



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 6 Number 9

May 2010

Fiction

First Rain

By: Charlotte Herman

Illus. by: Kathryn Mitter

Albert Whitman, 2010

ISBN: 9780807524534

Curriculum: Moving; Grandmothers; Rain; Jews; Israel

Moving to Israel is exciting; new food, new people, new language, but leaving Grandma behind in America is sad. Amazingly, as the first rains of fall arrive in Israel, so does Grandma. Mitter's acrylic illustrations are appealing and depict the diversity of Israel and highlight the difference between the two countries. Children of any religion, culture or ethnicity, will appreciate this story of the joy and adventure of moving and the sadness of leaving a loved one behind.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem.



Pete the Cat

By: Eric Litwin

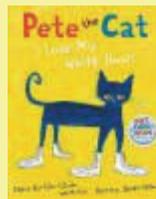
Illus. by: James Dean

Harper, 2010

ISBN: 9780061906220

Curriculum: Cats; Shoes

Pete is quite an easy going cat. As he walks



along in his brand new white shoes, he steps in strawberries, blueberries, mud, and a puddle. Oh no! Yet, he keeps on walking and singing his song. Pete's enjoyable, brightly colored, and predictable tale encourages readers to stay upbeat no matter what troubles come their way - because "it's all good." Readers will have fun walking down the road with Pete, helping him sing his song.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocerlich
Ford Elem.

Miss Fox's Class Earns a Field Trip

By: Eileen Spinelli

Illus. by: Anne Kennedy

Albert Whitman & Company, 2010

ISBN: 0807551691

Curriculum: School field trips; Moneymaking projects; Animals

One day, Miss Fox brings a poster into her classroom. It said: "For Your Next Field Trip, Visit Roller Coaster Planet." She challenges her students to raise the \$135.00 necessary to rent the van and pay for the tickets. They are determined to earn the money and begin a series of fund raisers: washing the librarian's car; putting on a play; baking and selling brownies; conducting a yard sale; and a monetary donation. Each time they get close to the needed amount, a disaster happens to set them back. The students



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.)

never give up and all is well that ends well.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell

Alumni

Ella Kazoo Will Not Brush Her Hair

By: Lee Fox

Illus. by: Jennifer Plecas

Walker, 2010

ISBN:9780802788368

Curriculum: Hair; Stories in rhyme

Ella refuses to brush her hair, mane, locks, mop, curls, frizz, tresses until her hair is totally out of control. Finally a very bad hair day makes it extremely apparent that Ella's hair is taking over control of everything. Can a hairdresser really fix this dilemma?

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin

Park Hill Elem.



The Library Gingerbread Man

By: Dotti Enderle

Illus. by: Colleen M. Madden

Upstart Books, 2010

ISBN:9781602130487

Curriculum: Folk tale; Dewey decimal system

One day, as the librarian was replacing the Gingerbread Man at his address of 398.2, he leapt out of the book and ran off through the library. He ran away from the librarian, a Word Wizard, a giraffe, and others. Just as the Fox was about to gobble him up, the librarian captured the Gingerbread Man back into his book. It is hard to outsmart a librarian!

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin

Park Hill Elem.



Spanish!

iMuu, Moo!

By: Alma Flor Ada, F. Isabel Campoy, Rosalma Zubizarreta

Illus. by: Viví Escrivá

HarperCollins, 2010

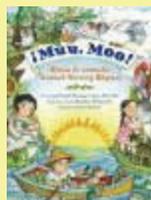
ISBN: 9780061346132

Curriculum: Animal nursery rhymes

This bilingual anthology presents sixteen traditional and modern animal nursery rhymes from Latin America, Spain and a few original ones from the United States. The play with words and sounds will fascinate children as they connect through rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration with their animal friends. Delightful colorful drawings present an evolving portrait of the action. The pictorial aspect will be specially enjoyed by little ones listening to the rhymes.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly

Spanish Reviewer



Nonfiction

Meet the Rays

By: Mike Kennedy

Norwood House Press, 2010

ISBN: 9781599533742

Curriculum: Sports, baseball

This is one book in a series titled, *Meet the Rays*. It covers the history and the culture of the Tampa Bay Rays baseball team. There are full spread photos on each page and the print is large, which makes it a perfect read



for little boys who are in love with baseball.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark
Greenwood Elem.

My Friend Has Autism

By: Amanda D. Tourville

Illus. by: Kristin Sorra

Picture Window Books, 2010

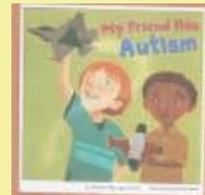
ISBN: 9781404857506

Curriculum: Autism

Nick's friend Zack can seem like he's in his own world, experiences many things differently, and often acts in ways that are hard to understand. Yet he's Nick's only friend who loves airplanes. So although he is autistic, he's a great friend to have! This sensitively done series encourages readers to be friends with or accepting of people even if there are things about them that make them different.

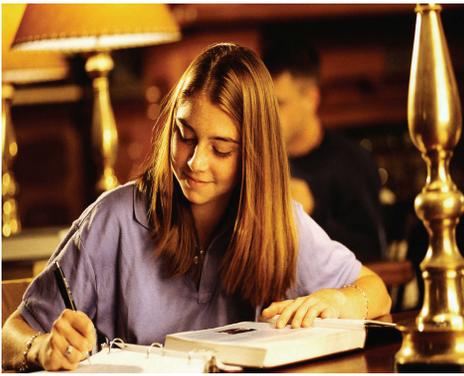
Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich

Ford Elem.



A wonderful thing about a book, in contrast to a computer screen, is that you can take it to bed with you.

~ Daniel J. Boorstin ~



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

Spanish!

Once Upon a Time/ Había una vez

By: Rueben Martínez

Illus. by: Raúl Colón

HarperCollins, 2010

ISBN: 9780061468957

Curriculum: Latin American folktales

Readers will be immersed in a magical world of adventure in this freely-translated bilingual collection of seven traditional Latin American folktales, some of which have their origin in Spain. The colorful and charming narrations depict from crafty animals to kings, giants, and tricksters in a variety of adventures. Younger children



will enjoy having these stories read to them.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly

Spanish Reviewer

Nonfiction

Insect Detective

By: Steve Voake

Illus. by: Charlotte Voake

Candlewick Press,
2010

ISBN: 9780763644475

Curriculum: Insects; Garden animals

This lovely book encourages readers to look closely at all the tiny world around them doing "strange and wonderful things." Large font tells where and what to look for, while smaller, more delicate type gives facts about the insects. Delightfully soft watercolors depict insects in their local surroundings; flowers, gardens, ponds, rocks. This is a peaceful look at a busy world.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier

Stedman Elem.



The Horrible, Miserable Middle Ages

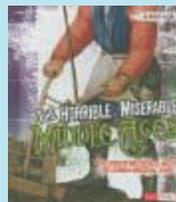
By: Kathy Allen

Capstone Press,
2010

ISBN:
9781427639583

Curriculum: Middle Ages; Hygiene; Plague

The Middle Ages was a nasty time to live. This title goes into the unpleasant details of being alive during this time. Highlighted are hygiene, toilet habits, health care, and the Black Plague. A most astonishing fact is that all but 5 people died of the



plague in Smolensk, Russia. "Foul Fact" boxes are included and live up to the *Digesting History* series title. Although targeted for the 3rd- 5th grade introductory researcher, this title will hold the interest of anyone through adulthood, but be prepared to say, "Ewww!"

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK H.S.

U.S. Presidents: Truth and Rumors

By: Sean Stewart Price

Illus. by: Eldon Doty

Capstone Press, 2010

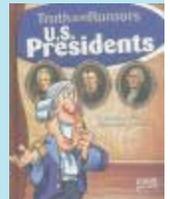
ISBN: 9781429639521

Curriculum: Presidents; George Washington; Abraham Lincoln

There is no shortage of books written on the U.S. Presidents, but this title separates the facts from the fiction. Washington's wooden teeth and cherry tree chopping, John Quincy Adams giving interviews naked, and Ford's modeling days are all highlighted. Rumors are also clarified on several other presidents. Taking on a tabloid feel, the book is fun and informative. Although these titles could not be used as a single source for research, the interesting facts could be incorporated to add something unique to reports.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK H.S.



How Baseball Managers Use Math

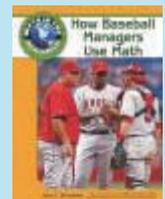
By: John C Bertoletti
and Rhea A. Stewart

Chelsea Clubhouse, 2010

ISBN: 9781604136043

Curriculum: Math; Baseball

Bottom of the ninth, bases loaded, best pitcher on the opposing mound faces what the baseball manager has mathematically calculated as the best hitter at the plate. REALLY? No doubt, every baseball managers version of "take me out to the ball



game" includes a calculator. This incredible book examines each area of a baseball manager's responsibility, describing data and calculations used, ending each chapter with sample problems. Excellent for young mathematicians and baseball fans alike.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton

South H.S.

**Bugs and Bugsicles:
Insects in the Winter**

By: Robert C. Kray

Boyd's Mills Press,
2010

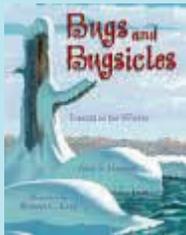
ISBN: 9781590782699

Curriculum: Insects; Wintering; Ecology

Arctic Woolly Bear Caterpillars transform into bugsicles by constructing cocoons then by using natural chemicals, freeze during the winter and thaw in the spring. Some bugs, like praying mantis, lay eggs which survive winter as adults die when temperatures drop. *Bugs and Bugsicles: Insects in the Winter* illustrates many techniques insuring insect species survival. Experiments demonstrating how water freezes and how insects naturally use antifreeze to survive provide the perfect addition to life cycle units.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton

South H.S.



Letters to a Soldier

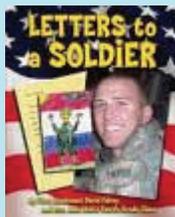
By: David Falvey

Marshall Cavendish
Children, 2009

ISBN:
9780761456377

Curriculum: Iraq War; Military; Soldiers; Letters; Children's Writing

Using student letters from fourth



graders in Roslyn, NY, First Lieutenant David Falvey has compiled a collection of his return letters to each student answering questions that children have about why the Iraqi war is being fought, what soldiers do and personal questions allowing the reader to see soldiers as people with normal lives. As an excellent classroom resource for teaching correspondence, this is a plethora of opportunities focusing on community service, current events and compassion for others.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton

South HS

**Buidling on Nature: The
Life of Antoni Gaudi**

By: Rachel Rodríguez

Illus. by: Julie Paschkis

Holt, 2009

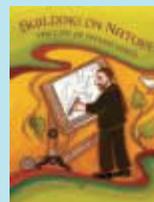
ISBN: 9780805087451

Curriculum: Gaudi, Antoni, 1852-1926; Architects Spain; Imagination

Rejecting the symmetry and straight lines of the Gothic style, Antoni Gaudi embraced a more organic approach incorporating natural elements into his projects. "He designs a gate for his friend...A dragon perches atop diamonds and squares, baring his fangs and slithery tongue." Bright gouache paintings portray Gaudi's flowing walls and winding seats embedded with mosaic tiles. The power of the imagination is paramount in this brief biography.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8



Christian the Lion

By: Anthony (Ace)
Bourke and John Rendall

Holt, 2009

ISBN: 9780805091823



Curriculum: Lions; Human-animal relationships; Bourke, Anthony; Rendall, John

Christian, a lion cub adopted by humans, 'tells' his story through the captions and photographs of his early years. His caregivers set about returning him to the wild with the help of George Adamson, responsible for rehabilitating the lioness, Elsa, of *Born Free* fame. This heartwarming story, with incredible pictures of Christian's adventures and his close bond with the humans who cared for him, will give readers a new appreciation for the majestic lion.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8

An Egret's Day

By: Jane Yolen
Wordsong, 2010

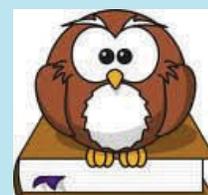
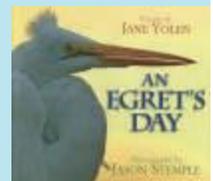
ISBN:
9781590756505

Curriculum: Poetry; Herons

"Grass stalks. Then grass walks. Look out, fish." The beautiful egret's hunting techniques, flight, preening, feathers, feet, stature, young, roosting, and sometimes tenuous relationship with humans, is captured in short, well-crafted poems paired with captivating photographs of the birds and their wetland habitats. A paragraph on facing pages provides factual information, elaborating on the poem's theme.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Fiction

The Timekeeper's Moon

By: Joni Sensel

Bloomsbury, 2010

ISBN: 9781599904573

Curriculum: Travel; Moon; Quests; Friendship; Perseverance

The moon is speaking to Ariel Farwalker. It is urging her to go on a quest to find the answer to a puzzle. She and her guardian, Scarl, start out and go to the village of Stink. Stink is an unusual town whose people live in the trees above the swamp. There they meet Sienna, a fire mage, who joins in the journey. Ariel must figure out the moon's puzzle before time runs out, or the world is in peril. They must use all of their gifts in order to succeed in time. This is the second book of the *Farwalker* series.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy



Player's Ruse

By: Hilari Bell

Harper Collins, 2010

ISBN: 9780060825096

Curriculum: Adventure; Knights; True love; Friendships

In book three of the "Knight and Rogue" novels, the adventure continues with Sir Michael and his squire, Fisk. Lady Rosamund runs away from home, and convinces the two to travel with her to find her true love, a traveling player. They go to the coast town of Huckerston where they encounter the "wreckers" or sea pirates as well as a mur-



der plot. The banter between Michael and Fisk lend to humor within the mystery story. It is good on its own, but reading the other two books first would help with the enjoyment.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

The Singing

By: Alison Croggon

Candlewick Press, 2009

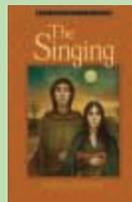
ISBN: 0763648046

Curriculum: Brothers and sisters; Supernatural; Magic; Fantasy

The story is based on the flamboyant and complex societies of Edil-Amarandh and Den Raven (ruled by the "Nameless One"). Maerad, a young and gifted Bard, must seek and find the answer to her half of "The Riddle of the Treesong." The second half lies with her brother Hem who is traveling to find her. They meet up in the Hollow Hills, try to reunite the Treesong, fail when the music goes wrong, fight off powerful Halls, and decide that they must find Afinil (a city long ago destroyed by the Nameless One). Readers will find themselves caught up in the mysteries and beauty of this magical fantasy.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell

Alumni



Boys Without Names

By: Kashmira Sheth

Balzer + Bray, 2010

ISBN: 9780061857607

Curriculum: Bombay; Sweatshops; India

11-year-old Gopal and his family leave their village and travel to the city Mumbai hoping to find work. Gopal is approached by a boy who offers him work. Gopal goes with this boy and finds himself abducted and forced into sweatshop with five other boys. Using his storytelling talents he tries to build relationship with the other boys because without their help there is no chance of escape.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA



Shakespeare Makes the Play-offs

By: Ronald Koertge

Candlewick Press, 2010



Review Crew Staff

Committee Chair:

Nancy Lucas

JFK High School

Secretary:

Sudi Stodola

TJ High School

Editor:

Chris Coble

Kepner Middle School

Reviewers:

Gretchen Allgeier

Stedman Elementary

Irene Bell

Alumni

Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

Dana Clark

Greenwood K—8

Cat DeRose

Trevista@Horace Mann

Ethel Hammerly

Spanish Reviewer

Cheri Hilton

South High School

Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA

Marilyn Martin

Park Hill Elem.

Megan McQuinn

Howell K—8

Karyn Pocerlich

Ford Elem.

Leah Rounds

Alumni

Carmen Sanjurjo

Alumni

From ERS:

Dave Sanger

Karen Shannon

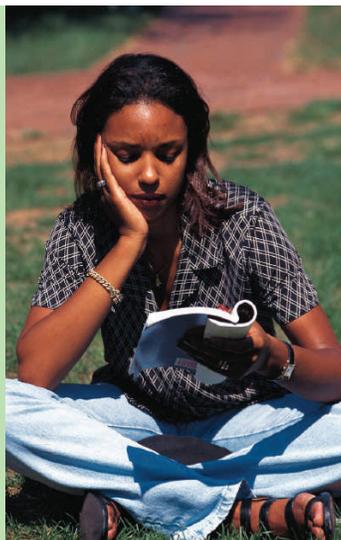
Antonio Nicotera

ISBN: 9780763644352

Curriculum: Baseball; Poetry; Friendship

Kevin's life is pretty good. He has a cute girlfriend and his team is going to the playoffs. He loves writing poetry and what is more, he is good at it. But then Kevin meets Amy at an open mic poetry reading. Now life is complicated. Mira is cute, but Amy loves poetry. This is a novel written in verse. The distinctive rhythm of *Hiawatha* by Longfellow and *The Raven* by Poe are well mimicked here.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.



Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Triceratops vs. Stegosaurus: When horns and plates collide

By: Michael O'Hearn
Capstone Press, 2010
ISBN: 9781429639385

Curriculum: Dinosaurs, Science

Readers can learn all about their favorite prehistoric beasts as they read about them battling for victory in this series, *Dinosaur Wars*. This book focuses on the triceratops and the stegosaurus. The material is covered in a similar format as watching a wrestling match on television - graphic, loud and gruesome. Each dinosaur is rated in terms of size, speed, weapons, defenses and attack style.

Reviewed by: Dana Clark
Greenwood Elem.



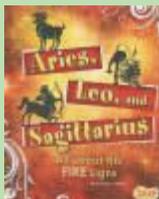
Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius

By: Jennifer Marks
Snap Books, 2010
ISBN: 9781429640145

Curriculum: Astrology; Horoscope; Zodiac

Almost everyone has looked up their horoscope at some time or another. Is there any truth to what you find there? Scientifically, there is no proof that the stars affect your personality. This book in the series, *Zodiac Fun*, highlights Aries, Leo and Sagittarius which are the fire signs. Books in this series have an appealing layout and should be popular in middle school.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.



Fiction

Escaping the Tiger

By: Laura Manivong
Harper, 2010

ISBN: 9780061661778

Curriculum: Refugees; Thailand; Laotians

It is 1982. 12-year-old Vonlai and his family escape Communist Laos by crossing the Mekong River into Thailand. The story centers on life in a Thai refugee camp. They find themselves struggling with conditions that lead to near starvation, oppressive guards, and unimaginable living conditions.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA



Finnikin of the Rock

By: Melina Marchetta
Candlewick, 2010

ISBN: 9780763643614

Curriculum: Fantasy; Adventure; Heroes

In the land of Lumatere, during the "five days of the unspeakable," the lands ran red with the blood of the innocent, many falsely accused were burned to death,



and Finnikin of the rock lost everything. Now, ten years later, Finnikin must travel with a young girl who claims she can find the heir to the throne and rescue Lumatere from its curse. This is a YA fantasy with teeth. Fantasy readers will find themselves drawn in by the storyline and unable to put this one down.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
T.J.H.S.

The Body Finder

By: Kimberly Derting
HarperCollins, 2010

ISBN: 9780061779817

Curriculum: Psychic abilities; Romance; Serial Killers; Mystery

Violet Ambrose has an unusual ability: She can sense "echoes" from murder victims and their killers. When Vi finds the body of a teenage girl in a lake, she quickly realizes that this is not the only girl who has been murdered, but the killer knows Vi is the one finding the bodies of his victims and now he's after her. Will he be caught before Violet becomes his latest victim? This mystery offers the reader a strong, balanced mix of romance, teen angst, and suspense. Readers will find themselves staying up late to read "just one more chapter."

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
T.J.H.S.

