banana into a little yellow boat, a blue porcelain teapot pouring tea as an elephant feeding her babies. When shared with a friend, these imaginings are even more magical!

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
Green Valley Elem.

Early Elementary Nonfiction

How Big Were the Dinosaurs?

Written and illus. by:
Lita Judge

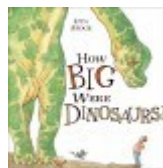
Roaring Book Press,
2013

ISBN: 9781596437197

Curriculum: Dinosaurs

Moving from the smallest to the largest, twelve dinosaurs are pictured alongside modern day animals and objects. The Leaellynasaura is shown mingling with comparably sized penguins at the South Pole, its own prehistoric habitat, and Struthiomimus is ridden by a jockey as it races with the speedy horses it resembles. The colorful and humorous illustrations will delight young dinosaur fans. More information is included in the back with fold out pages that explain how scientists determine a dinosaur's size, as well as a spread showing all the dinosaurs gallivanting together in their varied sizes.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8



Upper Elementary Fiction

Lulu and the Cat in the Bag

By: Hilary McKay
Albert Whitman, &
Company, 2011

ISBN: 9780807548042

Curriculum: Friendship, pets, cats, dogs



This is another fun book in Lulu series. When a mysterious bag is left on Lulu's doorstep, her grandmother is scared of its contents and warns Lulu not to open the bag. But Lulu is brave and she opens the sack to find a fluffy orange cat who comes to live with the family at Lulu's insistence. Nan, Lulu's grandmother, is none too happy about the addition to the family, but she quickly warms to the loving cat. Then the cat leaves abruptly one day and the family is devastated. This beginning chapter book ends with a happy surprise that will delight young readers!

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
Green Valley Elem.

Upper Elementary Nonfiction

When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop



By: Laban Carrick Hill

Illus. by: Theodore Taylor III

Roaring Brook Press, 2013

ISBN: 9781596435407

Curriculum: DJ Kool Herc; Disc jockeys; Rap music

Raised in Jamaica on cool music and dancing, Clive used to watch the big DJ's set up for the dance parties that he longed to attend, but it wasn't until his family moved to the Bronx that he could go. As a teenager, he took the name DJ Kool Herc, experimenting with his father's turntables and talking over the music, making up little rhymes that the audience loved. He took the music to the streets where the break dancers joined in, and hip hop was born. The energy and rhythm of the story are

mirrored in the bold full page illustrations with Clive and his friends in the groove. Students who are interested in this American music form will enjoy this vibrant picture book introduction.

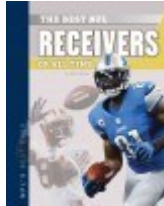
Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

The Best NFL Receivers of All Time

By: Barry Wilner
ABDO, 2014

ISBN: 9781617839115

Curriculum: NFL; Football; Wide receivers



Fourteen of the NFL's best receivers are highlighted in this title that is sure to be popular. Beginning with Don Hutson's career with Green Bay in the 30s and 40s the title progresses to present-day stars such as Tony Gonzalez. These are the athletes that made and make football fun to watch. Although subjective, the quality of the players included is indisputable. Great action photos accompany the text. Sidebars, captions, and stats emphasize each player's talented career. Upper elementary school football fans will enjoy reading about the sport's most accomplished players.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Middle School Fiction

Confessions of a So-Called Middle Child

By: Maria T. Lennon
Harper Collins, 2013
ISBN:



9780062126900

Curriculum: Middle schools; Family life; Bullying

Middle child Charlie is starting seventh grade in L.A. after being expelled in Malibu, and her therapist has given her an assignment: find the biggest loser she can and befriend them. She spots Marta the Farta, who looks like a "homeless Disney princess" and goes on a self-discovery journey as she helps Marta achieve her goal of becoming a gymnast like her mysterious mother. Charlie is funny and irreverent, but her budding empathy shines as she becomes a better daughter, sibling, and friend. Young teens will easily identify the typical middle school characters and will rejoice in the triumph of caring over indifference.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

The Silver Dream

By: Neil Gaiman and Michael Reaves

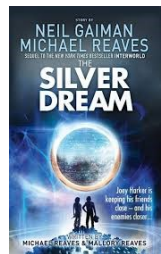
Harper Teen, 2013

ISBN:

9780082067968

Curriculum: Science Fiction; Relationships; Time Travel; Survival

Joey Harker is a Walker. He has the ability to walk between dimensions. His team was sent to retrieve a new Walker and return him to InterWorld. All did not go as planned. Then a stranger, named Acacia Jones, follows Joey back to base, which should not have been possible. Acacia works for Time-Watch and works to keep the different worlds safe. There is a traitor, plots and counter-plots going on. Joey will have a bigger



and more powerful role in the future than anyone can guess.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Mira in the Present Tense

By: Sita Brahmachari
Albert Whitman & Company, 2011

ISBN: 9780807551493

Curriculum: Family life; Writing; Cancer; Grief; Death and dying; Bildungsromans



Shy, quiet Mira has just turned twelve. Her family life is chaotic, she is being bullied at school, everything seems to embarrass Mira, including her own embarrassment, and her Nana Josie is dying from cancer. The only thing that seems to be going well is the Literature Club in which Mira is learning about writing from a real author. Through her required journaling, Mira begins to make sense of life and come to terms with her Nana's impending passing. This gentle, quiet, coming of age tale will resonate with most young female readers.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.

Fallout

By: Todd Strasser
Candlewick, 2013

ISBN: 9780763655341

Curriculum: Cold War; Racism; Families



Scott and his friends are busy thinking about the things that boys think about with one exception. Scott's father is building a bomb shelter in the back of the house and Russia has put up missiles in Cuba aimed at the U.S. When Russia bombs the U.S., Scott and his parents and younger brother make a

beeline to the bomb shelter but encounter many of the neighbors trying to get in also. As the supplies run out so do peoples' tempers and the grim reality of what is outside the bomb shelter slowly eats away at the mind. This story is told in alternating chapters: pre-bomb, post-bomb. This is a no-holds-barred look at the grim reality of war.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

CEC Middle College

Salt

By: Helen Frost

Farrar Straus Giroux,
2013

ISBN:

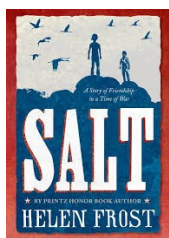
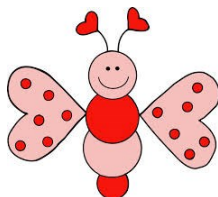
9780374363871

Curriculum: Friendship; War; 1812

Helen Frost's faultless verses once again take readers deep into the lives of two boys. Anikwa is Native American from the Miami tribe. James is the son of the owner of the trading post. The two boys enjoy a friendship with few words between them as neither speaks the other's language. War is coming to the community. The American soldiers get to the community first, they burn the forests and crop lands, shoot the animals and destroy the village of Kekionga, where Anikwa lives. It is late in the fall, there is no food. Who really wins this war? Anikwa's and James' verses are very distinct but blend together flawlessly. This beautiful book in verse will work well in middle school and higher.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

CEC Middle College



Middle School Nonfiction

Call of the Klondike

By: David Meissner and
Kim Richardson

Calkins Creek, 2013

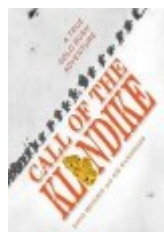
ISBN: 9781590788233

Curriculum: Gold; Mining; Klondike River Valley; Gold Rush; Yukon

After gold is found in the Klondike in 1897, thousands rush to make the arduous journey north with the hope of making their fortune. Among the first to go were Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond. They faced a dangerous journey that included climbing steep mountain passes and traveling over five hundred miles of lakes and swift flowing rivers. But that was just the beginning of an adventure that would test their mettle and hopefully prove to be profitable. The author combines primary source documents with historical research and archival photographs to bring the excitement of the adventure to life.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

TJ H.S.



High School Fiction

NOS4A2

By: Joe Hill

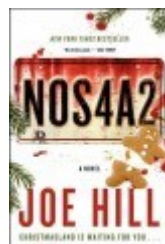
William Morrow, 2013

ISBN:

9780062200587

Curriculum: Horror; Kidnapping; Supernatural events

Charlie Manx collects deserving chil-



dren in his 1938 Rolls-Royce Wraith and brings them to the magical place of Christmasland where every day is filled with presents and fun. Victoria can transport across an old, torn-down bridge where she always finds the missing items she's seeking. During a fight with her mother, the worlds of Vic and Manx collide. Vic barely escapes with her life. As time passes, though, it's clear that Manx and his children at Christmasland aren't done with Vic yet. Written by the son of Stephen King, Hill proves that writing runs in his veins. Give to mature HS horror fans.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK H.S.

Descendant

By: Lesley Livingston

HarperTeen, 2013

ISBN:

9780062063106

Curriculum: Norse Mythology; Supernatural; End of the World; Survival

This second book in the Starling series picks up where the first book ended, with an explosion. Mason finds herself stranded in Asgard and she must find a way to get home. She needs to find the Spear of Odin and her time is running short. In the real world, the Fennrys Wolf is trying his best to rescue Mason, who he's come to love. It is said that Mason is the one who raises the spear to bring about Ragnarok, or the end of the world. Readers will be watching for book three of this trilogy to see if she can prevent the world from ending.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy



Gris Grimly's

Frankenstein

Written and illus. by:

Gris Grimly

Balzer + Bray, 2013

ISBN:

9780061862977



Curriculum: *Frankenstein's monster; Horror graphic novels*

Abridged from the original, this interpretation of the Frankenstein story is the first to use Shelley's text while illustrating it in graphic novel format. Young Frankenstein searches for the source and meaning of life, and creates a living being from the body parts of the deceased, but immediately regrets his decision. The "monster", never finding love or companionship, swears revenge on his creator - a revenge which he exacts with horrible consequences. Grimly's art, in muted watercolors, depicts Frankenstein as tall and skinny, with wild hair and a leather jacket bedecked with bones. Gothic backdrops, mixed with steampunk machines and a grotesquely humorous style, meld to produce the perfect tone for the text. Not for purists of the classical genre -- this one is for modern readers who would otherwise pass up the forbidding original, but will appreciate the timeless tale.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco

Skinner M.S.

The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo & Juliet

Adapted and Illus. by:

Gareth Hinds

Candlewick Press,

2013

ISBN:

9780763659486



Curriculum: *Shakespeare adaptations; Vendettas; Romance*

Once again, Hinds adds modern touches when he creates an abridged, graphical rendition of one of Shakespeare's most endearing plays. The Capulets (dressed in red) are from India, and the Montagues (dressed in blue) hail from Africa. The young people dress accordingly - with Juliet wearing short skirts and high boots, Romeo sporting an Afro, and Tybalt showing off his tattoos. And although lines are left out, the story and language stay true to the original. With crisp, colorful illustrations, this is an excellent edition that may inspire young readers to search out the full play.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco

Skinner M.S.

Promise Me Something

By: Sara Kocek

Albert Whitman, 2013

ISBN: 9780807566411

Curriculum: *Gay teens; Bullying; Suicide; High school*



Reyna ends up in high school with none of her middle school friends. Right away Levi starts to be her friend as does unpopular Olive. Reyna slips into an uneasy friendship with Olive until the time Olive tells her she is gay. Reyna doesn't like the person she seems to have become and when a girl gets hit by a train and is unidentifiable, Reyna realizes that it is too late to be a friend to Olive but there might still be time to be an advocate for some other students who are being bullied. This book highlights the abuse that many gay teens are subject to as well as the issue of suicide as a solution to the abuse.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

CEC Middle College

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