



# The Review Crew

## What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 6 Number 5  
January 2010

### Fiction

#### Dog and Bear: Three to get Ready

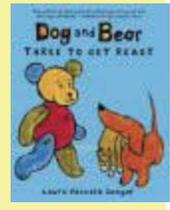
Written and illus. by: Laura Vaccaro Seeger

Roaring Brook Press, 2009  
ISBN: 1596433965

*Curriculum: Friendship; Dogs; Bears*

In traditional *Dog and Bear* series style this picture book is broken into three sweet and simple stories of Bear and Dog's friendship. The stories show young readers what a good friendship looks like; how friends look out for one another and help each other out.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni



Reviewed by: Dana Clark  
Greenwood Elementary

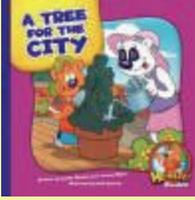
#### A Tree for the City

By: Cecilia Minden and Joanne Meier  
Illus. by: Bob Nostrum  
The Child's World, 2010  
ISBN: 9781602532229

*Curriculum: Trees, Environmentalism*

This story is dedicated to teaching young people about Arbor Day and how trees grow in big cities. Follow Herbie and his uncle as they walk through the city and discuss how, in a unique city environment, trees help to clean the air and cool the atmosphere.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark  
Greenwood Elementary



#### The Tale of Benjamin Bunny

By: Beatrix Potter  
Illus. By: Wendy Rasmussen  
The Child's World, 2010  
ISBN: 9781602532922  
*Curriculum: Easy Reader*

Once again the little bunnies are on an adventure in Mr. McGregor's garden. This time it is Benjamin Bunny who attempts to retrieve his cousin's lost shoes and coat. Benjamin is not scared at all, while Peter is very gun shy; especially when they run into the garden cat.



#### Lost and Found: Three Dog Stories

By: Jim LaMarche  
Illustrated by: David Roberts  
Chronicle Books, 2009  
ISBN: 9780811864015

*Curriculum: Dogs; Lost children*

A protective retriever, a trusting terrier, and a devoted husky each create a unique bond with a child. Three short stories describe these special relationships through both words and pictures. The expressive watercolor and acrylic illustra-



### Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.
- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ERS, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

tions are a large part of what make Anna's, Jules', and Jack's stories so touching and help create a very appealing book.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich  
Ford Elem.

### The Wee Christmas Cabin

By: Margaret Hodges

Illus. by: Kimberly Bulcken Root

Holiday House, Inc., 2009

ISBN: 9780823415281

*Curriculum: Christmas; Ireland; Fairies*

Oona, an abandoned Irish Tinker child, is cared for by a loving, adoptive couple but regarded as a servant not suitable to marry any young lad. Serving the sick and needy she longs for a life of her own until one cold Christmas Eve when she awakens to the fairy gift of a lifetime. Retelling a great Irish tale, this beautiful book exemplifies the Christmas spirit of giving without expecting anything in return.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton  
South H.S.

### Raf

By: Anke de Vries

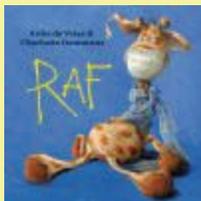
Illus. by: Charlotte Dematons

Lemniscaat, 2009

ISBN: 1590787496

*Curriculum: Stuffed animals; Travel*

Raf is a stuffed giraffe who becomes separated from his good friend Ben. Ben becomes listless, doesn't want to play with his other animal friends, or go outside to frolic in the newly falling snow. When the mailbox rattles,



there is a postcard from Raf who was found and is now traveling through Africa. In all, Ben receives 6 postcards telling how Raf meets "tall pink flamingos, long-trunked elephants, vine-swinging monkeys, and long-necked giraffes" while on a safari. Ben enjoys the postcards but wonders if Raf will make it back for his birthday.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Alumni

## Nonfiction

### Goldfish

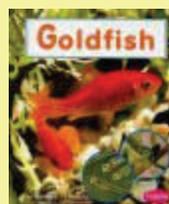
By: Martha E.H. Rustad  
Capstone Press, 2010

ISBN:  
9781429633093

*Curriculum: Goldfish; Growth and Development*

One in a series, *Watch it Grow*, this easy reader and small formatted book focuses on how goldfish grow. Each page offers two sentences of simple facts with vivid photographs on each stage in a goldfish's development.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni



### Are You Blue Dog's Friend?

By: George Rodrigue  
Bloomsbury, 2009

ISBN:  
9780810940697

*Curriculum: Color in Art; Tiffany (dog)*

Louisiana artist George Rodrigue takes young readers into the colorful world of Blue Dog, the frequent subject of his work. Although usually



Painted alone, Blue Dog has friends who are loyal, musical, and fun. Readers will enjoy the repetitive questions about his friends as well as the many paintings with their vivid colors and large distinctive subjects.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich  
Ford Elem.

### Mountain Goats

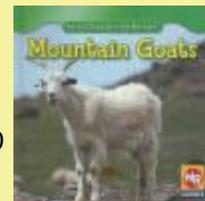
By: JoAnn Macken  
Weekly Reader, 2010

ISBN:  
9781433924149

*Curriculum: Colorado; Mountain Goats*

In this series, *Animals That Live in the Mountains*, there are 6 books of different animals. Each book describes the life cycle, diet, and behavior of a specific mountain dweller. In *Mountain Goats* we learn how their hooves can grip the tiniest piece of rock and they can leap between jagged rocks.

Reviewed by: Megan McQuinn  
Howell ECE-8



### The Itsy Bitsy Spider

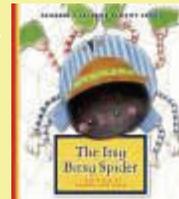
Illus. by Sharon Lane Holm

The Child's World,  
2010

ISBN: 9781602531901

*Curriculum: Nursery rhymes; Finger play*

In this series, *Children's Favorite Activity Songs*, there are 8 of the old time nursery songs. The spider is dressed in a blue striped rain coat and is wearing gloves and shoes on all of his 8 feet. On the heavy-weight pages we watch him get 'washed down the spout'. The final pages of the book include the hand motions that go along with each line of the song. This series would be a great resource for



teaching young readers language skills using these old songs and the matching activity.

Reviewed by Megan McQuinn

Howell ECE-8

### We Are Alike, We Are Different

By: Janice Behrens

Children's Press, 2010

ISBN:

9780531213476



*Curriculum: Multiculturalism; Interpersonal relations*

Students read about ways we are all alike - we all move around, we all eat food, we all wear clothes. However, we are all different - we move in different ways, we eat different foods, we wear different clothes. But, "we can all be friends."

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin

Park Hill Elem.

### The Mitten

By: Jim Aylesworth

Illus. by: Barbara McClintock

Scholastic Press, 2009

ISBN: 9780439925440

*Curriculum: Folklore*

A little boy loses his red woolen mitten as he is playing and sledding. A squirrel discovers the mitten and squeezes inside to warm his cold toes. Next comes a rabbit who has toes as cold as ice. More and more animals squeeze in to warm ice cold toes, until the mouse arrives! The unique ending will thrill all listeners.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin

Park Hill Elem.



### Librarians at Work

By: Karen Latchana Kenney

Illus. by: Brian Caleb Dumm

Magic Wagon, 2010

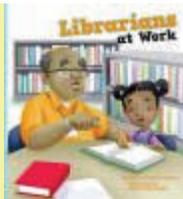
ISBN: 9781602706491

*Curriculum: Librarians; Community workers*

Diverse cartoon style characters illustrate what librarians do in schools, public libraries, universities, hospitals, and businesses. It explains the skills and tools that they need to do their jobs. A day as a Librarian lists a pretty realistic look at the job, including fitting in a meeting and no time for lunch!

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier

Stedman Elem.



**Spanish!**

### Las formas en la música (Shapes in Music)

By: Rebecca Rissman

Heinemann, 2009

ISBN: 9781432936242

*Curriculum: Shapes; Musical instruments*

As one on the series *Identify the Shapes* this Spanish book presents seven shapes with their names and then asks readers to identify the shapes seen in a variety of musical instruments, some of them quite unusual. Simple sentences and questions are used in a repetitive way to teach basic vocabulary.

The book is well illustrated and sys-



tematic in introducing vocabulary. At the end it asks children to name the shapes they have learned. Useful notes for parents and teachers for additional activities are included as well.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly

Spanish reviewer

### Gracias/Thanks

By: Pat Mora

Illus. by: John Parra

Lee and Low, 2009

ISBN: 9781600602580

*Curriculum: Gratitude*

A young boy acknowledges with gratitude the simple everyday pleasures he enjoys with his family and friends in this bilingual picture book. From the worm that helps him catch a big fish to the guitar-playing uncle that sets the dogs howling, it's all a joyful, light-hearted celebration that appreciates simple events in life.

Thoughtfully presented and complemented with supporting colorful drawings, this book will awake a sense of gratitude and young readers will love it.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly

Spanish reviewer



**Books, I found,  
had the power to  
make time  
stand still, retreat  
or fly into the fu-  
ture.**

**~ Jim Bishop ~**

## The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

# Nonfiction

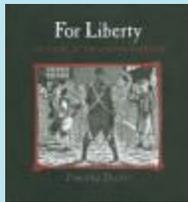
### For Liberty: The Story of the Boston Massacre

Written and illus. by: Timothy Decker  
Calkins Creek, 2009  
ISBN: 9781590786086

*Curriculum: American Revolution; Boston Massacre*

This is a beautifully illustrated, easy-to-understand history picture book! It has the feel of the beginning of a really good movie. All illustrations are in black and white. As the author begins to speak of the night of the Boston Massacre, this starkness highlights the seriousness of the events to come.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark  
Greenwood Elementary



### Sasha & Malia Obama

By: Sarah Tieck  
Abdo, 2010  
ISBN: 9781604537109

*Curriculum: Biographies; Children of United States presidents*

This easy to read and engaging book presents Sasha and Malia Obama as ordinary kids; they have to make their beds, help with chores, and take care of their dog Bo. Even though their dad is very busy as president they spend family time together. Bright colorful photographs show formal and informal family moments. This book makes these two young First Kids accessible role models.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier  
Stedman Elem.



### Mitzi's World

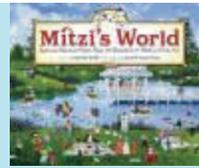
By: Deborah Raffin  
Illus. by: Jane Wooster  
Scott

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2009  
ISBN: 0810980044

*Curriculum: Picture puzzles; Dogs*

There are more than 150 details to be explored throughout the 15 works of Folk Art. Come explore with Mitzi (a black and white dog wearing a red collar) as she travels from one coast to the other during the four seasons. The reader seeks to follow the directions of verses, "Winter is here...sooo cold...oh, dear...cold snowflakes...Can You Find...one broom, a bell (things to sell), a church, a scale, a shovel, 4 small red birds, a bookstore, 9 boots, a blue-and-white horse blanket, and teeny-weeny, itsy-bitsy, ditzzy Mitzi?" Each time a picturesque canvas is looked at, new and surprising details can be found.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Alumni



### Mummies

Elizabeth Carney  
National Geographic, 2009  
ISBN: 9781426305283

*Curriculum: Mummies*

Do you know how mummies are made? Some are created by nature and some are created by man. Find out the differences in this book. This very slim and very informative book is packed with excellent photographs and illustrations. The reading level is third grade but the level of information is high.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.



## Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

# Fiction

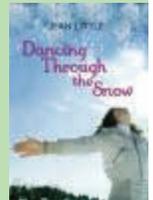
### Dancing through the Snow

By: Jean Little  
Kane Miller, 2009  
ISBN: 9781935279150

*Curriculum: Foster children; Abandoned children*

Min was abandoned when she was three years old. She is now eleven years old and has lived with several foster families. Just before Christmas, Min's current foster family returns her to the Family Aid office. Dr. Jessica Hart decides to foster Min. Other foster homes have provided care for Min but not love. Will Dr. Hart be different? This book gives readers insight into the experience of a child in foster care.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA

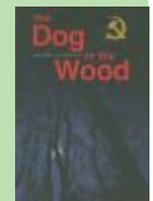


### The Dog in the Wood

By: Monika Schröder  
Front Street, 2009  
ISBN: 9781590787014

*Curriculum: Historical fiction; Political prisoners; World War II*

World War II is almost over. Fritz's father has died in the war and the Russians are approaching Fritz's town quickly. His grandparents, who are Nazi sympathizers, commit suicide. When the occupation begins, Fritz, his mother and a farmhand are evicted. They go to live in Sempow with Fritz's other grandmother. After arriving in Sempow, Fritz's mother is arrested by the Russians for a crime she didn't commit. Will Fritz ever see her



again? Based on the author's grandfather's experiences, this book provides readers with a glimpse into the effects of war upon children.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA

### Darkwood

By: M. E. Breen  
Bloomsbury, 2009  
ISBN: 9781599902593



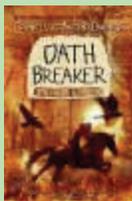
*Curriculum: Adventure; Fantasy*

Annie, leaving the confines of her Uncle's home and led by her two cats, searches for a better life. Fully aware of the dangers that the Kinderstalk are capable of in the wood, she is pushed on soon discovering why the Kinderstalk is not interested in attacking her. Darkwood is sure to hook those readers who have little experience in the fantasy genre and others are sure to delight in the strands of classic fairytales throughout the text.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton  
South H.S.

### Oath Breaker

By: Michelle Paver  
HarperCollins, 2008  
ISBN: 9780060728373



*Curriculum: Adventure; Revenge; Friendship; Wolves*

Torak continues on his quest to find the soul-eaters and discover his background. When he finds his friend, Bane, murdered, he takes an oath of revenge. He teams up with Renn to search for the murderer. He continues the relationship with Wolf, whom he befriended as a cub. Wolf has his own challenges to help Torak or find his own kind. There is adventure and betrayal as they travel far to catch the soul-eater. Torak must break his oath in order to save Renn from death. He must come to terms with

his own heart to understand that he did what he had to do. This is book five in the series and it is good to read them in order.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

### The Deep

By: Helen Dunmore  
Harper Collins, 2007  
ISBN: 9780060818586



*Curriculum: Sea; Mer people; Family; Loyalty*

Sapphire and her brother, Conner, have mixed blood. They can move freely above the sea and under the sea. Faro, Sapphire's Mer friend takes her to Ingo, the world under the sea to help his people. The Kraken has awakened in the Deep and so far Sapphire is the only one to have survived a trip to the Deep, thanks to her whale friend. Conner, Sapphire, Faro and the whale undergo the dangerous trip to the Deep, to put the Kraken back to sleep in order to save both their worlds. This is book three in the series, and although the story can stand on its own, it would be good to read *Ingo* and *The Tide Knot*.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

### The Locked Garden

By: Gloria Whelan  
HarperCollins Publisher, 2009  
ISBN: 9780060790943



*Curriculum: Psychiatric hospitals; Mental illness; Family life*

At the turn of the 1900's asylums for mental patients were elaborate affairs. Verna and her sister Carlie have just moved to one with their doctor father and Aunt Maude, who takes care of the girls after the death of their mother. Aunt Maude wants everyone to be as unhappy as she is and the girls spend their time trying to figure out ways to get rid of her.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

## Review Crew Staff

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Alumni

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# Nonfiction

## Isaac Newton and Physics for Kids

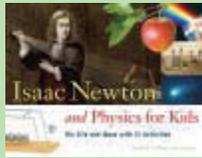
By: Kerrie Logan Hollihan

Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2009.

*Curriculum: Biography; Science; Science Experiments*

This book is a great way of introducing Sir Isaac Newton and his scientific contributions to young readers. It includes a detailed biography of the scientist. The book also has 21 hands on projects for students to explore Newton's scientific concepts and the world he lived. Students can experiment with swinging pendulums, track the phases of the moon, examine Newton's Three Laws of Motion, as part of several activities explained in the book. The book has a timeline of his life and times. This is also an excellent resource for science teachers.

Reviewed by Dr. Carmen Sanjurjo Alumni



## Heading West, Life with Pioneers

By: Pat McCarthy

Chicago Review Press, 2009

ISBN: 9781556528095

*Curriculum: Geography; US History; Arts and Crafts*

*Heading West* traces in a vivid way the saga of pioneer men, women, and children. It includes first-hand descriptions of pioneer experiences based on their journals and autobiographies. It has fun activities and is an excellent resource for Social Studies teachers. The projects, pictures and maps, bring history alive to kids and



adults.

Reviewed by: Dr. Carmen Sanjurjo Alumni

## More about Boy : Roald Dahl's tales from childhood

By: Roald Dahl

Illustrated by: Quentin Blake

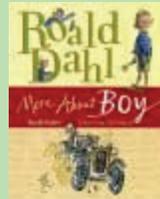
Farrar, Straus and Giroux

ISBN: 9780374350550

*Curriculum: Dahl, Roald; Authors, English*

These tales from Dahl's childhood celebrate many of the joys of his upbringing as much as *Boy* chronicled the terrors he endured in the English public school system. This detailed personal history is augmented by snippets of his letters, photographs and drawings by long-time collaborator Quentin Blake.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8



## Singing for Mrs. Pettigrew : stories and essays from a writing life

By: Michael Morpurgo

Illustrated by: Peter Bailey  
Candlewick Press

ISBN: 9780763636241

*Curriculum: Children's stories - English; Storytelling*

Michael Morpurgo, the former Children's Laureate of Britain, juxtaposes essays about events and people who influenced his becoming a writer with eleven of his short stories. His fiction, naturally imbued with references to life in Great Britain, ranges from a chilling ghost story to the heart-breaking tale of Mrs. Pettigrew.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8



# Fiction

## Shiver

By: Maggie Stiefvater

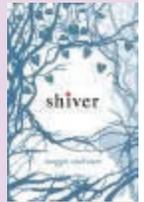
Scholastic, 2009

ISBN: 9780545123266

*Curriculum: Werewolves; Relationships*

Attacked by wolves as a child, Grace remembers one in particular-the one with the golden eyes who saved her. Meeting in person years later, the relationship between Sam (human only during warmer weather) and Grace intensifies. Reminiscent of *Twilight*, this is a love story with supernatural obstacles. Chapters alternate between Sam and Grace. The tension builds as the temperature drops. Can anything stop Sam's shape-shifting? Although a sex scene is included it is not explicit. The language and content are most appropriate for HS and upper MS.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.



## Angel in Vegas: The Chronicles of Noah Sark

By: Norma Howe

Candlewick Press, 2009

ISBN: 9780374322281

*Curriculum: Guardian Angels; Las Vegas*

Noah, a guardian angel, is given a chance to redeem himself after failing to save Princess Diana years before. Sent to Las Vegas as a 16 year old, Noah finds Barbara, the girl he is meant to protect. Not wanting another failure, he befriends Barbara and her boyfriend and awaits the moment in which he saves her. This quirky, light novel is fun. Accurate details of Vegas are sprinkled throughout the novel. HS and MS fans of Howe's Blue Avenger books will appreciate Noah Sark.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

