



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 5 Number 7
March 2009

Fiction

No Babysitters Allowed

By: Amber Stewart
Illus. by: Laura Rankin
Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2008
ISBN: 159990154

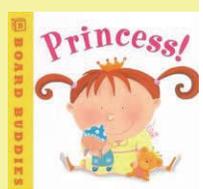


Curriculum: Rabbits; Fear; Babysitting
Soft, yet colorful pen and ink drawings, with acrylics, are a wonderful backdrop for this warm and fuzzy story about separation anxiety. Hopscotch is a young rabbit who is very brave: brave enough to scoop up a spider, to not cry when he falls off his tricycle, and more. But when his parents get ready for a party, he is not brave at all. He feigns a tummy ache when the babysitter, Mrs. Honeybunch, arrives. She ushers Mom and Dad out the door and suggests that Hopscotch and she paint, build cars, play hide-and-see, and read. A wonderful sweet and funny story that should reassure young children and parents about facing babysitter night.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell
Alumni

Princess!

Illus. by: Viviana Garofoli
Marshall Cavendish, 2008



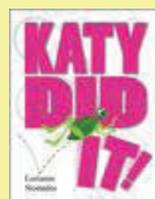
ISBN: 9780761454502

Curriculum: Princess; Stories in Rhyme
Follow a young princess through her day as she wakes up, eats breakfast, and plays with dolls. Written in a fun iambic pentameter style, it could be used as an introduction in a poetry unit, and the princess theme is bound to attract many young girls.

Reviewed by: Leah Jungers
Pioneer Charter

Katy Did It

By: Lorianne Siomades
Boyd Mills Press, 2009
ISBN: 9781590786024



Curriculum: Katydid; Insects; Behaviors
Katy and her tattle-telling brother are trying unsuccessfully to stay out of trouble. Her over-exuberant hopping scatters pollen and tangles Mrs. Spider's web. But finally, her hopping saves the ant colony by unplugging the olive from their front door. This is an energetic story that is certain to engage young readers. The illustrations are exceptional, with a mixture of photography and collage.

Reviewed by: Megan McQuinn
Howell ECE-8

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.)

My "b" Sound Box

By: Jane Belk Moncure

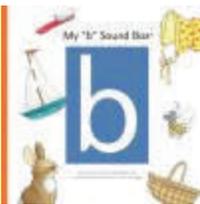
Illustrated by: Rebecca Thornburgh
Child's World, 2009

ISBN: 9781602531468

Curriculum: Alphabet; Rebus

Little b has an adventure finding many things that begin with her letter's sound. "She put the baby baboon, the bat, the bird, the birdbath, and the bunny back in the box." Small pictures assist the beginning reader to identify unfamiliar words that begin with b. The colorfully detailed illustrations give strong support to the text.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill ECE-8



Rain Stomper

By: Addie Boswell

Illustrated by: Eric Velasquez

Marshall Cavendish, 2008

ISBN: 9780761453932

Curriculum: Rain and rainfall; Parades

On the day of the parade, the only drumming and clattering Jazmin heard was the rain falling on her porch. Yet she wasn't going to let it spoil her day - out she went. She stomped, kicked, marched, and chased that rain until she drew other kids from the street into her **own** 'parade'. The action-filled pictures with big and bold words first show the power of the rain and then the power Jazmin and her friends had to turn disappointment into fun. Boswell's story will have readers looking at the next rainstorm in a different way!

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocerlich
Ford Elem.



Nonfiction

I Hate Reading

By: Arthur and Henry Bacon

Illus. by: Johanna Hantel

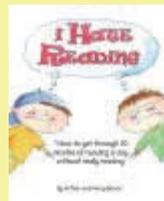
Upstart Books, 2008

ISBN: 9781602130258

Curriculum: Reluctant readers; Humor; Reading

Two young brothers share humorous strategies to get out of reading. "Rule 1: Look at the book and move your eyes from side to side. Slowly. Eyes on book. Rule 2: Stay in your seat. Butt on chair." Minimal ink and water-color illustrations focus attention on the words. At the end the authors declare, "OK, we're done. Ah-ha! Tricked you! It's been 20 minutes...you have been reading!" Even reluctant readers will be charmed into re-reading this one.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8



How an Egg Grows Into a Chicken

By: Tanya Kant

Illus. by: Carolyn Franklin
Children's Press, 2009

ISBN: 0531240479

Curriculum: Chickens, life cycle

From the title page, where the reader is invited to *Hold the page up to the light to see the chick inside the egg* to the experiments at the end, students will enjoy learning about chicks and chickens in this informative volume from Scholastic's *Amaze* series. Attractive torn-paper collages on a deep lavender background support the clean clear text.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8

My First Book

By: Jane Belk Moncure

Ist. By: Rebecca Thornburgh

Child's World, 2009

ISBN: 9871602531659

Curriculum: Self-discovery

Written more as a first picture dictionary, this book introduces new words that a young child would recognize from his or her daily life. An activity in the back of the book encourages students to draw themselves and label the picture using words from the book.

Reviewed by: Leah Jungers
Pioneer Charter

Spanish!

Pelé, King of Soccer / Pelé, El rey del fútbol

By: Monica Brown

Illus. by: Rudy Gutiérrez

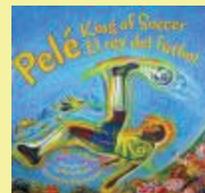
Harper Collins, 2009

ISBN: 9780061227790

Curriculum: Soccer champions; Soccer World Cup

The story of Pelé, a poor Brazilian boy who learned to play soccer in the streets with a newspaper-stuffed sock, is narrated in this bilingual picture book. He later became a soccer world champion scoring well over a thousand goals in his career and helped Brazil win three World Cups. Children will love the brightly colored drawings and will be inspired by Pelé's skills and dedication to his sport.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish reviewer



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

Yuki and the One Thousand Carriers

Written by: Gloria Whelan

Illustrated by: Yan Nascimbene

Sleeping Bear Press, 2008

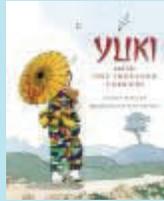
ISBN: 9781585363520

Curriculum: Haiku; Voyages and travel; Japan

Yuki's father has been called to leave the city of Kyoto and travel to Edo. She and her mother will travel with him. They will be accompanied by one thousand attendants transporting all they will need. Yuki captures her thoughts and impressions about this journey in haiku.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin

Park Hill ECE-8



Melting Stones

By: Tamora Pierce

Scholastic Press, 2008

ISBN: 9780545052641

Curriculum: Fantasy; Mystery; Friendship

Evvy is traveling to the Battle Islands with her mentor to diagnose why the plants are dying. Her traveling companion is Luvo, the living stone heart of a mountain. With Luvo's aid she uncovers a dangerous clue to the problem. Now she must test her strength as a mage to avert disaster. Originally written as an audio book it is appropriate in print for upper elementary through high school readers: any fan of the Tor-



tall books will love this latest submission.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

There's a Wolf at the Door

By: Zoë B. Alley

Illus. by: R.W. Alley

Roaring Brook Press, 2008

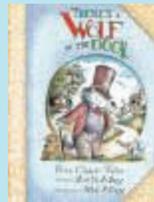
ISBN: 1596432756

Curriculum: Folklore; Fables; Wolves, fiction

A dapper wolf in top hat makes his way through the comic panels of this oversized book in search of a decent meal. From the Three Little Pigs to Little Red Riding Hood and beyond, he's foiled at every turn by droll characters and circumstance. The tongue-in-cheek attitude and puns of these slightly fractured tales will be most appreciated by readers well versed in the classic renditions.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8



Coretta Scott

By: Ntozake Shange

Illustrated by: Kadir Nelson

Katherine Tegen Books, 2009

ISBN: 9780061253652

Curriculum: King, Coretta Scott,



1927-2006; Civil rights workers

The strength and determination of Coretta Scott helped her to spend most of her life fighting against the discrimination that ran rampant in the U.S.

Through prayer, words, and peaceful actions, she and her husband, Martin Luther King, Jr., united hundreds of thousands of Americans to work to become a nation of equality. Shange's simple words and Nelson's artwork create a powerful portrayal of Scott. The double-page images depict Coretta Scott and those she impacted with such expression that the reader can actually **feel** the sense of hurt, anger, determination, peace and love that were key parts of her life.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich

Ford Elem.

Mars

By: Tim Goss

Heinemann Library, 2008

ISBN: 1432901660

Curriculum: Universe; Planets

Ready for take-off? Heinemann Library is set and ready for count down with their 'The Universe' series. Each book focuses on a particular subject narrowing the scope of the information but providing excellent detail that might otherwise be lost. In *Mars*, the author explains the planet's red color and takes a closer look at the ice caps. General information on the subject is given but fine detail is also described such as the Caloris Basin on Mercury and how scientists think it was formed. The color photos will catch the eye of students as well as revealing the chemical compounds that make up Jupiter's atmosphere or the heat levels on Venus. Gula Mons is looked at more closely in *Venus*,



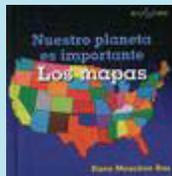
and students understand the pressure on the love planet after having it compared to our own planet's living conditions. Color (or in some cases colorized) photographs give Mars its red tint and Mercury a lovely glow from the sun. This series is a definite plus for the library that needs to supplement classroom information as well as giving a leg up for future astronomers or aspiring astronauts.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer
Grant M.S.

Spanish!

Maps /Los mapas

By: Dana Meachen Rau
Marshall Cavendish,
2009



ISBN: 9780761434931

Curriculum: Maps; Cartography

How would your new friend find your house? Maps are thus introduced to show oceans and continents with their division into countries, states, counties, cities, towns, roads and streets with their keys, symbols and scales to interpret them. Maps may come in a variety of ways and can also show what one sees in the sky. This is a thorough, concise and appealing presentation of the topic in a well illustrated bilingual book. A glossary and index are also included.

(The article "Los" is missing from the Spanish title on the first page.)

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish reviewer



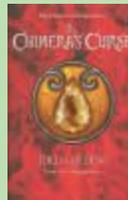
Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Fiction

The Chimera's Curse

By: Julia Golding
Marshall Cavendish
ISBN: 0761454403



Curriculum: Eco-Fantasy; Animals, Mythical; Friendship

Mythic grandeur, with magical detail and all-too-human feelings, has been woven into a spellbinding tale pitting magic against magic in a battle for the world. In this epic, Connie joins together with her friends to protect the fragile bond between humans and animals against dangerous forces: a chimera, fire imps, kelpies, will-o'-the-wisps, stone sprites, black and white dragons, weather giants, and Kullervo (a shape-shifter and a force of darkness) who wants Connie to bond with him to use her power to wipe out humanity. In a series of deceptive incidents, Kullervo has his chimera bring Connie to the oil refinery, at the edge of town. Once there, he holds her captive and attempts to make her do his bidding but she challenges him to meet her at The Mark. She further challenges him to take human shape to fight a fair battle but he resists. For now humanity is saved but who knows about the future.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell
Alumni

Tales of terror from the Black Ship

By: Chris Priestley
Illus. by: David Roberts
Bloomsbury Children's
Books, 2008



ISBN: 9781599902906

Curriculum: Ghost stories; Seafaring stories; Horror

In an old inn perched on a coast, "savaged by a wild and rabid storm," two children listen to a mysterious sailor as he shivers their spines with tales of flesh eating snails, imps, ghost ships and demon tattoos. These are menacing tales told within a ghost story- not for the faint of heart.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8

Blue Flame

By: K. M. Grant
Walker & Co., 2008
ISBN: 080279694X



Curriculum: Religion; Knights; Friendship; Good vs. Evil

The story is set in France during the time of the inquisition. Yolanda is the daughter of the Catholic count, and Raimon is the son of a Cathar weaver. The two had always been in love, and assumed things would work out between them. Then her uncle, the Inquisitor arrived and held court. Things were not the same. Their only hope was the mystical Blue Flame, lit at the time of the death of Christ. Was it a myth, or would it come in time to save their people?

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Rishel M.S.

The Parliament of Blood

By: Justin Richards
Bloomsbury, 2008



ISBN: 1599901404

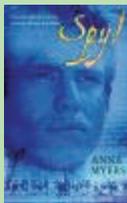
Curriculum: Horror; Vampires; London

Are vampires real and living beneath the streets of London? George, Liz and Eddie are about to find out. George and Liz attend a mummy unwrapping at the museum. Only this mummy, the Lord of the Undead, gets up, walks out the door, and is picked up by a black carriage. They investigate the mysterious "Damnation Club" whose membership is very selective and they may soon be among the ranks of the undead. This adventure leads them to the chambers of Parliament itself to try to save the Prime Minister and keep the vampires from ruling England.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Rishel M.S.

Spy!

Written by: Anna Meyers
Walker, 2008
ISBN: 9780802797421



Curriculum: American Revolution; Historical fiction; Spies
Yale educated Nathan Hale has come to the small town of New London in the colony of Connecticut to teach school. Nathan's uncle, Samuel, is a prominent well respected business man in the town. He is also a devoted Tory. As unrest in the colony grows and the word revolution is heard more and more often, the town begins to morph from a close knit community into a community where members are labeled as Tories or patriots. Nathan tries to maintain a neutral stance in the schoolhouse and while he has patriot leanings, he still wants to maintain his relationship with his Tory uncle. This book is highly recommended and can easily become a

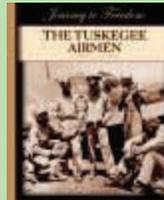
tool for sparking student interest in the American Revolution.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
Johnson Elem.

Nonfiction

The Tuskegee Airmen

By: Sarah E. De Capua
Child's World, 2009
ISBN: 9781602531383



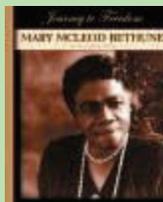
Curriculum: African American history; World War II; Pilots; U.S. Army Air Force; Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.

The Tuskegee Airmen, the first black U.S. Army Air Force pilots, played a critical role in the successful outcome of WWII for the Allied powers. This title traces their history and struggles as they faced challenges of racial prejudice in the air and on the ground. Not until 1948 did President Truman issue Executive Order 9981 requiring "equal treatment of soldiers, regardless of race." Marvelous period photographs are appropriately placed and captioned. The topic is covered succinctly but detailed enough for introductory research among MS and struggling HS students.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Mary McLeod Bethune

By: Amy Robin Jones
Child's World, 2009
ISBN: 9781602531291



Curriculum: Mary McLeod Bethune; African American education; Civil rights; Women's rights
The inspiring life of Mary McLeod Bethune is explored in this short biography. Dedicated to improving the educational opportunities for black girls she opened a school 1904. Her efforts to-

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From ERS:

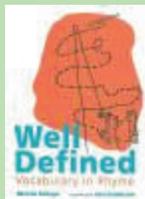
Jody Gehrig
Karen Shannon
Antonio Nicotera

wards racial equality continued throughout her life. She eventually become the president of the National Association of Colored Women Clubs and was also appointed as the director of the Division of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration by FDR. Wonderful period photographs are appropriately placed and captioned. Although slim, the book is detailed enough for introductory research among MS and struggling HS students.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Well Defined: Vocabulary in Rhyme

By: Michael Salinger
Illus. by: Sam Henderson



Wordsong, 2009
ISBN: 9781590786154

Curriculum: Vocabulary; English language; Rhyme

Poetry Slam, Inc. founder, Michael Salinger shares his knowledge and wit with students as he presents the definition of words often found on standardized tests, in a short story rhyme. This handy little volume will have students laughing and learning at the same time. Don't question it, since *Refute can stop a speaker dead/in her tracks.....because refute comes armed/simplely/with the facts.*

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem.

Lincoln Shot: A President's Life Remembered

By: Barry Denenberg
Illus. by: Christopher



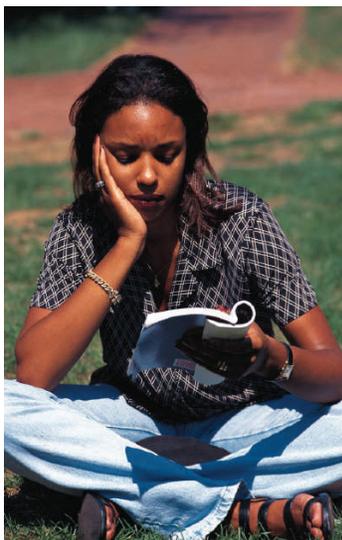
Bing
Feiwei and Friends, 2008
ISBN: 031237013X

Curriculum: Abraham Lincoln; United States; Civil War; U.S. history

This book is presented as a memorial edition of the *National News*, a fictitious nineteenth-century newspaper complete with period ads, ragged, yellowed pages, and old fashioned font. The articles begin with Lincoln's assassination and the resulting manhunt for the gunman and his accomplices. The ensuing commentary details Lincoln's boyhood, his political career, and the civil war. This amazing book will be hard to shelve, but will have students pouring over the archival photographs, wood-cut illustrations, and text for hours.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem.

**Young Adults
Deserve the
Best!**



Fiction

Busted

By: Antony John
Flux, 2008
ISBN: 9780938713731

Curriculum: Feminism; Popularity; Self concept



Somehow geek flute player Kevin has been put in charge of keeping in the Book of Busts; a demeaning forty year old tradition of writing the measurements of each of the senior girls under their pictures. Kevin who has never been on a date or kissed a girl is suddenly surrounded by the hottest girls in school all looking for dates in order to pad their measurements. Enter Kevin's mom, who holds a doctorate in women's studies who starts a class at the high school in order to empower the girls.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

Mao's Last Dancer

Written by: Li Cunxin
Walker, 2008
ISBN: 9780802797792

Curriculum: China; Cultural Revolution; Ballet; Dancing



The Cultural Revolution was just three years old when Li Cunxin was born into a peasant family in rural China. At the age of eleven, he was one of nine children chosen to audition for a chance to study dance at the Beijing Dance Academy. This true story chronicles his journey through the Beijing Dance Academy to the Houston Ballet and his ultimate defection to the United States. This book gives an insider perspective on the Chinese Cultural Revolution and I highly recommend it.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
Johnson Elem.