

The Review Crew

Early Elementary Fiction

How To Hide a Lion

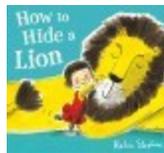
Written and illus by: Helen Stephens

Henry Hold and Co., 2013
ISBN:9780805098341

Curriculum: Lions; Friendship; Trust

One day, a lion strolled into town wanting to get a hat. The people were afraid of him and ran him out of town. The lion ran until he found a play house in a back yard and tried to hide there. A little girl, Iris, who was not afraid of lions, found him. He was too big to hide in the playhouse. So she quietly sneaks the lion into her house and up to her room without her parents noticing. Iris and the lion have several adventures until her mother sees the lion and screams. Lion has to find another hiding place, this time between the stone lions downtown. He turns out to be a hero when he stops two burglars. They throw him a parade and everyone loves him. This is a fun story and great to read aloud to young ones. There are many "what if" questions that can be used for interesting discussions.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy



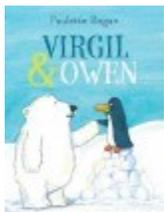
Virgil & Owen

Written and illus by: Paulette Bogan

Bloomsbury, 2015
ISBN:9781619639728

Curriculum: Friendship; Jealousy; Getting along

Virgil, who is a penguin, found a polar bear.



He told his mother that the polar bear was his, and he was keeping him. They went for a walk and came upon some terns playing. The polar bear joined in the fun, but Virgil did not. "You are my polar bear!" They left and came upon some seals. Polar bear had fun sliding on the ice with them, but Virgil did not. They left and came upon other penguins playing. When polar bear joined in, Virgil got angry and pouted. Polar bear explained to Virgil that he did not belong to him, and his name was Owen. Owen and the others invited Virgil to play with them. Virgil finally understood, and said that Owen was not his, he was his friend. A fun story about friendship, jealousy and how not to act if you want friends.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Say It

Written by: Charlotte Zolotow

Illus. by: Charlotte Voake
Candlewick Press, 2015
ISBN: 9780763681159

Curriculum: Mother and daughters; Autumn

A little girl and her mother are walking on an autumn day, and as the leaves swirl around, they meet a little black kitten and a dog, and watch milkweed float in the air and purple clouds soar across the sky. "Say it," the girl keeps asking, and her mother teasingly comments on the beautiful day and animals. Finally the girl shrieks, "Say it!" and her mother loudly proclaims, "I love you, I love you!" as she catches her daughter up. "That's what I've been saying all the time," the mother laughs. The illustrations in pen and water-



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

Volume 12 Number 6

February 2016

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.)

color display the glory of the season and evoke the emotions of the mother and daughter in quick, deft strokes. This is a reissue of a lyrical book written thirty-five years ago, but the message of love and how we communicate it is timeless.

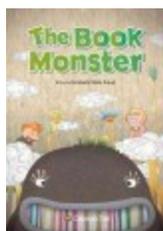
Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni

The Book Monster

By: Humberta Maria
Araujo

Illus. by: Hubuluck
JLS Co. Ltd., 2014

ISBN:
9788966290406



Curriculum: Leveled reader; Adventure

During a visit to the library, siblings Amanda and Brian find that their favorite book, "The Growly Monster", is blank! They embark on an adventure to find the missing text and illustrations. This level 3 reader from Caramel Tree employs simple text and Manga-style illustrations to tell the story of a misunderstood monster who just wants to be loved.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.

Owl Diaries: Eva's Treetop Festival

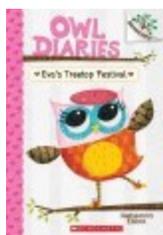
Written by: Rebecca
Elliott

Scholastic, 2015

ISBN: 9780545683623

*curriculum: friendship,
diaries, owls, spring*

One of Scholastic's
Branches titles, Eva's



Treetop Festival, is great for readers ready to move onto early chapter books. Eva and her best friend, Lucy, learn about multitasking, asking for help, and balance in this adorable story. Definitely geared towards young girls, this diary style book follows Eva, an owl. She and her classmates are creating a spring festival, the Bloomtastic Festival. We get daily updates reading her entries, which are filled with many

doodles and color illustrations. This would be a great book for any primary student ready for the step above picture books and early readers.

Reviewed by Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.

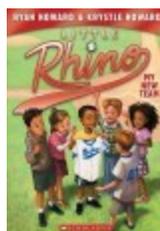
Little Rhino: My New Team

Written and illus. by: Ryan Howard
and Krystle Howard
Scholastic, 2015

ISBN:
9780545674904

*Curriculum: Bullies;
Friendship; Sports*

Written by a Major
League Baseball first



baseman and his wife, a former elementary school teacher, this 2nd/3rd grade level early chapter book is perfect for both young boys and young girls who love baseball (and dinosaurs). This text is a perfect combination of situations that middle grade students are experiencing (bullies, friendships, new situations), mimicking the lives of our students. The main character, Rhino, lives with his grandpa and his older brother. His grandpa is constantly giving great advice about how to live life, and how to deal--the "three second rule," for dealing with situations when you are feeling angry or upset is one I'll use with my students. Some illustrations are throughout the text, and the text formatting is not intimidating to students new to chapter books.

Reviewed by: Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.

When something in
life goes wrong,
yell, "plot twist!"
and move on.

The Very Best Sheepdog

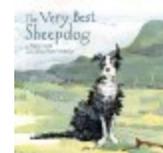
By: Pinny Grylls

Illus. by: Rosie Welles-
ley

Pavilion Books, 2014

ISBN: 9781843652199

*Curriculum: Friendship;
Perseverance; Dogs*



Like his parents before him, Ben is a sheepdog. But his parents were prizewinning and Ben is not. He tries, but he just cannot herd sheep. The sheep run away or worse - they laugh at him. But Ben does have a good nose. When a lamb is lost, Ben is able to sniff it out and bring it back to the shepherd. One night during a storm, the entire flock disappears. It is up to Ben to sniff them out and lead them home. This heartwarming tale is about doing your best and being yourself.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

Upper Elementary Fiction

Tractor Mac: Arrives at the Farm

Written and illus by:

Billy Steers

Farrar Straus Giroux,
2015

ISBN: 9780374301026

*Curriculum: Farm life;
Being useful*



Sibley is a work horse and he lives on Stony Meadow Farm. One day a shiny red tractor arrives. Every morning Sibley waits for the farmer to harness him up so he can go to work, but every morning the farmer starts up Mac, the shiny tractor. Sibley is sad! Will he ever be useful on the farm again? Quirky illustrations bring the characters in this series to life. Young readers will like the bright il-

illustrations as well as the stories that highlight positive character traits. This is a great series for read alouds as well as for independent reading.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College

Monsieur Albert Rides to Glory

By: Peter Smith

Illus. by: Bob Graham
Crows Nest, 2014

ISBN:

9781743318423

Curriculum: Bike races; Age; Humor

Monsieur Albert Larousse lives in a sixth floor loft in an apartment building in Paris. He loves to cycle and he carries his bike up and down the stairs every day. One day he reads about a Grand Cycle Race, with a fabulous prize to be won. He decides to enter. Monsieur Albert is elderly, but he is in good shape, he packs what he needs and carries his bike down the stairs. Every one laughs when he shows up at the starting line. "You are mad, Monsieur Albert, you haven't a chance!" This unlikely story is a lot of fun; we don't often meet sixty year old protagonists in picture books.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College



Upper Elementary Nonfiction

Counting Lions

By: Katie Cotton

Illus. by: Stephen
Walton

Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2015

ISBN: 9780763682071

Curriculum: Counting books; Endangered species; Drawing exemplars

This counting book transcends the

Counting Lions



genre with exquisite illustrations and a powerful message. Stephen Walton presents the animals in charcoal drawings, each startlingly life-like. You can all but read the thoughts of the regal male lion staring back at you. Three baby giraffes threaten to gambol off the page. A free verse meditation by Katie Cotton accompanies every illustration. British activist Virginia McKenna's passionate foreword treats the awe-inspiring beauty of these species, while a final section briefly discusses each animal's wildlife protection status. A counting book that teaches what counts.

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.

Nelly Nitpick,

Kid Critic

Written and illus. by:

Candlewick Entertainment
Candlewick Press,

2015

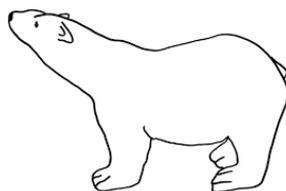
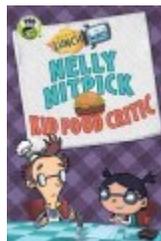
ISBN: 9780763672805

Curriculum: Healthy eating; Cookbook

In this media tie-in to the popular PBS show "Fizzy's Lunch Lab", Professor Fizzy and the gang are shocked to learn that the toughest food critic in town, Nelly Nitpick will be eating at their lunch lab. Nelly blatantly blasts vegetables on her show. Can they change Nelly's ways by serving her delicious vegetables disguised as junk food? Part story and part cookbook, this title will have kids begging their parents to help in the kitchen.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing

Carson Elem.



Gay & Lesbian History for Kids: the century-long struggle for LGBT rights

By Jerome Pohlen

Chicago Review Press,

2016

ISBN: 9781613730829

Curriculum: LGBT; Civil Rights; Gay Rights; American History

Thoroughly researched with 9 full pages of notes, this book is a comprehensive resource for anyone interested in LGBT history. The book opens with a timeline that dates as far back as 570 B.C. and concludes with the recent Supreme Court marriage equality ruling of 2015. The reader is exposed to the many events, people, groups, and movements within each decade from the 1900's to the present. LGBT hero spotlights, excellent photos, and 21 activities are provided to heighten and bring awareness to a period of American History that is not often found for this age group (ages 9 & up). The book, although intended for younger kids, is sure to appeal to older age groups (middle school and high school) as well.

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez
North H.S.



Middle School Fiction

Return to Augie Hobbie

Written and illus. by:

Lane Smith

Roaring Brook Press,

2015

ISBN: 9781626720541

Curriculum: Relationships; Theme Parks; Paranormal

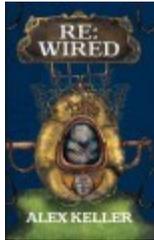
Augie Hobbie works at his father's rundown theme park, Fairy Tale Place, but this summer he also has to come up with a project to complete his failed Creative Arts class. On top of that, he and his best friend Britt are dealing with bullies, unrequited love, and a possible werewolf. Then Britt leaves for a



family vacation, and weird messages start showing up Augie's journal. Is he turning into a monster himself? A sudden tragedy, mysterious government figures, and a cast of quirky park employees are thrown into the mix for an ending including the paranormal, the power of everlasting friendship, and a lesson about coming to terms with yourself. The black and white illustrations are a combination of Augie's wild ideas for his project and other pictures that enhance the story. Middle school readers who like their stories strange, funny, and poignant will enjoy this one. Reviewed by: Peggy Obert Alumni

Re-Wired

By: Alex Keller
Mogzilla, 2011
ISBN:9781906132347
Curriculum: Science-Fiction; Steampunk; Adventure



Described as a "Steampunk Fairytale", this second book in the *Hay-wired* series features giant robots controlled by transplanted human brains, a hunchback half-brother, a mad scientist father, and spooky pirates. Brothers Ludwig and Hephaestus set out on a journey to find their father, Mandrake von Guggestein, who was abducted moments before he was to be hanged for trying to take over the city with giant human/cyborg hybrids! A gothic adventure/horror story that will leave readers looking for the next installment. Reviewed by: Denise Cushing Carson Elem.

The Tournament at Gorlan

By: John Flanagan
Philomel Books, 2015
ISBN: 978-0-399-16361-6
Curriculum: Adventure



Halt and Crowley are young, new Rangers. King Oswald has been taken hostage by Morgarath. When Halt and Crowley travel north to petition Prince Duncan they find that the real prince is captive in an island castle and an imposter is terrorizing the North Country in order to discredit him, part of an elaborate scheme by Morgarath to weaken the Ranger Corps and have himself proclaimed heir to Araluen. Halt, Crowley and a small but vital force of Rangers who have been dismissed from the service take matters into their own hands and force a confrontation at Gorlan and the annual tournament there.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College

Middle School Nonfiction

Iron Rails, Iron Men, and the Race to Link the Nation

By: Martin W. Sandler
Candlewick Press, 2015
ISBN: 9780763665272



Curriculum: Transcontinental Railroad; Westward Expansion; West (U.S. History)

In the 1850's, Gold Fever spurred a tide of humanity to head west. To cross an 1800 mile expanse, people were required to walk, ride horseback, or sail fifteen thousand miles around Cape Horn in South America. Each choice was treacherous and required months of travel time. In July 1862, President Lincoln signed the Pacific Railway Act authorizing the laying of tracks from two separate rail companies (one from the east, the other from the west), with the intent that the companies would be meet and join tracks. The act set in motion a race to complete a transcontinental rail-

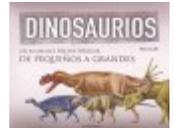
road that would link a nation and change it forever. A fascinating, well-researched title.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson H.S.



Dinosaurios: 150 animales prehistóricos, de pequeños a grandes

Written and illus. by: Roc Olive
Lectio Ediciones, 2013
ISBN: 9788415088967



Curriculum: Dinosaurs; Prehistoric animals

Whether you are a novice just browsing or a serious student seeking specific information, this volume will prove fascinating. One hundred fifty prehistoric species--marine reptiles, pterosaurs, and true dinosaurs--are pictured in detailed scale drawings, each accompanied by a concise summary of what scientists know about the animal. Family trees clearly illustrate evolutionary relationships, while graphic timelines reveal when each species lived within the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous periods.

Olive's brilliantly colored drawings reflect recent discoveries which suggest one major group of dinosaurs were feathered and many were richly colored. This lovely example of the bookmaker's art features an extensive index, but no reference to online resources.

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.



SPANISH

El gran libro sobre Roma

By: Pau Joan Hernandez



Illus. by: De Jordi Vila Delclos
Combel, 2013

ISBN: 9788498258561

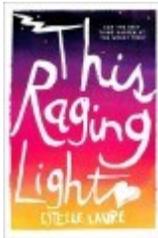
Curriculum: Ancient Rome; Imperial Rome

In a beautifully designed book filled with instructional games, maps, cut-away diagrams, pop-ups, and flaps to lift, Hernandez provides an overview of Roman civilization, while providing in-depth detail about certain aspects of their culture. Rome's origins, empire, trade, and daily life—all have their moment. In addition, the author and his able illustrator tell us about the Coliseum, legions, and the most important of the emperors. Although the front cover illustrates a roadway and a major aqueduct under construction, there is limited text about Roman engineering.
Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.

High School Fiction

This Raging Light

By: Estelle Laurie
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015



ISBN:

9780544534292

Curriculum: Family; Friends; Sisters;

Mental Illness; Abandonment

Sisters Lucille and Wren eagerly await the return of their mom after she leaves for a "vacation" following their dad's mental break-

down and admittance to rehab. When she doesn't return, seventeen-year-old Lucille does her best to keep herself and nine-year-old Wren afloat and out of foster care. Bills, however, have been piling up, the refrigerator is empty, and people are starting to ask questions. Struggling with the responsibilities no seventeen-year-old should have to experience, Lucille gets by with the unexpected help and support of friends and neighbors. A story of resilience, this book tackles many difficult issues that teens face today - mental illness, family issues, friendship, romance, honesty, and the importance of reaching out for help.

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez
North H.S.

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.
-Maya Angelou

Review Crew Staff

Committee Chair:

Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

Michelle Jensen

TJ/GW High School

Secretary:

Peggy Obert

Alumni

Editor:

Chris Coble

CEC Early College

Reviewers:

Nick Bleckley

Cheltenham Elem.

Denise Cushing

Carson Elem.

Jutta Gebauer

South High School

Sarah Martinez

North High School

Emily Rubin

Barnum Elem

From ETLs:

Karen Shannon

Antonio Nicotera

Sudi Stodola