

The Review Crew



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 9 Number 1

January 2013

Fiction

Zephyr Takes Flight

Written and illus. by: Steve Light

Candlewick Press, 2012

ISBN: 9780763656959

Curriculum: Airplanes; Flight; Imagination; Family

Zephyr is a girl who longs to take flight. She's a model airplane pilot extraordinaire, until disaster strikes and she's sent to her room. In exile, she finds a secret passageway that leads to a magical workshop. Using her imagination and superior engineering skills, she flies to a land where pigs also fly. Her unique talents allow her to connect with a new friend before she returns to her supportive and forgiving family.

Reviewed by: Elise Edwards
Early Ed Coordinator



Cinderella

Written by: Trixie Belle

Illus. by: Oliver Lake

Henry Holt, 2012

ISBN: 9780805096248

Curriculum: Cinderella; Fairy tales

"Girl, chores, mean stepsisters... pumpkin, glass slipper, wedding." Cinderella, one in a board book series, *Les Petits Fairytales*, is presented to young students using single words and bright and bold illustrations to tell this classic fairy tale.



Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni

This Is Not My Hat

Written and illus. by: Jon Klassen

Candlewick Press, 2012

ISBN: 9780763655990

Curriculum: Humor; Fish; Stealing

"This hat is not mine. I just stole it." A little fish confesses, but is certain he can get away from the big fish he stole it from. After all, he is going to hide in the big tall plants, and only the crab saw him go. Klassen's unique digital and ink illustrations tell more of this story through pictures than words, making it a fun read aloud to students at all levels.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni



Charley's First Night

By: Amy Hest

Illus. by: Helen Oxenbury

Candlewick Press, 2012

ISBN: 9780763604552

Curriculum: Dogs; Bedtime; Responsibility

It's puppy Charley's first night in his new home, and Henry, his young owner, is reminded by his parents of the responsibilities he has undertaken. The problem comes at bedtime: Charley is supposed to be sleeping under the kitchen table, but his crying in the night wakens Henry several times. He comforts Charley in a loving way, showing him around the house by



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.)

the light of the moon. Of course Charley ends up on Henry's bed! Gentle pencil and watercolor illustrations highlight Henry's tenderness towards his new friend, and the text sounds just the way a child might talk and think about a cherished pet.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert Waller K-8



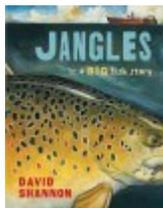
The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

Jangles : A Big Fish Story

Written and Illus. By: David Shannon
Blue Sky Press, 2012
ISBN: 9780545143127



Curriculum: Trout; Fishes; Storytelling; Tall tales

Jangle, an uncatchable giant speckled trout, was so named because "he'd broken so many fishing lines that his huge crooked jaw was covered with shiny metal lures and rusty old fishhooks (that) clinked and clattered as he swam." A young lad recounts his

father's adventure with this denizen of the deep in this modern tall tale. Shannon brings his considerable story-telling skills as well as his signature illustration style to the fore in this catchy yarn.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose Alumni

Germs!

By: Martin Howard
Illus. by Colin Stimpson



Pavilion, 2010

ISBN: 9781843651192

Curriculum: Germs; Bacteria; Battles; Cleanliness

As a germ in Queen Bacteria's Army, Sam is expected to participate in the attack on the Giant. Reluctantly he prepares for battle. Then the Giant provides the perfect opportunity for invasion when he fails to wash his hands after using the toilet. A great battle ensues as Queen Bacteria's Army clashes with the defending army of King Antibod. Sam must choose which side he is really on! Students will enjoy this title with its mix of humor, gross references, and vivid illustrations.

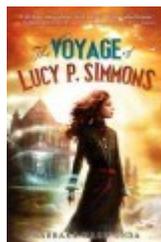
Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen TJ H.S.

The Voyage of Lucy P. Simmons

by: Barbara Mariconi
Katherine Tegen Books, 2012

ISBN: 9780062119797

Curriculum: Orphans; Inheritance; Death



After her father and mother drown in a tragic accident at sea, Lucy must deal with an uncle who has come to take over and does not have Lucy's best interests at heart. Lucy is to be sent away to boarding school. When the teacher shows up to take her to the school, Lucy realizes it is the

same mysterious magical woman that she has seen roaming the beach. The woman, Marni, takes Lucy in and Lucy is surprised to learn that Marni's idea of schooling is that of love and practicality. She has taken in three children who have been abused by their father and is now taking Lucy in under her wing. When Lucy discovers her Uncle is planning on selling her family home to a less than honest banker, Lucy, Marni, and the other three children go back to her home in an effort to save it.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley MSLA

Case of the piggy bank thief

By: Martha Freeman
Holiday House, 2012
ISBN:

9780823425174

Curriculum: Mystery; White House; Sisters

Cammie and Tessa and their dog Hooligan are at it again. Tessa is sure that she has the best hiding place in the whole White House to put her piggy bank. But one day when she looks for it, it is missing. At the same time archeologists believe they have found buried gold on the White House lawn. Can the girls and their over-enthusiastic dog figure out what happened to the piggy bank? The mystery is fast-paced and humorous and readers might actually learn some little known facts about the White House.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble Kepner M.S.



Spanish!

Esmeralda: Rumbo al Horizonte

Written and illus. by: Sara Rojo



Macmillan Iberia, 2011
 ISBN: 9788479428426
Curriculum: Independent girls and women; Adventure; Travel
 Lina, the plucky heroine of this fine graphic novel, is in the middle of tough times. Her mother has recently died, and her father, a botanist for the Compania de los Mares Australes, is about to set sail on yet another exploratory mission. Lina and her magical pet lizard/dragon, Esmeralda, stow away on the ship, in search of connection and adventure.
 Reviewed by: Elise Edwards
 Early Ed Coordinator

Nonfiction

Taylor Swift

By: Jody Jensen Shaffer
 Child's World, 2013
 ISBN:
 9781614732976

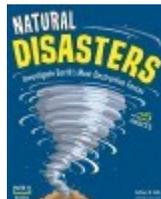


Curriculum: Taylor Swift; Music
 The life of popular singing sensation, Taylor Swift, is examined in this brief biography. From her singing at local events to her songwriting deal with RCA, this shooting star has never looked back. This book also highlights Taylor's many awards and her personal life. The reviewed titles in the *Stars of Today* series are perfect for 2nd -4th grade fans. The slim books are enhanced with terrific photos. Suitable for preliminary research the titles do provide a publisher-sponsored website and a list of additional books for those requiring more depth.
 Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
 JFK H.S.



Natural Disasters: Investigating Earth's Most Destructive Forces

By: Kathleen M. Reilly
 Nomad Press, 2012
 ISBN: 9781619301474
Curriculum: Natural Disasters; Science Experiments
 Explanations of hurricanes, volcanoes, blizzards, and many other natural disasters are found here, as well as hands-on experiments that use household items to demonstrate the science behind these events. Students can make cake batter lava and tornadoes in a pop bottle. This thorough, well-written book has black and white drawings clearly illustrating the information and instructions. Young scientists who want to do more than just read about natural disasters will enjoy the activities.
 Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
 Waller K-8



Body Actions

By: Shelley Rotner
 Holiday House, 2012
 ISBN:
 9780823423668
Curriculum: Human body
 In this book the reader will see how all of the body systems work together along with the five senses to allow us to run and jump and ride a bike. It shows how food is digested and how blood and oxygen power our bodies. This most interesting book is photographs of children with parts cut away to show the body systems under the skin. Explanations are simple and with the aid of the photographs lead the reader to basic understanding of how wondrous our bodies really are. The reading level



is upper elementary but it could be used with younger children who have adult support.
 Reviewed by: Chris Coble
 Kepner M.S.



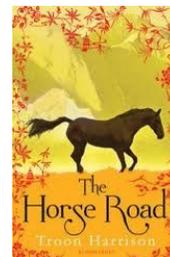
Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Fiction

The Horse Road

By: Troon Harrison
 Bloomsbury, 2011
 ISBN: 9781599908465
Curriculum: Horsemanship; Central Asia; Ferghana Valley; Historical fiction



In 102 B.C.E., the Chinese empire waged war against the city of Ferghana in Central Asia. The issue at stake was the possession of a superior breed of horses owned by the people of Ferghana who refused to sell them to the emperor Wu-Ti. Out on a mountain horseback ride, the heroine Kallisto and her friend Batu spy the Chinese army marching toward their city. Kalli must use all of her cunning and skill to try and save the town, her family and her beloved horses. Suggest to girls who love horses, and they'll also enjoy a

strong female character on a great adventure.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco Skinner M.S.

Because of Shoe and Other Dog Stories

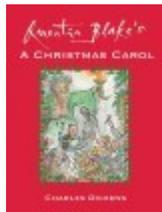
By: Various Authors
Illus. by: Oga and Aleksey Ivanov
Henry Holt, 2012
ISBN:
9780805093148



Curriculum: Dogs; Short stories
Shoe, a German shepherd with a fondness for footwear, acts as matchmaker. Max, a pint-sized dog detective, solves a mystery. Peanut, an ugly mutt, helps a boy win friends. Howard Eubanks turns himself into a dog for the school science fair. This illustrated anthology of dog stories by nine well-known children's authors runs the gamut from hilarious and fantastic to touching and thought provoking. A winner for dog lovers.
Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Alumni

Quentin Blake's A Christmas Carol

By: Charles Dickens
Illus. by: Quentin Blake
Pavilion Children's,
2011
ISBN:
9781843651659



Curriculum: Scrooge, Ebenezer (Fictitious character); England Social life and customs; Ghosts; Christmas
In this rendition of the classic tale, Scrooge is rendered following Dickens' description with pointed nose, shriveled cheeks and thin lips. Marley's clamoring ghost, the colorful spirits of Christmases past and present and the foreboding figure of Christmas Yet to Come, in Quentin Blake's inimitable style, come to life for middle school readers. The text

is faithful to the original with a thoughtful introduction by the illustrator. Brief biographies of Dickens and Blake are bonuses.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Alumni

The Hero's Guide to Saving Your Kingdom

By: Christopher Healy
Illus. by: Todd Harris
Walden Pond Press,
2012



ISBN: 9780062117434
Curriculum: Princes; Fairy tales; Witches
Four "Princes Charming" are disgruntled by the way nobody seems to know their real names, but they get their chance to make their mark when the evil witch who imprisoned Rapunzel tries to destroy their four kingdoms. Cinderella and Snow White get involved in the fight, and of course, there are dwarfs, as well as a dragon, a bumbling giant, and a ten-year-old Robber King. The cover and the black and white illustrations look like they are straight out of an animated film. This is a fun, action-filled read for upper elementary and middle school students who enjoy tongue-in-cheek humor.
Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

Treason

By: Berlie Doherty
Anderson Press, 2011
ISBN: 9781849391214
Curriculum: Pages; Treason; Fathers and sons; Great Britain; Henry VIII



Under the heavy-handed rule of King Henry VIII, 16th-century England is a dangerous place. Arrests, torture, and beheadings are commonplace. Spies are everywhere and one wrong word could result in an arrest. In this cli-

mate, Will Montague is selected to be the page to the young Prince Edward, son of King Henry. Will quickly gains favor with the King and makes enemies of those in the court jealous of his position. Then Will's father is arrested for treason. Will must flee for his life, find refuge with the poor of London and hope to prevent his father's execution. *Treason* is a well-written and entertaining piece of historical fiction.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.

Nonfiction

Write Fantasy Fiction in 5 Simple Steps

By: Laura Lee McKay
Enslow, 2013
ISBN:
9780766038349



Curriculum: English language composition; Creative writing
This writing guide covers a 5-step process: inspiration, story elements, organization, writing and publishing. Excerpts from popular novelists (e.g. J.K. Rowling, Christopher Paolini) provide professional examples to illustrate ideas and advice. A clear, straightforward description of the writing process, coupled with a clean, colorful page design, makes this an ideal aid to budding authors and an excellent teaching tool for creative writing lessons.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco Skinner M.S.





Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Fiction

Team Human

By: Justine Larbalestier and Sarah Rees Brennan
HarperTeen, 2012
ISBN:



9780062089649

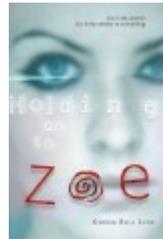
Curriculum: Vampires; High school; Investigation

Vampires and humans coexist in New Whitby and this usually isn't a problem. However, when Mel's best friend falls in love with a seemingly nefarious vampire and another friend's father suddenly leaves his family for a vampire, Mel investigates. What she discovers and the decisions made will change her and her friends' lives forever. Although this is yet another vampire novel being added to the overstuffed market, this one stands out with the clever, snarky Mel and her pals.

Upper MS and HS students looking for more vampire lit will enjoy.
Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Holding on to Zoe

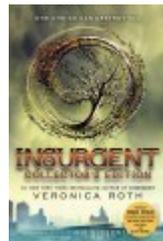
By: George Ella Lyon
Farrar Straus Giroux,
2012
ISBN: 9780374332648



Curriculum: Pregnancy; Emotional problems; Teenage mothers
After an ectopic pregnancy, sixteen-year-old Jules cares for her imaginary baby, Zoe. Zoe is the center of Jules' world and she cannot understand why her mother refuses to accept her baby. Even her best friend tells her that Zoe is not real. Zoe finally connects with a therapist that helps her come to terms with her imaginary baby by exposing an abusive episode from her childhood.
Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Insurgent

By: Veronica Roth
Tegen, 2012
ISBN: 9780062024046
Curriculum: Fantasy; Dystopia; Social classes; Action;



After the simulation war, Tris and her friends seek shelter with the neutral factions, only to find that nobody is truly neutral. In order to end the war between the factions, Tris and Tobias must seek help from the "factionless" who are not willing allies either. When Tris is captured, she must endure agonizing simulation trials that test her courage and fortitude. At times, Tris would rather die than endure another test. Non-stop action fills every chapter of this sequel to *Divergent*. *Fans must have read the first one for this book to make sense.
Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

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Passenger

By: Andrew Smith
Feiwei & Friends
2012

ISBN:
9781250004871

*Curriculum: Fantasy;
Dystopia; Parallel
worlds; Horror; Sci-fi*

In this sequel to the disturbing sci-fi adventure Marbury Lens, Jack and his friends attempt to defeat temptation by breaking the spectacles that enable them to travel to another world. When the lens shatters, however, Jack and Connor are immediately transported to another Marbury that is darker and more evil than the last time. Jack and Connor must find each other in a harsh landscape where death lurks on every corner and then, together, they must find a way home. Readers who enjoyed the first book will find this one darker, scarier, and more satisfyingly creepy.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College



cliffhanger ending will leave readers impatient for the finale in the trilogy, due out next year.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

I Have a Dream **By Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked

"insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check -- a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not

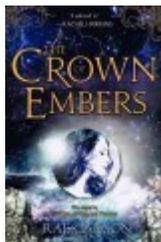
Crown of Embers

By: Rae Carson
Greenwillow, 2012

ISBN:
9780062026514

*Curriculum: Magic;
Fantasy; Strong female
protagonist;
Middle East*

Having led her people to a hard-won victory against the sorcerers of Invierno, Elisa is now the queen. She must deal with spies and unrest along the borders of her country while seeking the secret of the Godstone in her belly and its sisters and brothers that lie hidden, lest the sorcerers use their magic against her. After multiple attempts on her life, Elisa embarks on a quest to fulfill her destiny as the bearer of the Godstone. The



lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied, as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For Whites Only". We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we

will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"