

# The Review Crew



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

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

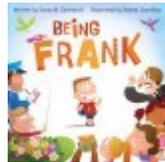
Volume 9 Number 7

March 2013

## Fiction

### Being Frank

By: Donna W. Earnhardt  
Illus. by: Andrea Castellani  
Flashlight Press, 2012  
ISBN: 9781936261192

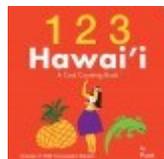


*Curriculum: Honesty; Grandparent and child*  
Frank is frank to a fault. Sparing no one, he shares his honest opinion: "Your singing is kind of shrieky...Your breath smells funny... Your toupée looks like my pet weasel." After suffering rejection by his classmates, Frank learns from his Grandpa Ernest that he can still be honest if he'll just emphasize the good and not criticize. This clever lesson in civility is illustrated with comic Photoshop images. Great advice wrapped up in a humorous package.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Alum

### 1, 2, 3, Hawai'i

Written and illus. by: Puck  
Duo Press, 2013  
ISBN: 9781938093005



*Curriculum: Counting; Hawai'i*  
Bold numbers and highly contrasted blocked illustrations show numbers 1 to 10, highlighting features of Hawai'i: palm trees, canoes, Geckos, and more. This simple counting board book offers much more than just numbers, it shows Hawaiian culture and provides

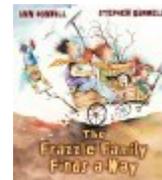
good question starters for young students.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni

### The Frazzle Family Finds a Way

By: Ann Bonwill  
Illus. by: Stephen Gammell  
Holiday House, 2013  
ISBN: 9780823424054

*Curriculum: Family, Memory, Problem solving*  
The members of the Frazzle family are delightfully forgetful. They forget to wear appropriate clothing and even leave Grandpa at the grocery store. Aunt Rosemary is called in to fix her disorganized kin, but ultimately young Annie comes up with the best solution. Kids will love the wild illustrations and the clever ending.

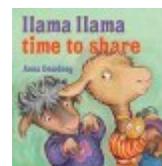


Reviewed by: Elise Edwards  
Early Education

### Llama Llama Time to Share

By: Anna Dewdney  
Scholastic, 2012  
ISBN: 9780545500579V

*Curriculum: Sharing*  
Little Llama is back for another learning adventure when he has a play date with Nelly Gnu. At first the two work together, sharing blocks to make a tower, but when



## 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!

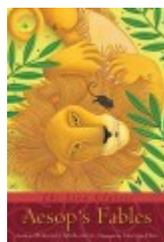
- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ This publication consists of the best books we review each month.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETLs, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

Nelly picks up Llama's special fuzzy doll the trouble begins. The stuffie's arm gets pulled off; llama-mergency! Mama fixes the doll and has it take a "time out" until the little ones can play happily together. When Nelly leaves, Llama can hardly wait to share again. The bright and expressive paintings are paired perfectly with the rhyming text. This is a satisfying story to use in a sharing lesson.  
 Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
 Waller K-8

## Nonfiction

### The Lion Classic Aesop's Fables

By: Margaret McAllister  
 Illus. by: Amanda Hall  
 Lion Children's Book,  
 2011

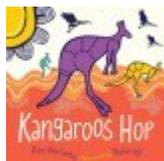


ISBN: 9780745962009

*Curriculum: Fairy tales; Folklore*  
 These classic tales, some familiar and some obscure, are given a fresh interpretation here. Characters are developed and beautifully rendered in bright paintings that bring them to life. This adaptation will give readers a new appreciation for the lasting wisdom of these centuries-old fables. The author's notes provide readers with the genesis of the book and her early experience with Aesop's tales.  
 Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
 Alum

### Kangaroos Hop

By: Ros Moriarty  
 Illus. by: Balarinji  
 Allen & Unwin, 2012  
 ISBN:  
 9781742379159

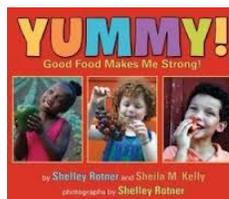


*Curriculum: Australian animals; Australian Aboriginal language of Yanyu-*

*wa*  
 Kangaroos hop, birds fly, and frogs jumps to the riverbank... where, shhhh! The big fat crocodile is sleeping! Unique and bold illustrations highlight the animals of Australia and their actions. Included is a Yanyuwa translation of the book, the language spoken by the northern Australian Aboriginals.  
 Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
 Alumni

### Yummy! Good Food Makes Me Strong!

By: Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly  
 Holiday House,  
 2013



ISBN:9780823424269

*Curriculum: Nutrition, Healthy foods, Five senses*

This engaging photo essay showcases real kids enjoying real food. The concept is simple: award-winning photographer Rotner has contributed bright, interesting images of children eating, while Kelly has written short, engaging text. In addition the short text, they've included fact boxes with helpful nutritional tips for teachers or families.

Reviewed by: Elise Edwards  
 Early Education

### Pluto's Secret: An Icy World's Tale of Discovery

By: Margaret A. Weitekamp  
 Illus. by: Diane Kidd  
 Abrams Books, 2013  
 ISBN: 9781419704239



*Curriculum: Pluto; Astronomy*  
 Pluto was happily dancing with its moons and whirling around in its strange orbit when it was designated as a planet in 1930. But Pluto had a

secret; he wasn't like the other eight planets in the solar system. Waiting over the years for astronomers to discover his secret as they examined him, he rejoiced in 2006 as they finally realized his uniqueness and changed his classification to a dwarf planet. Cheerful cartoon illustrations give the book a lighthearted feel. Pair it with *Pluto Visits Earth* or *Poor Pluto!* for a comparison.  
 Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
 Waller K-8



## The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

## Fiction

### Otter and Odder

By: James Howe  
 Illus. by: Chris Raschka  
 Candlewick Press, 2012  
 ISBN: 9780763641740

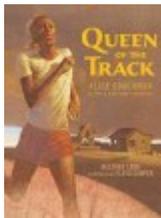


*Curriculum: Otters; Fishes; Love*  
 Unexpectedly, Otter falls in love with a fish! "Impossible...I am in love with my food source!" Myrtle, the fish, reciprocates. Talk around the pond

disparages the unlikely match calling it unnatural and the pair fears their romance is doomed. A wise beaver convinces Otter he may follow his heart rather than convention. After making radical adjustments to his diet, the odd couple blissfully reunites. Imaginative watercolor and pencil designs fill the pages. Fascinating artwork and an unusual storyline create a winning combination with a powerful message. Reviewed by: Cat DeRose Alum

### Queen of the Track

By: Heather Lang  
 Illust. By: Floyd Cooper  
 Boyd's Mills Press, 2012  
 ISBN: 9781590788509



Curriculum: *Alice Coachman; Track and field athletes; African Americans; Olympics*

As a child Alice loved to run and jump. But as a poor African American girl growing up in the South during the 1930's, Alice was discouraged from playing sports. She played anyway. After being accepted into the Tuskegee Institute, Alice quickly excelled as an athlete and proved herself the best high jumper in the country. Her talent and hard work eventually led Alice to the 1948 London Olympics, where she set a new Olympic record and became the first African American woman to win a gold medal. *Queen of the Track* is an inspiring story with a beautiful message and striking illustrations.

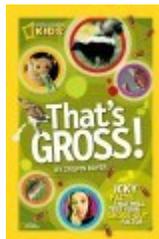
Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen TJ H.S.



## Nonfiction

### That's Gross

By: Crispin Boyer  
 National Geographic, 2012  
 ISBN: 9781426310669



Curriculum: *Science; Miscellanea; Curiosities and wonders*

Bodily excretions, edible insects, and gross facts from history are some of the topics that will keep upper elementary students glued to this book and eager to share with their friends. Graphic photographs enhance the "ick" factor with close-ups of such delights as germs and parasites. "Disgusting Fun" in the back of the book has ideas to try at home. While being fascinated with information that might make them squirm, students will forget they are really learning a lot of solid science.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert Waller K-8



## Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

## Fiction

### The Vengekeep Prophecies

By: Brian Farrey  
 Illust. by: Brett Helquist  
 Harper Collins, 2012  
 ISBN: 9780062049285  
 Curriculum: *Family;*



*Thieves; Prophecy; Magic*  
 The Grimjinx family business is thievery. Each family member has skills such as lock picking and pickpocketing. Jaxter can't do any of those things. In his first attempt at thievery, he set a house on fire and got his family jailed. It was discovered that there was a tapestry that foretold the future. The Grimjinx family would be heroes. Unfortunately, the tapestry also predicted many disasters and each is coming true. Jaxter has the ability to beat magic with science. Can Jaxter find the formula to dissolve the tapestry and save the town?  
 Reviewed by: Karen Burns Place Bridge Academy

### Such Wicked Intent

By: Kenneth Oppel  
 Simon and Schuster, 2012  
 ISBN: 9781442403185  
 Curriculum: *Death; Spirit world; Obsession*



In this sequel to *This Dark Endeavor*, Victor Frankenstein is mourning the death of his brother. Even though he succeeded in giving him the elixir of life, Victor failed. The story opens with him burning the books from the Dark Library. He finds a book that survived the flames. Victor discovers the world of the occult. The book explains how to visit the dead and bring them back to

life. That world is dark and dangerous. Victor becomes obsessed with the idea of bringing the dead back to life. His two friends return for the adventures that grow increasingly dark. Readers will have to wait for the third book for the conclusion.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

### Rock on

By: Denise Vega  
Little Brown, 2012  
ISBN: 9780316133104

*Curriculum: Bands; High school; Brothers*  
Ori Taylor is a guitarist. A really good guitarist! With a couple of friends he forms a band. They start planning on playing at the battle of the bands months before it actually comes around. They realize they need a bass player so they start to advertise. On the day of the auditions there turns out to be only one choice for bass player, a deaf girl who can really rock the house. Everyone is happy for Ori except his older brother Del who has left college, but is the only one Ori wants to be happy for him. This is an excellent coming of age novel for upper middle school as well as high school readers.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

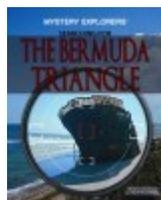


## Nonfiction

### Searching for the Bermuda Triangle

By: Vivian E. Shumway and Aaron Rosenberg  
Rosen, 2012  
ISBN: 9781448847594

*Curriculum: Bermuda Triangle; Disappearances; Unsolved mysteries;*



### *Boats; Planes*

The Bermuda Triangle, location of many ship and plane disappearances, is the subject of much investigation and speculation. Disappearances are confirmed, but there is no evidence to explain what may have happened. Theories abound and include weather, aliens, equipment malfunction, methane, and top-secret government projects. The mysterious nature of the region has even worked its way into popular culture. All reviewed series titles, suitable for 6<sup>th</sup> grade and up, provide adequate research information and offer lists of books and websites for further study. Perfect for those curious about the unknown and unsolved mysteries.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

### Tape it and make it: 101 duct tape activities

By: Richela Fabian Morgan  
Barron's, 2012

ISBN: 9781438001357  
*Curriculum: Crafts and hobbies*

The title says it all! Duct tape projects range in difficulty from simple as a bracelet to as ambitious as reupholstering a bar stool. Each activity is presented with numbered instructions accompanied by clear, colorful photos for each step. Teen crafters will especially enjoy the chapters on accessories, school supplies and room décor. Required basic supplies include cutting mat, craft knife, metal rulers and scissors. Websites for purchasing supplies is included.

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



### Marching to the mountaintop : how poverty, labor fights, and civil rights set the stage for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s final hours

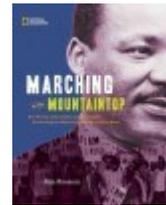
By: Ann Bausum  
National Geographic, 2012

ISBN: 9781426309397

*Curriculum: King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968; Sanitation workers strike, Memphis, Tenn., 1968*

Beautifully laid out photos, quotes, song lyrics and text recount the confluence of the Memphis Sanitation Strike, the War on Poverty, and the Civil Rights movement as they met to set the stage for King's fateful trip to Memphis in 1968 that culminated with his assassination. This is an excellent lesson in historical connections that surpasses the usual MLK Middle School fare.

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



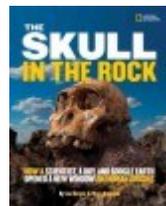
### The skull in the rock

By: Lee R. Berger  
National Geographic, 2012

ISBN: 9781426310102

*Curriculum: Archeology; Anthropology; Africa*

Not so very long ago scientists were ready to give up exploration in South Africa in what they have named the *Cradle of Humankind*. But Lee Berger stumbled on a different way of looking at the ground they had been walking over; Google Earth. With Google Earth he was able to zoom in on ground that had been overlooked. He was able to distinguish what he believed were collapsed caves in the structure of the earth. One day his son, Mathew, stumbled on an amazing find; a human clavicle. This proved to be part of what was eventually an almost complete humanoid skeleton.



This is one amazing book! The photographs are marvelous. The text is so enthralling that even readers not enamored with archeology will be swept off their feet.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.



**Young Adults  
Deserve the  
Best!**

**Fiction**

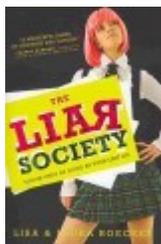
### The Liar Society

By: Lisa Roecker and  
Laura Roecker  
Sourcebooks, 2011  
ISBN:

9781402256332

*Curriculum: Secret  
societies; Death; High school; Private school*

A year ago, Kate's best friend Grace died in a fire at their private school. Now Kate is getting emails and clues from Grace that suggest her death was not an accident. As Kate investigates, she uncovers secret societies, deception, and cover ups that extend far beyond the walls of the school. This engaging book is a great non-vampire, non-zombie addition to YA fiction. Luckily, the sequel, *The Lies that Bind*, has already been published so



readers don't need to wait for this suspenseful story's continuation.

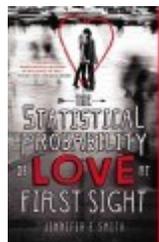
Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

### The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight

By: Jennifer Smith  
Little, Brown, 2012  
ISBN: 9780316122382  
*Curriculum: Love; Fate; Weddings; Funerals; Airplane flights*

When Hadley misses her plane to London for her father's dreaded wedding by just four minutes she has no idea that the next 24 hours will be life changing. Hadley and Oliver, another passenger on her rescheduled flight, fall in love over the ocean but then lose contact going through customs. But, are fate and destiny strong enough forces to intertwine and bring them back together? Perfect for escaping, this novel will find its target with HS girls looking for a nice, sweet, emotion-filled, romantic love story.

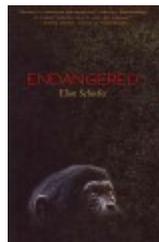
Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.



### Endangered

By: Eliot Schrefer  
Scholastic Press, 2012  
ISBN: 9780545165761  
*Curriculum: Bonobos; Apes; Animal sanctuaries; Wildlife rescues; Congo; Civil war*

Sophie's mother runs a sanctuary for bonobos in the Democratic Republic of Congo. When the fourteen-year-old goes to visit her mother, she never dreams that she will become the caretaker of a young, orphaned bonobo. Sophie and Otto become inseparable. When revolution suddenly sweeps through the capital and the sanctuary is attacked, it is up to Sophie to find refuge in the jungle for both herself and Otto while fleeing the pursuing soldiers. This is a thought-provoking read



## **Review Crew Staff**

### **Committee Chair:**

**Nancy Lucas**  
JFK High School

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**Alumni**

**Elise Edwards**

**Early Ed Coordinator**

**Michelle Jensen**

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**Lynne Lopez-Crowley**

**MSLA**

**Peggy Obert**

**Waller ECE—8**

**Janice Pacheco**

**Skinner Middle School**

**Leah Rounds**

**Alumni**

### **From ETLs:**

**Dave Sanger**

**Karen Shannon**

**Antonio Nicotera**

in which the author confronts difficult moral issues without providing pat solutions.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen  
TJ H.S.

### Never Fall Down

By: Patricia McCormick

Balzer + Bray, 2012

ISBN:

9780061730948

*Curriculum: Cambodia*

*history; Genocide,*

*Survival, Family*

Eleven-year-old Arn lives in Batambang, Cambodia. One day the Khmer Rouge march into town. They gather up the townspeople and march them into the country. After being in camp for a few weeks, Arn and his aunt and sisters are about to be separated. He said, "Then she hold us all in her arm. 'Do whatever they say,' she whisper. 'Be like grass. Bend low, bend low, then bend lower. The wind blow one way, you bow that way. It blow the other way, you do, too. That is the way to survive.'" Arn lives through the atrocities of the labor camp and finally finds his way to Thailand and ultimately the United States.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA



### Pinned

Written by: Sharon Flake

Scholastic Press,  
2012

ISBN:

9780545057189

*Curriculum: People*

*with disabilities; Friendship; High school*

Ninth-grader, Autumn, is the star and the only girl on the wrestling team. She works hard to be a top-notch wrestler. She also has a



crush on the team manager, Adonis, who is disabled. The only problem is that Adonis wants nothing to do with her. While Autumn is a star at wrestling her academics do not shine. When her parents decide not to let her wrestle until she brings up her grades, she struggles with not wanting to learn but needing to if she wants to wrestle and wanting to and winning Adonis's love.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA



A long time ago when the Earth was green,  
There was more kinds of animals than you've ever seen.  
And they'd run around free while the world was being born.  
The loveliest of all was the Unicorn!

There was green alligators and long necked geese,  
Hump back camels and chimpanzees.  
Cats and rats and elephants but sure a you're born,  
The loveliest of all was the Unicorn!

But the Lord seen some sinnin' and it caused him pain.  
He says, "Stand back, I'm gonna make it rain.  
So hey, Brother Noah, I'll tell you what to do.  
Go and build me a floating zoo."

"You'll take two alligators and a couple of geese,  
Two hump back camels and two chimpanzees.  
Two cats, two rats, two elephants but

as sure as you're born,  
Noah, don't you forget my unicorns!"

Well, Noah looked out through the drivin' rain,  
But the unicorns was hidin'-playin' silly games.  
They were kickin' and a-splashin' while the rain was pourin',  
Oh them foolish unicorns.

"So you take two alligators and a couple of geese,  
Two hump back camels and two chimpanzees.  
Two cats, two rats, two elephants but as sure as you're born,  
Noah, don't you forget my unicorns."

And the the ark started movin' and it drifted with the tide,  
And the unicorns looked up from the rock and cried.  
And the water came up and sort of floated them away,  
That's why you've never seen a unicorn to this day.

You'll see a lot of alligators and a whole mess of geese,  
You'll see hump back camels and chimpanzees.  
You'll see cats and rats and elephants but as sure as you're born,  
You're never gonna see no unicorn.

