

The Review Crew



Early Elementary Fiction

Bubbly and Grumpy

By: Cho SungJa

Illus. by: Sa SukWon

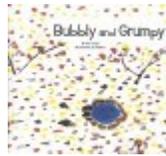
Norwood House Press, 2015

ISBN: 9781599536514

Curriculum: Friendship; Positive attitude; Sharing; Generosity; Emotional intelligence

A prophetic tale with beautiful illustrations warning readers of the consequences that can result from a bad attitude and an unwillingness to share. Two water springs named Bubbly and Grumpy have very different attitudes toward life. Bubbly shares its water with the forest animals and Grumpy does not. As a result, Bubbly survives, has many friends, and overcomes great hardship thanks to his friends, while Grumpy slowly ceases to exist and is forgotten. What a wonderful way to teach children about the importance of a keeping a positive attitude about life!

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
South H.S.



I Feel Five!

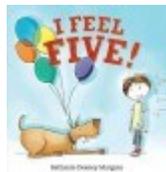
Written and illus. by: Betha-
nie Deeney Murguia

Candlewick Press, 2014

ISBN: 9780763662912

Curriculum: Growing up; Birthdays; Friendship

Fritz is anxiously awaiting his fifth birthday. He knows when he turns five, everything will



look and feel different. But then the big day comes and nothing has changed. He still has all his baby teeth. He still looks the same and doesn't feel any different, even after his teacher presents him with a birthday crown. He is feeling down. Then a little girl approaches him and asks him to pick an apple for her. He jumps up into the tree and picks two ripe juicy apples, one for him and one for her. Suddenly he feels much more grown up! We are reminded that growing up is not always so simple. Colorful watercolor illustrations adorn each page, adding to the allure of this book.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
South H.S.

Recycling Day

Written and illus. by:

Edward Miller

Holiday House, 2014

ISBN: 9780823424191

Curriculum: Recycling; Community; Earth Day

There is an empty lot on our street where bugs and worms make their home, but people started throwing their trash there. One day a little girl came along and organized a lot cleanup day; recycling the glass, paper, plastic, and metal, and turned a lot into a community garden. This is a straightforward story of recycling and taking care of the planet. The processes for recycling the different materials are well explained with diagrams, and extra information about living green is included.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni



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

Volume 11 Number 5

January 2015

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.)

How To Be A Cat

Written and illus. by:
Nikki McClure

Abrams Appleseed,
2013

ISBN: 9781419705281

Curriculum: Kittens; Cats; Animals

A young kitten watches his mother closely as he learns how to navigate his world. He imitates her as he stretches, cleans, hunts, and scratches. The story is told simply with a single word on each spread with intricately cut black paper placed on a white background to create delightful, expressive illustrations. Young children will enjoy exploring each page.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson H.S.



Super Red Riding Hood

Written and illus. by:
Claudia Davila

Kids Can Press, 2014

ISBN: 9781771380201

*Curriculum: Fairy tales;
Superheroes; Strong female characters*

When Ruby puts on her red cloak and red boots she becomes Super Red Riding Hood. She mostly daydreams of saving the day, but now her mother asks her to go on an important journey through the dark forest. Ruby must stay brave in the presence of the big bad wolf. Can Ruby prove that girls can be super heroes as well? Young readers will love this new rendition of an old story, the vibrant illustrations, and the important message behind Super Red Riding Hood.

Reviewed by: Jonathan Almon
Steck Elem.



Angry Aardvark to Zealous Zebra

By: Scott Thomas

Illus. by: Robert Byrd

Bright Connections
Media, 2014

ISBN: 9781622670284

Curriculum: Alphabet; Alliteration

An angry aardvark alarming an addled alligator, a party of prim pigs pompously picnicking, to a zealous zebra zigzagging a zany zeppelin; silly creatures introduce the alphabet through alliteration, making it a fun book to use with students of all ages.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds
Alumni



Lulu the Shy Piglet

By: SoYun Jeong

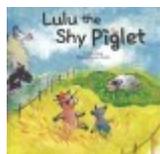
Illus. by: Laura Orsolini

Norwood House Press,
2015

ISBN: 9781603576543

Curriculum: Pigs; Shyness; Friendship

Lulu the pig is very shy and she suffers from social anxiety when trying to speak or sing in public. When she is feeling insecure, she hides in the barn where she sings to herself. One day, her friend Mouse catches Pig singing and he tells her how wonderful her voice is. He encourages her to perform for her friends, but she is still hesitant. Mouse presents her with magic glasses that he says will take away her shyness and her confidence increases when she is wearing the glasses. She seems to have overcome her shyness, but then her magic glasses break just before her first



big performance. She is encouraged to continue on with the show despite the mishap and finds that she doesn't even need the glasses to be successful! What a wonderful book to share with introverted children to encourage them to pursue their talents!

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
South H.S.

Bruno and Titch: A Tale of a Boy and His Guinea Pig

Written and illus. by:
Sheena Dempsey

Candlewick Press, 2014

ISBN: 9780783673161

Curriculum: Friendship; Pets; Guinea pigs

Titch lives at the pet shop where it seems that every animal but he has found a forever home. Finally Titch's day comes and a boy named Bruno adopts him. The two do everything together and, though Titch is happy to have a real home, the human ways of doing things confuse him. Bruno eats strange foods and plays very strange games. Bruno then offers Titch the ultimate show of friendship - he builds him a guinea pig palace complete with his favorite foods, toys, and a special bed. And that is when Titch knows that Bruno is a true friend!

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
South H.S.



Early Elementary Nonfiction

Days and Times

By: Kathy Thornborough

Illus. by: Kathleen
Petelinsek

The Child's World,
2015

ISBN: 9781626873162

*Curriculum: Sign language; Days of
the week; Months; Time*

When learning any new language, vocabulary acquisition is the key to building understanding in that language. In the Talking Hands series, young readers can learn the basic vocabulary of sign language. *Days and Times* provides the reader with illustrated hand movements, a brief description of the hand movements, and an explanation of why the learner would use these movements. It also provides the signs for time, parts of the day, days of the week, months, and year. Early readers will find this book to be helpful and informative as they learn the basics of sign language.

Reviewed by: Jonathan Almon
Steck Elem.



SPANISH

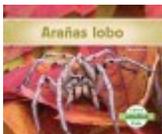
Arañas lobo

By: Claire Archer
ABDO Kids, 2015

ISBN:
9781629703701

Curriculum: Wolf spiders

In this Spanish edition, brilliant full-bleed photos accompany simple text explaining the physical attributes, habitat, method of catching prey



and basic reproductive cycle of wolf spiders. These high-quality books are a first choice for the school library. Other offerings in the series include tarantulas, black widows, jumping and trapper spiders.

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

Upper Elementary Fiction

Nuts To You

Written and illus. by:
Lynne Rae Perkins
Harper Collins, 2014

ISBN:
9780060092757

Curriculum: Squirrels; Forests

Jed the squirrel finds himself swept away by a hawk, and after freeing himself with his quick thinking, he lands in a different part of the forest where the squirrels and food are different. A growing commotion panics the animals as they discover humans are clearing branches from power lines and destroying their homes. Jed must get back to warn his community, and he can with the help of old friends Chai and TsTs who have come looking for him. Simple black and white illustrations depict the squirrel culture in a humorous way. The book has great characters and vivid language for fun, but it also lends itself to a discussion about preserving animals' habitats.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni



Doctor White

By: Jane Goodall

Illus. by: Julie Litty

Michael Neugebauer Pub-
lishing, 2014

ISBN: 9781599536460

*Curriculum: Children; Service dogs;
Therapy*

Based on actual events, Dr. White helped children in a London hospital. Those children who were the most seriously ill were visited by this unusual doctor. He gave special treatment that often was unusually beneficial. Doctor White was a very unique little white dog. The nurses found when he visited the children and cuddled with them, that the children felt better. One day, the health inspector banned the little dog from the hospital. The caregivers noted the difference in the children. When the inspector's daughter became ill, they snuck the little dog into her room. The inspector saw the good that Dr. White did and welcomed him back to the hospital. He paved the way as one of the first therapy dogs in health care.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy



Rory's Promise

By: Michaela MacColl and
Rosemary Nichols

Holiday House, 2014

ISBN: 9781620916230

*Curriculum: Orphans;
Orphan trains; Christian life, New York;
Arizona; Historical Fiction*

Rory and her younger sister Violet have been living in a foundling hospital in New York for the last three years. Rory promised her sister they would never be separated. But then Rory learns that Violet and 50 other young children will be put on a train



headed west to the Arizona Territories to be adopted into new homes. Rory will not be allowed to go as she is deemed too old to be adoptable. But she is determined to keep her promise to her sister, so she devises a plan to stowaway on the train and follow Violet out west.

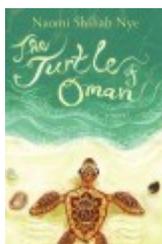
Based on an actual event, this story takes a dramatic and surprising turn that touches on environmental, racial, religious, and socioeconomic issues.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

The Turtle of Oman

By: Naomi Shihab Nye
Greenwillow Books,
2014

ISBN:
9780062019721



Curriculum: Emigration; Grandfathers; Oman; Turtles

Aref's family is preparing to move from the only home he has ever known in Oman to a new one in Michigan. With only a week before their departure, Aref's suitcase lays open and empty. He is allowed to take only what will fit inside it. But the things that matter most to Aref don't fit. The thing he will miss the most is his grandfather, Sidi. To ease the departure, Sidi spends as much of the final week with Aref as possible. The two share old memories as they make new and Sidi in his own quiet way assures Aref that all will turn out as it should. This poignant tale is about making and accepting the transitions in our lives. Powerful in its simplicity and filled with vivid descriptions, many children will find a story with which they can relate.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

Bunny the Brave War Horse

By: Elizabeth Macleod

Illus. by: Marie Lafrance

Kids Can Press, 2014

ISBN: 9781771380249



Curriculum: WWI; Horses in war

This picture book is based on the true story of Bunny, a horse who was sent to WWI along with two brothers. Tom is assigned to ride Bunny into war. When Tom is killed in action, his brother Bud is assigned to ride Bunny. Bunny is brave and never flinches in action. Illustrations are done in muted tones that give visible credence to the horrors of war. This book would be an appropriate read aloud for older students or an independent read for students who are studying WWI. While it is a picture book, it may not be the best book for young readers. This book will work in upper elementary and middle school, and perhaps even in high school.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

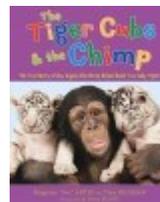
Upper Elementary Nonfiction

The Tiger Cubs & the Chimp

By: Bhagavan Antle
Henry Holt and Col,
2013

ISBN: 9780805093193

Curriculum: Chimpanzee; Tiger cubs; Behavior; Nurturing



This book is based on a true story set in a preserve for endangered animals. The story is about two tiger cubs that were raised in the preserve. Anjana, a chimpanzee helped take care of these

cubs. The cubs were three days old when they were rescued. China, a worker at the preserve, and Anjana raised the cubs. The chimp learned how to bottle feed them and cuddled with them when they were afraid. The tiger cubs are healthy and happy thanks to the human and the chimpanzee that helped them. Real photos of the cubs with Anjana are fun to see.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Middle School Fiction

Loot: How to Steal a Fortune

By: Jude Watson
Scholastic, 2014

ISBN:
9780545468022

Curriculum: Jewel thieves; Heists; Twins

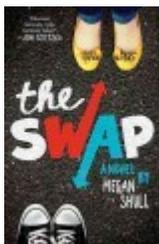


When 12-year old March's dad, a career jewel thief, falls to his death, he leaves March many mysterious clues including one to "find jewels." What March finds is his twin sister Jules, and thus the heists begin anew as they must locate and steal the seven valuable moonstones that predict their death on their 13th birthday and reverse the prophecy. But others want the gems, too, and the twins must use their wits and their dad's clues to outwit their thieving opponents. Clever and fun, give this novel to MS-HS students who want an entertaining, action-packed good read.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

The Swap

By: Megan Shull
Harper Collins, 2014
ISBN:
9780062311696



*Curriculum: Bullying;
Families; Interpersonal relationships*

Ellie and Jack meet in the school nurse's office while each is in a middle school crisis; Ellie's best friend is now her bullying enemy and Jack's been in a fight. After some magic by the quirky nurse, the two completely divergent students swap bodies and now face unknown parents and siblings, making the grade in a new sport, and sleepovers. In a story told in alternating voices, the two protagonists grow and gain skills in confidence and compassion. Middle schoolers will enjoy this funny, heartfelt, and vivid book.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni

If I Ever Get Out of Here

By: Eric Gansworth
Arthur A. Levine
Books, 2013
ISBN:
978054541730



Curriculum: Tuscarora Indians; Indian reservations; Military families; Bullying; Identity

Lewis, a slightly built seventh grader from the reservation, suffers greatly at the hands of the school bully; but a love of the Beatles connects him with brawny, military brat George. Can their friendship protect Lewis? The harsh realities of life on the reservation compared to the refined life on the military base serve as the backdrop for

Lewis' desire to change his situation while remaining loyal to his traditions. This is an excellent example of a realistic, strong, Native American character that should be in every secondary library.

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

Royal Ranger

By: John Flanagan
Puffin Books, 2013
ISBN: 9780142427316



Curriculum: Adventure

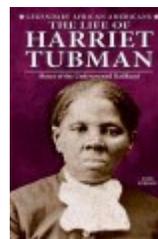
Many years have passed since we last visited the kingdom of Araluen. Will Treaty is the King's Ranger, Horace and Cassandra have a teenage daughter, Madelyn, and Halt and Pauline are enjoying retirement of sorts. Horace and Cassandra are at their wits ends with how to keep Maddie safe as she loves the forest rather than learning how to be a princess. As a solution to the dilemma, they disown her and turn her over to Will to be trained as a Ranger. Fans of the *Ranger's Apprentice* series will not be disappointed by this riveting page turner.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

Middle School Nonfiction

The Life of Harriet Tubman

By: Anne Schraff
Enslow, 2015
ISBN: 9780766061378



Curriculum: African Americans; Biography; Underground Railroad

The *Legendary African Americans* series brings to life Harriet Tubman's

Review Crew Staff

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From ETLs:

Karen Shannon
Antonio Nicotera

courageous struggle for freedom from slavery for herself and others. As a child Harriet displayed defiance and independence towards her owners and eventually leaves for the North where she becomes an infamous conductor of the Underground Railroad. Bringing more than 300 slaves to freedom she is involved in a number of other ventures which are included in detail here. The book is informative but chapters are long and limited visuals are offered.

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez
North H.S.

High School Fiction

I Have a Bad Feeling about This

By: Jeff Strand
Sourcebooks Fire,
2014

ISBN:
9781402284557

*Curriculum: Survival;
Camp; Murder*



When video game geek Henry and his best friend Randy get sent to survival camp, they have no idea what they're in for. With three other "campers" and drill sergeant Max, the boys try hard to do well...comically so. But things turn bad when Max is killed by debt collectors, and the boys must apply real-life survival skills. A nearby music camp provides a strong female character. Henry's spot-on self-deprecating humor will surely speak to the inner dialogue of many teenage boys. Action, drama, a smidge of romance, and lots of laughs.

Reviewed by:
Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.



Blind

By: Rachel DeWoskin
Viking, 2014
ISBN: 9780670785223

*Curriculum: Disabilities;
Siblings; Coming of Age*



Imagine going to a fireworks display on the Fourth of July and having your life changed forever. Emma Sasha Silver's life is changed after one such outing and she is struck by a stray firecracker. Blinded Emma must learn to do the things she once took for granted like walking, reading, writing, and dressing herself all over again. Eventually with the help of doctors, specialists, friends and of course her parents Emma overcomes many obstacles and begins to take hold of her future. A number of subplots and storylines makes this book slow at times but it deftly details the difficulties and hurdles one faces adjusting to life without sight.

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez
North H.S.

Drama Queens in the House

By: Julie Williams
Roaring Brook Press, 2014
ISBN: 9781596437357

*Curriculum: Homosexuality;
Racism; Theater*



Jessie Jasper Lewis has grown up around theater. Her parents own a theater and the acting company that goes with it. Smart, Jessie graduates high school at fifteen and is now looking for her next steps. On the night of her graduation party she walks in on her father kissing another man. From that moment on the life she knew turns around. Issues around coming of age, sexual orientation, racism and bi-racial heritage are all dealt with in this sometimes messy but always entertaining story.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

Recipe for a Happy New Year

Author Unknown

Take twelve whole months.
Clean them thoroughly of all bitterness,
hate, and jealousy.
Make them just as fresh and clean as possible.

Now cut each month into twenty-eight, thirty, or thirty-one different parts, but don't make up the whole batch at once.
Prepare it one day at a time out of these ingredients.

Mix well into each day one part of faith,
one part of patience, one part of courage,
and one part of work.
Add to each day one part of hope,
faithfulness, generosity, and kindness.
Blend with one part prayer, one part meditation,
and one good deed.
Season the whole with a dash of good spirits,
a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play,
and a cup full of good humor.

Pour all of this into a vessel of love.
Cook thoroughly over radiant joy,
garnish with a smile,
and serve with quietness, unselfishness,
and cheerfulness.
You're bound to have a happy new year.