

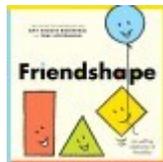
The Review Crew



Early Elementary Fiction

Friendshape

Written & Illus. by: Amy Krouse Rosenthal & Tom Lichtenheld
Scholastic, 2015
ISBN: 9780545436823

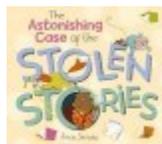


Curriculum: Friendship; Shapes,
In this heartwarming story about four friends (rectangle, triangle, square, and circle) children are introduced to many ways to be a good friend to others. We learn that friends make you feel happy, have fun together, welcome others, solve conflicts, and support each other. A wonderful picture book full of sketch illustrations that keep students engaged and excited throughout the reading. This text does a great job of using the alternative meanings for words that made students think about what they are listening to and/or reading, and was a cause for giggles all around.

Reviewed by: Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.

The Astonishing Case of the Stolen Stories

Written and Illus. by: Anca Sandu
Jonathan Cape, 2014
ISBN: 9781780080345



Curriculum: Mystery; Detectives; Adventure; Friendship

The prince's bedtime stories have been stolen! Never fear, the king has called upon Bear, Cat, and Fox to solve the case. As they investigate the entire kingdom, ruling out

suspects such as the big bad wolf and wicked witch, the mystery deepens as the detectives discover that every book in the entire kingdom has been filched! Will the prince ever sleep again? Who is responsible for this atrocity?
Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.

You Nest Here With Me

By: Jane Yolen and Heidi Stemple
Illus. by: Melissa Sweet
Boyd Mills Press, 2015
ISBN: 9781590789230



Curriculum: Nesting; Birds; Mother; Child
This is a sweet little story that begins with a mother putting her child to bed. "Like baby bird, your nest can be anywhere there's you and me." The mother then goes on to tell her how pigeons nest on ledges, and wrens in shoreline sedges. It ends with the mother reassuring her child that she'll nest with her, in their house. Through colorful illustrations and rhymes, we see different kinds of birds and the nests they make. There are reference pages that cover each type of bird, what their feathers and eggs look like.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy



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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 twelve 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.)

Early Elementary Nonfiction

Mammoths and Mastodons

By: Jennifer Zeiger

Illus. by: multiple contributors

Cherry Lake Publishing, 2016

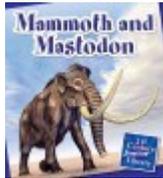
ISBN: 9781633623835

Curriculum: Prehistoric mammals;

Pachyderms

Part of the extensive 21st Century Junior Library, this work gives detailed descriptions of two ancient pachyderms. Despite relatively simple text, the reader encounters significant vocabulary such as prehistoric, extinct, and fossil—each briefly defined in the book's glossary. Zeiger discusses the size, range, appearance, behavior, and discovery of mammoths and mastodons. Photographs and color illustrations accompany the text. Recommended activities encourage the reader to look, create, and ask questions. Traditional text features are augmented by two recommended websites specific to these proboscids.

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.



Hop, Bunny: Explore the Forest

By: Susan B. Neuman

National Geographic Society, 2014

ISBN: 9781426317392

Curriculum: Forests, Animals; Rabbits

In this National Geographic Society pre-reader, children will be mesmerized by the clear photography. They will be engaged in the idea that the bunny goes throughout the forest looking at the plant life, animals, and exploring nature around it. This pri-



mary non-fiction book includes text features students are introduced to in the primary elementary classroom, such as labels, photographs, and an (unlabeled) glossary. An extra feature is a chance for non-readers to tell their own story about the bunny using images from the story. This would be wonderful for a guided reading group about retell!

Reviewed by: Emily Rubin
Barnum Elem.

At the Beach

By: Mary Lindeen

Norwood House Press, 2016

ISBN:

9781599536989

Curriculum: Beaches

This low-level text is a great gateway for our youngest readers to experience non-fiction reading. The use of simple text and full color photos work together to give kiddos a glimpse of the beach. Using 70 high frequency words, listed in the back of the book, children build their reading skills while learning about a desirable topic. Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.



Dog Loves Fairy Tales

Written and Illus. by:

Louise Yates

Jonathan Cape, 2014

ISBN: 9780857550170

Curriculum: Fairy Tales;

Adventure; Friendship

Dog falls into a fairy tale book while dusting his bookshelves and sets off on an adventure to find a cursed imp. The imp has been cursed by a witch to stay in a jam jar until his bad luck changed. Dog and the imp set off on an adventure through the Enchanted Forest in order to find the witch to have her lift the spell. Along the way, the imp unknowingly helps out storybook characters such as Goldilocks,



the three little pigs, and Little Red Riding Hood by interfering with their stories with his bad luck. Finally, Dog and the imp find the witch, who has been missing the imp all along. The two are reunited and all is well!

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.

Patterns on the Farm

By: Rebecca Felix

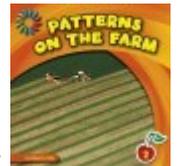
Illus. by: Various stock photography companies
Cherry Lake Publishing, 2014

ISBN: 9781631889233

Curriculum: Mathematics; Patterns

This is one of an intriguing series of books reviewing the concept of patterns. Each text follows the same format: an explanation of patterns; a definition and example of cores; an example of a "non-pattern"; and then opportunities for the reader to actually practice identifying patterns and cores. Each explanation and/or example is preceded by a full page color photograph, thus providing the reader with not only simple sentence structures, but also visuals directly connected to the written text. One nice aspect of this series is it offers the young reader multiple DIFFERENT examples of patterns.

Reviewed by: Dawn Lewallen
Skinner Middle School



Upper Elementary Fiction

What Happened at Wizard School

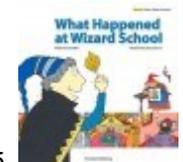
By: Cecil Kim

Illus. by: Joo-yoon Lee

Tantan Publishing, 2015

ISBN: 9781939248022

Curriculum: Symmetry; Geometry



When student wizard Bong-Bong awakens with unequal arms, a wobbly walk, and a woefully wonky countenance, he's diagnosed with mismatch disease. Luckily the cure is simple: find ten symmetrical things. Unsatisfied with simple mirror symmetry—a leaf, a frog, a butterfly—Bong-Bong introduces us to vertical, radial, and spherical symmetry. Even more math follows. Guileless and goofy illustrations add to the fun, while activities in the back of the book add to the learning. Reluctant reader and mathphobe alike will be drawn into this excellent example of TanTan Publishing's math stories. Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley Cheltenham Elem.

The Stranded Whale

By: Jane Yolen

Illus. by: Melanie

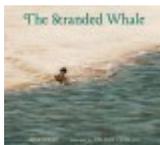
Cataldo

Candlewick Press, 2015

ISBN: 9780763669539

Curriculum: Whales; Friendship

Sally and her brothers are walking home from school one day and find a large whale beached near their home. They try to help the whale by moistening his large body with sea water. They get help from town. But no one can save the whale since the tide has already gone out and the whale is much too heavy to move. Sally shares a special bond with the whale, talking to him about his great beauty and strength as he approaches death. A sad but realistic story, it may help children understand that death cannot always be prevented. We can keep memories alive to help us through our grief, just as Sally dreams about the majestic whale eternally swimming in the vast ocean. Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer South H.S.



Anyone But Ivy

Pocket

Written and ill. by:

Caleb Kris

Greenwillow, 2015

ISBN:

9780062364340

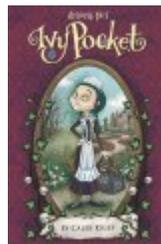
Curriculum: Curses;

Necklaces

Ivy Pocket is a humorously insufferable twelve-year-old orphan who has been fired from her position as a maid in Paris and is recruited to deliver a mysterious necklace to a young lady in London. Warned not to look into the necklace's diamond, Ivy can't resist, and is shown a vision of herself as a child. Beset by ghosts and other obstacles, the intrepid heroine soldiers on, using her "natural instincts" to foil her enemies, human and supernatural. She delivers the necklace but it causes such calamities that she is ordered to take the cursed jewel and leave, which suits Ivy as she wants to learn more about her past from the necklace. Students will shake their heads at Ivy's supreme narcissism while laughing at the foibles portrayed in the vivid black and white illustrations.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Alumni



Bear Can Dance

Written and ill. by

Suzanne Bloom

Boyd's Mills Press,

2015

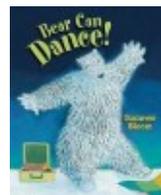
ISBN:

9781629794426

Curriculum: Bears; Friendship;

Flying; Dancing

Bear wishes he could fly. His friends, goose and fox, want to help him. Goose tries the best that she can to teach bear how to fly. Fox brings him a cape and tells Bear to flap and whoosh around. They try



several ideas, but bear tells them that it's not working. The two friends watch Bear and decide that Bear cannot fly, but Bear can dance. Dancing is just like flying, with your feet on the ground. So they put on some music and have fun dancing with Bear. The colorful illustrations really make the story. It is also a good lesson on how to help a friend out when he needs it.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

Ketzel, the Cat Who

Composed

By: Leslea Newman

Illus. by: Amy June Bates

Candlewick Press, 2015

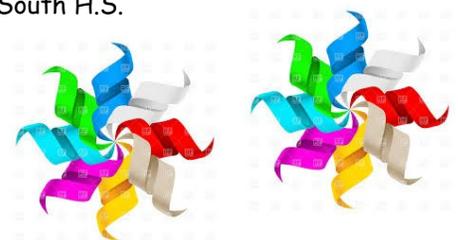
ISBN: 9780763665555

Curriculum: Cats; Music; Composition

Moshe Cotel is a composer who lives on a noisy busy street in a large city. One day as he is taking a stroll down the street, he finds a small kitten and decides to take him home with him. He names the cat Ketzel. The two become good companions. One day as Moshe is becoming frustrated and distracted when trying to compose, his beloved cat inadvertently climbs onto the piano keys and begins "composing" a piece. The piece is entered into a contest and the rest is history. This picture book story is based on a true story of a real composer and his cat who became famous for his 60 second composition on the piano. What a wonderful story to share with our young readers; the dedication of a composer and his strong bond with his beloved cat. Warm watercolor illustrations enhance each page.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer

South H.S.



Upper Elementary Nonfiction

J. J. Watt

By: Matt Scheff

Illus. by: multiple contributors

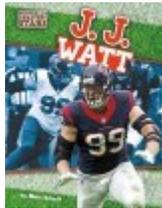
Abdo Publishing, 2015

ISBN: 9781624038280

Curriculum: Football; Sports stars

J. J. Watt worked hard for years to earn sudden success. Although a promising high school player, a frustrated Watt dropped out of small college ball to a career delivering pizzas. Inspired by the support of a young fan, however, he returned as a walk-on at prestigious Michigan University. After toiling a year on the scout team, Watt became a breakout player, went pro in the first round, and started in his rookie NFL season. Today he dominates every game. Action-filled, double-page photos make this a real page-turner, even for reluctant readers. Part of the Football's Greatest Stars series, the book features quality paper and strong binding that will stand up to rough-and-tumble fans.

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.



Discover Moray Eels

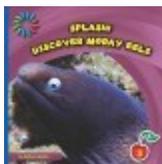
By: Kathryn Beaton

Cherry Lake Publishing, 2016

ISBN: 9781633626010

Curriculum: Science; Animals; Ocean; Fish; Eels

Amazing full-page, richly colored photographs accompany detailed information about the moray eel. Incorporating simple and complex sentences, the text is perfect for intermediate and independent readers as well as for use by teachers providing young



readers with foundation knowledge for unit lessons. The bottom of each page includes a brief fact related to the displayed photo and several times students are encouraged to further their knowledge base by accessing online websites for deeper research. The book concludes with a series of questions and/or discussion topics as well as a glossary, an index, and a short list of further books or websites to continue learning about the moray eel.

This book is an excellent addition to the animal section for any elementary library.

Reviewed by: Dawn Lewallen
Skinner Middle School

Middle School Fiction

The Book of Dares for Lost Friends

By: Jane Kelley

Feiwel and Friends, 2015

ISBN: 9781250050878

Curriculum: Friendship; Magic

Lanora and Val have been friends forever, but when they start middle school, Lanora wants to leave her old, discouraged self behind. Taken up by the "A Team," the local mean girls, she gets arrested for shoplifting and heads into a downward spiral. Val is determined to save her friend by using a spell from an old book and the help of a strange boy named Tasman. She painstakingly collects things representing the real Lanora and takes them to a dangerous midnight ceremony in Central Park that exposes Tasman's mysterious past and allows the main characters to save each other. The evil enchantment is really broken by the magic of true friendship in this imaginative and sensitive coming-of-age story.



Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni

High School Fiction

Magonia

By: Maria Dahvana Headley

Harper, 2015

ISBN:

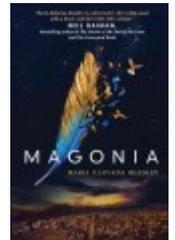
9780062320520

Curriculum: Diseases;

Illnesses and injuries; Death and dying; Identity; Magic

At the age of one, Aza developed a disease that no doctor could diagnose. Her lungs did not work properly - making breathing nearly impossible. She survived through sheer force of will. When she begins to see a ship floating in the sky, Aza believes it be a medication-induced hallucination. But then one night Aza's body unable to bear the strain any longer, shuts down and she dies. Aza awakens aboard a ship that sails high above the clouds. She finds that her body is no longer weak, but transformed. Magonia is a beautiful, peculiar, imaginative story in which Aza's destiny is entwined with that of a ship that can fly.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson H.S.



Nil Unlocked

By: Lynne Matson

Henry Holt, 2015

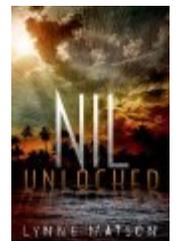
ISBN:

9781627792936

Curriculum: Islands;

Love; Survival

Skye's father is obsessed with finding the island on which his brother was once stranded. After reading her Uncle's account of his experiences, Skye is compelled to join her father on his search of the Caribbean. Rives has been on Nil for



241 days. He must catch a gate off the island soon or die. But Rives wants something more - unlock the secrets of Nil and find a way home for everyone. When resourceful Skye appears on the island, Rives discovers that she might have enough knowledge to help him achieve his goals. But time is running out and Nil does not give up its secrets without exacting a price. An intense, high-octane thrill ride. Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen Thomas Jefferson H.S.

Mirrored

By: Alex Flinn
Harper, 2015
ISBN:



9780062134516
Curriculum: Beauty; Popularity; Witches
Violet is an unattractive girl. She is bullied unmercifully by just about everyone in her class. One day she sees two boys kill a bird. Violet picks the bird up and lo and behold it comes back to life. Celine is a naturally beautiful girl and she becomes Violet's stepdaughter when her mother is killed. Each of the women is beautiful and the power that beauty holds over them is ruinous in very different ways. Reviewed by: Chris Coble CEC Early College

None of the Above

By: I.W. Gregorio
Baltzer+Bray, 2015
ISBN:



9780062335319
Curriculum: Gender identity; Intersex people
Everything is falling into place for Krissy Lattimer. She loves to run and is a champion hurdler and was awarded full ride track scholarship. She just got voted homecoming

queen and her boyfriend, Sam, is the love of her life. The first time Krissy and Sam have sex it doesn't work out very well. Krissy goes to a Dr. and finds out that she is intersex: she looks like a girl but has male chromosomes and testes. It is a hard enough revelation for Krissy to handle but when the entire school finds out the fallout is brutal.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College

High School Nonfiction

Becoming Nicole: The transformation of an American family

By: Amy Ellis Nutt
Random House, 2015
ISBN: 9780812995411



Curriculum: Family; Equal Rights; Twins; Transgender identity
Becoming Nicole is the story of a remarkable family and their transformative journey and fight for Equal Rights for transgender youth. Parents Wayne and Kelly Maines were profoundly aware of the many differences between their identical twin boys, Jonas and Wyatt, since they were toddlers. Yet, it was Wyatt's unwavering vocal expressions that he was a girl in a boy's body that helped them help him be who he truly wanted to be. Along the way they struggled with their many doubts and insecurities while facing horrific discrimination, intimidation, and bullying from others. Eventually, it is through self-education and help from groups like GLAAD and many others that the family grows together and overcomes their many personal and public obstacles. A definite must read, this book contains informative scientific research, as well as, a Resources guide and Glossary to support the reader.

Review Crew Staff

Committee Chair:

- Karen Burns**
Place Bridge Academy
- Michelle Jensen**
TJ/GW High School

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- Peggy Obert**
Alumni

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- Chris Coble**
CEC Early College

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- Denise Cushing**
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- Jutta Gebauer**
South High School
- Sarah Martinez**
North High School
- Emily Rubin**
Barnum Elem

From ETLs:

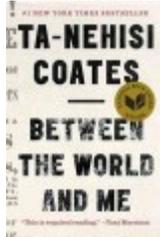
- Karen Shannon**
- Antonio Nicotera**
- Sudi Stodola**

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez
North H.S.

Between the World and Me

By: Ta-Nehisi Coates
Spiegel & Grau, 2015
ISBN: 9780812993547

Curriculum: *Father & Sons, Equal Rights, African American History, Current Events, American Dream*



Writer and Atlantic correspondent, Ta-Nehisi Coates, writes a letter to his fifteen-year-old son, Samori, that is a powerful examination of the past, present, and future of black male life in the US. Filled with historical context, personal anecdotes, and a vision for his son, Ta-Nehisi writes from his experiences growing up in Baltimore, attending school at Howard, and life as an adult in Chicago, New York, and Paris. He reflects on the many challenges of black life throughout history paying special attention to today's current events and the deaths of Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, and fellow classmate, Prince Jones. Coates speaks of fear yet portrays hints of promise as he envisions "his route will be different...It must be."

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez
North H.S.



A Variety of Quotes by Neil Gaiman!

"Don't ever apologize to an author for buying something in paperback, or taking it out from a library (that's what they're there for. Use your library). Don't apologize to *this* author for buying books second hand, or getting them from bookcrossing or borrowing a friend's copy. What's important to me is that people read the books and enjoy them, and that, at some point in there, the book was bought by someone. And that people who like things, tell other people. The most important thing is that people *read*..."

"Stories you read when you're the right age never quite leave you. You may forget who wrote them or what the story was called. Sometimes you'll forget precisely what happened, but if a story touches you it will stay with you, haunting the places in your mind that you rarely ever visit."

"Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten."

"Grown-ups don't look like grown-ups on the inside either. Outside, they're big and thoughtless and they always know what they're doing. Inside, they look just like they always have. Like they did when they were your age. Truth is, there aren't any grown-ups. Not one, in the whole wide world."

"I hope you will have a wonderful year, that you'll dream dangerously and outrageously, that you'll make something that didn't exist before you made it, that you will be loved and that you will be liked, and that you will have people to love and to like in return. And, most importantly (because I think there should be more kindness and more wisdom in the world right now), that you will, when you need to be, be wise, and that you will always be kind."

"Books make great gifts because they have whole worlds inside of them. And it's much cheaper to buy somebody a book than it is to buy them the whole world!"

"I lived in books more than I lived anywhere else."