

The Review Crew

Early Elementary Fiction

The Line

Written and illus. by: Paula Bossio

Kids Can Press, 2013

ISBN: 9781894786843



Curriculum: Imagination; Creativity; Drawing

A little girl stumbles upon a line and follows its path to find out what is at the very end of it. Along the way she encounters interesting and playful shapes, as well as a few scary creatures. A surprise ending will delight children of all ages. This wordless picture book with simple sketches is perfect for younger children who can fill in the story as they make their way through the illustrations.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
Green Valley Elem.

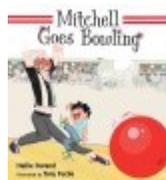
Mitchell Goes Bowling

By: Hallie Durand

Illus. by: Tony Fucile

Candlewick Press, 2013

ISBN: 9780763660499



Curriculum: Bowling; Perseverance; Father-son bond

Mitchell loves to knock things down, and so his dad has a perfect place for him to go, the bowling alley! Mitchell gets incredibly discouraged and is about to give up when he

can't bowl a strike, but his fun-loving Dad is there to show him how perseverance and working together pays off in the end.

Leah Rounds

Alumni

Niño Wrestles the World

By: Yuyi Morales

Roaring Book Press, 2013

ISBN: 9781596436046



Curriculum: Wrestling; Imagination; Brothers and Sisters

Playing in his room, young Niño (the Kid) picks up a lucha libre (Mexican wrestling style) mask and imaginatively conquers historical and folkloric foes that include a space alien, la Llorona (the Weeping Woman), Cabeza Olmeca (Stone Head), the Mummy of Guanajuato and El Chamuco (the devil). But Niño meets his match when his little sisters wake up and start climbing all over him. Rather than fight them, he asks them to join his team. This is a cute and colorful story that is sure to have youngsters (especially boys) asking to hear it again and again.

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

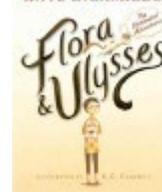
Upper Elementary Fiction

Flora & Ulysses

By: Kate DiCamillo

Illus. by: K.G. Campbell

Candlewick Press, 2013



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 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.)

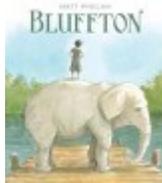
ISBN: 9780763660406

Curriculum: *Magic; Superheroes; Family*

This is called "The Illuminated Adventures" and is a combination of text and comic book style illustrations. Flora loves her superhero comics. Her mother, an author of romance novels, does not want her to read them. When a neighbor accidentally vacuums up a squirrel, Flora resuscitates him and he comes back to life with the ability to fly and to type poetry. Flora is sure he is a superhero and names him Ulysses. When her mother tries to eliminate him, he turns into a real superhero. This is a touching story, full of fun, that readers from upper elementary to middle school will enjoy.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy



Bluffton

By: Matt Phelan

Candlewick Press, 2013

ISBN: 9780763650797

Curriculum: *Buster Keaton; Vaudeville; Muskegon, MI; Graphic novels*

The small, quiet town of Muskegon, MI is transformed each summer when a troupe of vaudeville performers arrive to rest, recuperate, and prepare for the following season. It is the summer of 1908, and young Henry is excited about the prospect of spending time at the colony checking out the elephant and zebra, while learning some tricks. But his best times come from pulling pranks and playing ball with performers that are his own age, like the slapstick actor Buster Keaton. Phelan puts the graphic novel format to good use as

he introduces readers to vaudeville, the legendary Buster Keaton, and the magic to be found from those long, hot summer days of childhood.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen

TJ HS

Upper Elementary Nonfiction

The Lion First Book of Nursery Stories

By: Lois Rock

Illus. by: Barbara Vagnozzi

Lion Children's Books, 2013



ISBN: 9780745963419

Curriculum: *Nursery rhymes*

A multicultural guide to nursery stories, this book is sure to delight children and adults alike. Among the classic stories are Goldilocks and the Three Bears, the Emperor's New Clothes, and Stone Soup. But children will also be introduced to stories from Africa, the Philippines, and other Western European countries. Colorful artwork complements each story. This compendium would work well as a read aloud or for children to enjoy at home.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer

Green Valley Elem.

Cool String Art: Creative Activities that Make Math & Science Fun for Kids!

By: Andres Hanson and Elissa Mann

Abdo, 2014

ISBN: 9781617838248



Curriculum: *Geometry; Astronomy; Arts and crafts*

Infused with math and science concepts this string art book provides four fun projects including ones for string art letters and string art planets. Directions are clear with technical math and science vocabulary highlighted in the text and defined in the glossary. Some required materials may not be readily available at home, but craft stores will have them. Although many craft books with step-by-step directions and illustrations can be a bit confusing, this title does a decent job. 2nd-4th grade students will have fun, create some cool products, and learn a bit about geometry and astronomy at the same time.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK H.S.

The West

By: Rebecca Felix

Child's World, 2014

ISBN: 9781623234959

Curriculum: *U.S. geography; American west; Native Americans; Rocky Mountains*

Providing a nice overview of America's west region and its 11 states, this title includes short sections on its varied geography and weather, history, and economy. Considering both Alaska and Hawaii are included in this region, there are significant differences! Highlighted are the Louisiana Purchase, the Transcontinental Railroad, and California's entertainment business. Sidebars offer additional facts about Hawaii's plastic bag ban and tourism throughout the west. Each title in the *Regions of the U.S.A.* series provides a generalized but interesting look at the country. Titles conclude with a "Fast Facts" section and a regional recipe.



Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Arctic Animals:
Snowy Owls

By: Julie Murray
ABDO, 2014
ISBN:
9781617838019



Curriculum: Snowy owls; Arctic animals; Arctic

Snowy owls are one of the largest owls, and their seamless flying makes them excellent hunters. This is one in a series, *Arctic Animals*, focusing on the characteristics of snowy owls, and is an ideal tool to use to teach research to young students.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni

Middle School Fiction

The School for Good and Evil

By: Soman Chainani
Harper, 2013
ISBN:
9780062104892



Curriculum: Good vs. evil; Character; Fairy tales

Every four years, two children from Gavaldon disappear forever. They are snatched and dropped into the fairy tale world—one to be trained for good, the other for evil. Sophie wants to be picked, though, and is certain her destiny is as fairy tale princess. She is also sure her best friend, Agatha, is destined for the School for Evil. They indeed get selected, but their placements are

reversed. Excitement, action, and adventure will keep upper elementary and MS readers turning the pages in this behind the scenes look how princesses, ogres, princes, and witches are made. Give to fans of Rowling and Snicket.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Middle School Nonfiction

The Girl from the Tar Paper School
School: Barbara Rose Johns and the Advent of the Civil Rights Movement

By: Teri Kanefield
Abrams Books for
Young Readers, 2014
ISBN: 9781419707964



Curriculum: American Civil Rights Workers; Segregation in Education

Filled with historical and current photos, primary source documents and interviews with the subject's friends and family members, this is the little-known account of Barbara Rose Johns, a high school student in 1950's Virginia who staged a student walkout to protest the deplorable conditions at her school in comparison to the pristine conditions at the white school across town. The case eventually found its way to the Supreme Court as part of Brown vs. Board of Education. An inspiring read for young people about what one dedicated person can do.

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

Vietnam War

By: Martin Gitlin
Abdo, 2014
ISBN: 9781617838804



Curriculum: Vietnam War

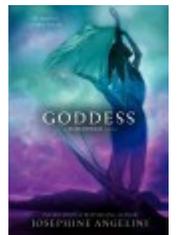
The Vietnam War was different from the other wars the United States has been involved in. The United States believed that communism was wrong and thus entered the war on the side of South Vietnam in order to stop the advancement of a communist takeover. This is the first war that the American people were able to witness in live action on their television sets. The war was in the living room now. As the brutality grew, more and more people turned against the war and wanted our troops home. A byproduct of this war was that the American people became less likely to accept what policy makers, politicians and military leaders claimed was "the best or only path" to solve an issue.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

High School Fiction

Goddess

By: Josephine Angelini
Harper Collins, 2013
ISBN: 9780062012036



Curriculum: Gods and Goddesses; Conflict; Romance

Helen is a goddess whose powers are getting stronger as well as discovering new ones. She is recovering from a battle (from the last book) and keeps getting visions both warning her and uncovering events from the past that

will affect the future. Her closest friends are all descended from the Greek gods. She is in love with Lucas, but is told that love is cursed and cannot exist. She also loves Orion, but not in the same way. Both guys vow to protect her from the gods at all times. The Oracle reveals that an all-out war is coming and she must find a way to change her destiny. This is book three in a trilogy, and the reader would benefit from starting this story at the beginning. This is an interesting combination of teen romance and conflict with the gods and goddesses of Greece.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

The Wall

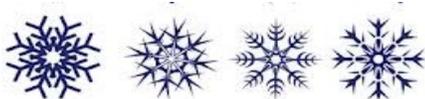
By: William Sutcliffe
Walker Books, 2013
ISBN: 9780802734921

Curriculum: Coming of age; West Bank; Walls; Bildungsroman



Joshua lives with his mother and abusive stepfather in the town of Amari-as. One day while trying to recover a lost soccer ball from a construction site, Joshua discovers a tunnel that travels under The Wall. Hoping for a glimpse of the people on the other side, Joshua follows the tunnel and discovers a very different way of life that leaves him questioning everything he has been taught. *The Wall* parallels the occupation and segregation of the West Bank. This extraordinary title will leave readers with plenty to ponder and creates opportunities for discussion.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen
TJ HS



Living with Jackie Chan

By: Jo Knowles
Candlewick, 2013
ISBN: 9780763662806
Curriculum: Karate; Teen fathers; Interpersonal relationships



Josh is going to spend his senior year with his Uncle Larry. Why would anyone want to miss their senior year with their friends? Josh has his reasons. Uncle Larry is a Karate Man; he follows the doctrine of the Karate Masters of old. He wants Josh to understand and let those doctrines help him grow. Then there is Stella, the girl upstairs, and her ultra-controlling boyfriend who needs to know where she is every minute and who she is with.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

Towering

By: Alex Flinn
HarperTeen, 2013
ISBN: 9780062024176

Curriculum: Magic; Curses; Drugs; Missing persons



Rachel is kept in a tower, protected, the woman who cares for her tells her. She reads her books and waits for the day it will be safe to come out of the tower. Wyatt is from Long Island but his mother grew up in this small town of Slakkill. Wyatt needs to get away from Long Island for a while so he is going to live with Old Lady Greenwood, help her out around the house and get his head together. Mystery surrounds the small town of Slakkill: the number of missing children, the rumor of drugs, and the mysterious singer in the woods that only Wyatt can hear.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

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