

The Review Crew

Early Elementary Fiction

Samson in the Snow

Written and Illus. by: Phillip C. Stead

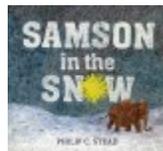
Roaring Book Press, 2016

ISBN:9780062112866

Topics: Friendship; Kindness; Woolly mammoth; Blizzards

Samson was a woolly mammoth that loved dandelions, the color yellow, and his friends. The little red bird asked him for a few of his lovely yellow dandelions to give to a friend who was having a hard day. She flew off looking for her friend and Samson took a nap. While he was sleeping, the weather changed and it began to snow. In the blizzard, he started to worry about his friend and went to look for her. As he walked, he found a little mouse freezing in the snow. He picked up the mouse and settled him in his warm fur. As he kept walking, they spotted some yellow dandelions in the snow, and underneath was the little red bird. They all went to Samson's warm, dry cave to wait out the storm. This is a fun story to read aloud with wonderful illustrations.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy



Louise and Andie The Art of Friendship

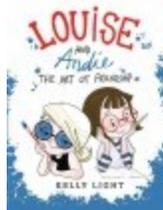
Written and Illus. by: Kelly Light

Balzer+Bray, 2016

ISBN: 9780062344403

Topics: Art; Friendship;

In this lovely picture book we connect back up with Louise



and meet Andie, her new neighbor and (hopefully) new friend. After Louise comes over to meet Andie, she is delighted to learn that art is also her favorite thing. They have the "best day ever," but as many young children often do, have a disagreement on how the final product should look. Yet, in a great example for primary grades, Andie comes up with a solution to salvage their friendship. Through photoshop and black pencil, this story will connect with young readers who aren't always sure how to handle a disagreement.

Reviewed by: Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.

The Branch

By: Mireille Messier

Illus. by: Pierre Pratt

Kids Can Press, 2016

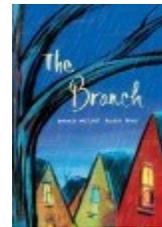
ISBN: 9781771385640

Topics: Ice storms; Creativity; Repurposing; Adult friends

When an ice storm falls a young girl's favorite tree branch, the one she "sat on, jumped from, played under," she is determined it not be hauled away. A kindly neighbor helps her find new potential in the branch. Together in a workshop that "smells sweet like Sunday breakfast" they saw and plane and sand. Soon the branch returns to the tree as a swing, and the girl notes, "It was my castle, my spy base, my ship . . . It still is!"

Messier's poetic prose combines with Pratt's expressive illustrations to make a lovely little work of art, appealing to children and adults.

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.



Brought to you by
the Denver Public
Schools Book
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 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.)

The Princess in Black Takes a Vacation

By: Shannon and Dean Hale

Illus. by: LeUyen Pham
Candlewick Press, 2016
ISBN: 9780763665128



Topics: Princess; Vacation; Monsters
The husband and wife team are at it again! This time the Princess in Black is in dire need of a vacation--but how can she do that when she is needed? Thankfully, Goat Avenger is there to support her. Of course, it cannot be that easy, but by the end the Princess in Black is able to finally relax and get her share of snoring in. This early reader is great for the student beginning the challenge of chapter books without overwhelming them. Visual supports are still present and will keep readers entertained. Perfect for girls who want to be princesses, and teachers who want a positive female role model that will inspire girls. Lovely title and series for any classroom or school library. Reviewed by: Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.

Best Frints in the Whole Universe

Written and illus. by: Antoinette Portis
Roaring Brook Press,
2016

ISBN: 9781626721364



Topics: Friendship; Aliens

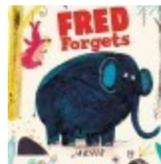
Yelfred and Omek from the planet Boborp have been best "frints" since they were little blobbies. Just like most friends, they sometimes have issues when playing games like eye ball. Now Yelfred has a new spossip, and Omek takes it for a run without asking and accidentally smackles it! Can their frintship grow back? Funny invented alien language and bright galactic illustrations make this a

great choice for an interactive story time.

Review by: Peggy Obert
Alumni

Fred Forgets

Written and illus. by: Peter Jarvis
HarperCollins Children's Books, 2016



ISBN: 9780062349163

Topics: Friendship; Mischief; Forgetfulness

A cheeky monkey, who calls himself a friend to elephant Fred, leads the forgetful elephant into hilarious situations because Fred can't remember what he was doing. Will Fred turn the tables? A fun read-aloud, perhaps to lead a discussion on peer pressure. Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.

Safe in a Storm

By: Stephen R. Swinburne
Illus. by: Jennifer A. Bell
Cartwheel Books, 2016



ISBN: 9780545867924

Topics: Animals; Animal homes; Animal families

In this loving picture book, thirteen animal families keep safe in their homes from the storm outside. From whales in the sea, to bears in their dens, to lambs in the meadow--they calm their young ones during the storm by focusing on their love. An adorable book for young ones who are scared of storms, and a great way to discuss the different places animals live. Written in memory of Sandy Hook Elementary and the 20 school children lost that day. While primary readers won't necessarily understand the reasoning behind the book, the adults reading it to them will and it will warm their hearts. Reviewed by: Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.

I Wonder - Celebrating Daddies Doin' Work

By: Doyin Richards
Feiwei and Friends,
2016



ISBN:
9781250078957

Topics: Fatherhood; Gender roles
Author Doyin Richards is an up and coming voice for modern fatherhood. He has gained notoriety with his Facebook and Instagram posts about the joys of fatherhood. Filled with photos gathered by his social media followers, this picture book shows a multicultural variety of dads in an emotional and caring role for their children. A beautiful addition to any classroom.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.

A Child of Books

By: Oliver Jeffers
Illus. by: Sam Winston
Candlewick Press,
2016



ISBN:
9780763690779

Topics: Reading; Love of reading
In this soon to be classic, a young girl is introduced as a "child of books." She spends her time floating and sailing "across a sea of words," meeting those who come along with her or have lost the ability to find her. The story and illustrations work together in a way rarely seen. Winston's usage of watercolor, pencil, and digital collage are unique and engaging. Images are also created by sections of famous children's stories (including Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Pinocchio) of different font sizes, entertaining and amusing in their own ways. Jeffers' handwritten type that has become a favorite brings a smile to fans. A wonderful picture book that will be on shelves and in children's hands for

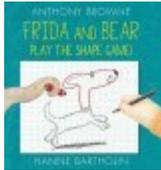
years to come.

Reviewed by: Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.

Upper Elementary Fiction

Frida and Bear Play the Shape Game!

Written and Illus. by:
Hanne Bartholin
Candlewick Press,
2015



ISBN:

9780763678371

Topics: Shapes; Drawing; Imagination

Frida and Bear love to draw. One day, Bear couldn't think of anything to draw and asked his friend for a suggestion. Frida drew a shape on some paper, and told Bear to turn it into something. Bear looked and thought for a while and turned the shape into a puppy. This was a wonderful game. Bear drew a shape and Frida turned it into a fish. They did this for a while, then moved to objects. A piece of brown paper bag turned into a monkey and a twig turned into a butterfly. The last pages show some of the pictures that they made and encourage readers to draw some shapes and play. This is a very creative book and could easily kick off some art activities in the classroom or at home. This is a fun book to read and then turn into ideas for activities.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy



Wish

By: Barbara O'Connor
Farrar, Straus, Giroux,
2016

ISBN: 9780374302733

Topics: Families; Dogs

When Charlie's family falls apart, she is sent from the city to live in rural North Carolina with her aunt and uncle. They love her, but Charlie still feels rejected, acts out, and continues to make desperate and superstitious daily wishes for her life to change. Fifth grade classmate Howard becomes an unlikely friend who helps Charlie tame her temper and catch a homeless dog who's a metaphor for her hopes and fears. When her erratic mother tries to take her back, Charlie realizes she wants to stay in the little town where all her wishes for stability have come true. A hopeful story told with an authentic country voice.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni

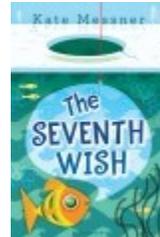


The Seventh Wish

By: Kate Messner
Bloomsbury Children's
Books, 2016

ISBN: 9781619633773

*Topics: Family; Secrets;
Drug abuse; Irish step
dancing; Wishes*



Taking place over the ice-fishing season, middle-schooler Charlie lands a wish giving fish seven times. Seven times it asks for its freedom in exchange for a wish. At first, the fish seems like the answer to all her middle-school concerns but soon Charlie begins to worry about the effect of the wishes and reflects upon classic cautionary tales such as *The Monkey's Paw*. She soon learns that she must be extra specific in her wishes and that selfishness doesn't pay. When her family ends up in crisis, Charlie learns to appreciate the important things in life.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.

Review Crew Staff

Committee Chair:

Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

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Barnum Elem

Editor:

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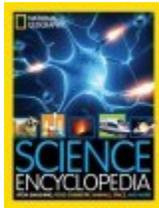
Upper Elementary Nonfiction

National Geographic Science Encyclopedia

Editorial Direction by:

Barbara Brownell
Grogan

Art Direction by:
Callie Broaduss



National Geographic Partners, 2016
ISBN: 9781426325427

Topics: Science encyclopedias
Beautifully designed and featuring fascinating photographs, this 300 page kids' science encyclopedia packs in major sections on matter, energy, electronics, machines, the universe, Earth (including life on it), and the human body. Special features include a discussion of what defines science, fun facts, sidebars about specific scientists and topics, hands-on activities, recommended books and websites, and some of the silliest science jokes ever told. Written for ages 8-12, this book makes great browsing or a handy reference for almost anyone. Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.

On Our Way to Oyster Bay

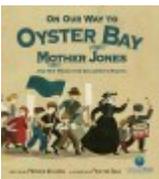
By: Monica Kulling

Illus. by: Felicita Sala

Kids Can Press, 2016

ISBN: 9781771383257

*Topics: Mother Jones;
Child labor*



Mary Harris "Mother" Jones is well-known for her defense of the rights of workers in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Told through the eyes of young cotton mill workers in Pennsylvania, this is the story of a grueling one-hundred-mile march on President Theodore Roosevelt's home in Oyster Bay, New York, to shine light on the

plight of child laborers. Although the President refused to meet with the children and adults, Mother Jones explained that they had achieved public awareness of the plight of those who had to be in factories and mills, not schools. Simple illustrations and text portray the enthusiasm and disappointment of the marchers. A good choice for Women's History month. Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni

Under Earth/Under Water: There are World's to Explore Just Below the Surface

Written and illus. by:

Aleksandra and Daniel
Mizielinski

Candlewick Press, 2016

ISBN: 9780763689223

Topics: Archeology; Speleology; Paleology; Zoology; Botany; Oceanography; Geology; Civil Engineering

Filled with fascinating information, *Under Earth/Under Water* is a large-format flip book about everything that lies below the surface of our planet. Ninety double-pages, each 30 by 22 inches, with detailed mixed-media illustrations, deliver information so wide-ranging that almost any reader will find something new. More than a wonderful coffee-table book for kids, this great browse is filled with jumping off points for all species of deeper learning. Originally published in Poland, this is more fruit from the global search for fine children's literature. Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.



Middle School Fiction

Seeking Cassandra

By: Lutricia Clifton

Holiday House, 2016

ISBN: 978082343569

*Topics: Coming of age;
Friendship; Mystery*
Cassie is off to stay with her dad for the



summer. Her mom is off to Europe. When Cassie leaves her posh home and private school friends to visit her dad she is appalled to find out that he is living in a trailer in the Palo Duro Canyon. Cassie thinks her mother will freak out and bring her to Europe but in reality that is not going to happen. She is left in the Canyon to become a Junior Ranger with a collection of other kids. While Cassie has never hiked a step in her life, she learns how and she and the other kids stumble into a mystery while they are at it.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College

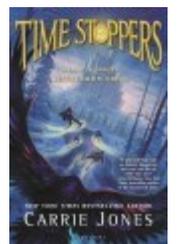
Time Stoppers

By: Carrie Jones

Bloomsbury, 2016

Topics: Magic; Adventure

Annie Nobody is being dropped off at her twelfth foster home in twelve years. A trailer in the woods where Mrs. Wiegle lives with her horrible son Walden. Jaime is only a couple days away from his thirteenth birthday when he is awakened in the night in time to watch his grandmother turn into a troll in their backyard. When he finds out that he is going to be dinner for his grandmother and father on his thirteenth birthday he knows it is time to go. Both



Annie and Jaime get rescued just in the nick of time but it just might be one of those "out of the frying pan, into the fire" situations
Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College

High School Fiction

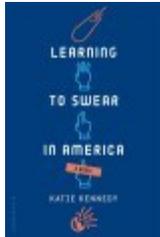
Learning to Swear in America

By: Katie Kennedy
Graphix, 2016
ISBN:
9780545826037

Topics: Dreams; Families; Friendship

Science nerds and romance mavens alike will enjoy this quirky tale of a 17-year-old Russian physics genius whom NASA enlists to save California and the entire West Coast of the US from annihilation by an asteroid currently hurtling through space. When he arrives in Pasadena, Yuri has only 18 days to prove to the scientists that his risky anti-matter plan will work. He meets Dovie, an eccentric teen who awakens in Yuri the desire to be "normal".

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.



A Walk in the Sun

By: Michelle Zink
HarperTeen, 2016
ISBN:
9780062434463

Topics: Grief; Family farm; Love

Rose's mom has died and her dad barely leaves the bedroom now but the farm must be run. School is almost out and her friends are excited to move on with their lives, but Rose's plans are all on hold in order to take care of the farm. Her aunt hires a



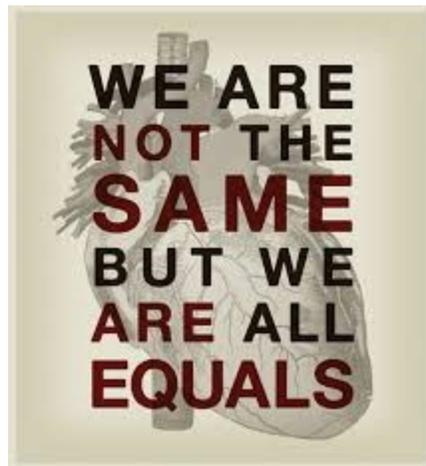
hand for the summer months, Bodhi. Bodhi left home at fourteen and has never looked back. He is already planning his trip to Europe when his summer job is done. Rose is grateful for his help but she doesn't count on is falling in love and he doesn't count on falling in love with her. Loving Rose will make a mess of his plans to go to Europe - or will it?

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College



Just remember that sometimes the way you think about a person isn't the way they actually are.

— John Green, Paper Towns



A person's a person no matter how small.

— Dr Seuss, Horton Hears a Who!



We all live with the objective of being happy: our lives are all different and yet the same.

— Anne Frank, The Diary of a Young Girl

"BEAUTY ISN'T ABOUT HAVING A PRETTY FACE. IT'S ABOUT HAVING A PRETTY MIND, A PRETTY HEART, AND A PRETTY SOUL."

Part of love is letting a person be who they want to be.

— David Levithan, Boy Meets Boy