



# The Review Crew

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

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

Volume 7 Number 9

May 2011

### Fiction

#### Perfect Square

Written and illus. by: Michael Hall

Greenwillow, 2011

ISBN: 9780061915130

*Curriculum: Squares; Math; Geometry; Imagination*

This perfect red square was perfectly happy. But as the week progressed it was cut, torn, and shredded into pieces; all to create imaginative fountains, gardens, and parks. A very simply illustrated book with a big impact; a new world is created out of just a simple, colorful square.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni



#### Roly-Poly Egg

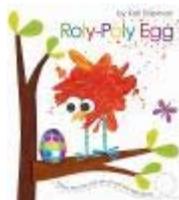
Written and illus. by: Kali Stileman

Tiger Tales, 2009

ISBN: 9781589258525

*Curriculum: Birds; Eggs; Jungle Animals*

This fun, interactive story follows Slotch, a red bird who has just laid her first spotty egg. Her excitement causes the egg to go bouncing out of the nest, where little fingers can trace its path as it bounces past other



jungle animals until it is safely back with its mother again.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds  
Alumni

#### If I Never Forever Endeavor

Written and illus by: Holly Meade

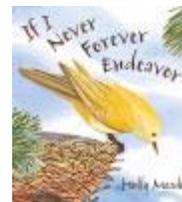
Candlewick Press, 2011

ISBN: 9780763640712

*Curriculum: Courage; Flight; Birds*

The decision to take a chance is not always easy. There may be risks and pitfalls, but there may be wonderful new opportunities as well. A young bird sits in the safety of his nest and weighs out his options - finally deciding to endeavor and leave for the first time. Success is his and he will never be the same! The message to readers is inspiring and comes across effectively through this brave little bird who takes the plunge.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocerlich  
Ford Elem.



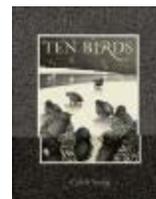
#### Ten Birds

Written and illus. by: Cybele Young

Kids Can Press, 2010

ISBN: 9781554535682

*Curriculum: Counting; Learning Disabilities*



### 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 ETLS, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

Ten birds, too small to fly, must decide how to cross a river. Each bird, named to aptly represent their skills such as "Brilliant" and "Quite Advanced", find different gadgets which they cleverly manipulate to cross. However, the last bird, "Needs Improvement", demonstrates how to work smarter, not harder.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton  
South H.S.

**I Spy with My Little Eye**

Written and illus. by:  
Edward Gibbs  
Templar, 2011



ISBN: 9780763652845

*Curriculum: Animals; Color; Preschool*

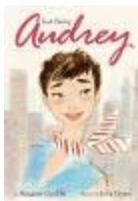
"I spy with my little eye something that is blue." A circular opening in the page shows the color of blue. Text in the speech balloon explains, "I am the biggest animal in the whole world." Turn the page to discover the blue whale. There is white for a polar bear and green for a frog, red for a fox and yellow for a lion.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin  
Park Hill Elem.

**Nonfiction**

**Just Being Audry**

By: Margaret Cardillo  
Illus by: Julia Denos  
Balzer + Bray, 2011  
ISBN: 9780061852831



*Curriculum: Audrey Hepburn*

This charming picture book offers an interesting look at Audrey Hepburn's life. Foreign born, she survived horri-

ble conditions during WWII and eventual came to America where she starred on Broadway and in films. Her later life was devoted to helping others. The illustrations and story make this a worthy purchase for read-aloud time or for preliminary background information. The message of hard work and perseverance will stay with readers regardless of their familiarity with Audrey Hepburn.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

**The Best for  
Upper  
Elementary**

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

**Nonfiction**

**Birds of a Feather**

By: Jane Yolen  
Illus. by: Jason Stemple  
Wordsong, 2011



ISBN: 9781590788301

*Curriculum: Birds; Poetry*

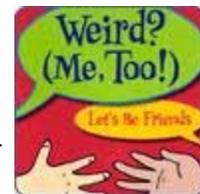
"Hey, girl, fish lover, Sitting on the dead gray tree, Love the blue Mohawk." Varied odes to feathered friends are paired with intimate photos of winged wonders, from the "regal eagle" to the Marbled Godwit, in this talented duo's latest collaboration. Facts about each bird are nestled in small plates within the photos

facing the poems. This beautiful book combines poetry, photography and scientific fact to great effect.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8

**Weird? (Me, Too!):  
Let's Be Friends**

By: Sara Holbrook  
Illus. by: Karen Sandstrom



Wordsong, 2010

ISBN: 9781590788219

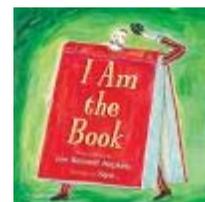
*Curriculum: Friendship; American poetry; Poetry technique*

"Such a private conversation that words would interfere. We reach out and grasp what no one else can hear." The ups and downs, the intimacy and trials, the joys and sorrows of friendship are captured in over three dozen clever poems. Added creative writing suggestions make this a unique, inspirational choice.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8

**I am the Book**

Edited By: Lee Bennett Hopkins  
Illus. by: Yayo  
Holiday House, 2011



ISBN: 9780823421190

*Curriculum: Books - poetry; Books and reading poetry*

Thirteen poets offer a whimsical, inspired look at the pleasure of reading. "Mind-thrilling/spine-tingling" books are friends that guide us to mysterious and dazzling worlds. Quirky acrylic illustrations accompany the poems and offer an imaginative backdrop to each entry. This is an excellent volume to share with the whole family.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier  
Stedman Elem.

**Celebritrees: Historic & Famous Trees of the World**

By: Margi Preus

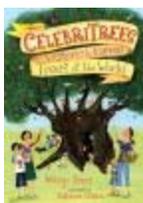
Illus. by: Rebecca Gibbon

Henry Holt, 2010

ISBN: 9780805078299

Famous trees in this book range from less than 50 to over 4,800 years old. Each tree has a fascinating history; the Methuselah Bristlecone Pine was 200 years old when the Great Sphinx was built, inside the Boab Prison Tree ten Aboriginal prisoners were held, and young trees all over the world once traveled to the moon as seeds. These truly are *Celebritrees!*

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier  
Stedman Elem.



**Joe Mauer**

By: Sarah Tieck

Abdo, 2011

ISBN: 9781617147050

*Curriculum: Joe Mauer; Baseball players*

For such a young player, Joe Mauer has already made quite a name for himself in the baseball world. Fans and readers will enjoy getting to know about the player and the man as well. The *Big Buddy Biography* series presents more than 40 popular athletes and stars that will be of great interest to readers. Informative and with an appealing layout, this series will be sure to draw some new readers into the frequently overlooked genre of biographies.



Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich  
Ford Elem.

**Peaceful Pieces**

By: Anna Grossnickle Hines

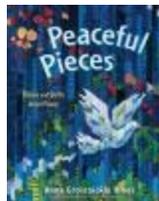
Henry Holt, 2011

ISBN: 9780805089967

*Curriculum: Peace; Quilts*

The author is a member of a writing group which chose to write a poem a day about a specific subject. Anna Hines chose peace as a theme. In addition she chose to use various quilting techniques as illustrations for each poem. The quilts themselves are stunning accompaniments as Hines describes peace at home, worldwide, and within oneself.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin  
Park Hill Elem.



**Middle School  
Reader Gold Mine**

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

**Fiction**

**Paradise Red**

By: K.M. Grant

Bloomsbury, 2010

ISBN: 9780802796967

*Curriculum: France; Religion; Rebellion; Love*



This is the third book in the Perfect Fire trilogy. Yolanda and Raimon continue to try to recover and protect the Blue Flame, to keep it out of the hands of the evil White Wolf. There is still war in the Occitan as France continues to invade. Through the war and the death of many, Yolanda and Raimon do what they can to help their people and be reunited. This story is based on historical fact and readers will find a satisfying conclusion.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

**Children of the Lost**

By: David Whitley

Roaring Book Press, 2011

ISBN: 9781596436145

*Curriculum: Friendship; Secrets; Nightmares*

The second book in the trilogy starts where book one ended. Mark and Lily find themselves lost in a forest, tired and hungry. They are rescued by the residents of a "harmonious" village, but there are evil forces at work. They take the form of the Nightmare that lives in the forest and invades dreams. Mark and Lily must work together to find the Children of the Lost. Things don't go as planned when Mark and Lily are separated by forces beyond their control.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy



**90 miles to Havana**

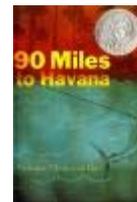
By: Enrique Flores-Galbis

Roaring Book Press, 2010

ISBN: 9781596431683

*Curriculum: Refugees; Refugee camps; Historical fiction*

After Castro takes over Cuba, nine-year-old Julian and his two brothers

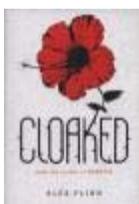


are sent away from the island via operation "Pedro Pan," a camp in Miami for exiled Cuban children. Unfortunately one of the boys designated as a leader is the camp is a ruthless bully. Julian's brothers are sent to an orphanage in Denver after they try to protect themselves from the bully. Julian escapes from the camp and meets another Cuban exile who is planning a daring mission to Cuba to extract more people. Julian decides to team up with him to get his own parents out of Cuba.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA

**Cloaked**

By: Alex Flinn  
Harper Teen, 2011  
ISBN: 9780060874230  
*Curriculum: Magic; Shoes; Family*



Everyone knows that there is no such thing as magic, or witches. Johnny is sure that he knows that too. At least until the princess of Aloria asks him to find her brother who has been turned into a frog. Since she is a beautiful princess, he agrees to help her, even though he still doesn't believe in magic.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

**Sugar and Ice**

By: Kate Messner  
Walker & Co., 2010  
ISBN: 9780802720818  
*Curriculum: Ice skating; Self-confidence; Competition*



Claire loves to ice skate, and she is very good. At the spring Maple Festival a scout from Lake Placid sees Claire skate and offers her a scholar-

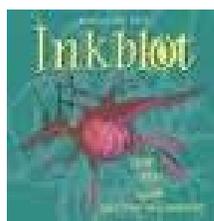
ship to skate in Lake Placid and to train with an Olympic coach. The world of skating in Lake Placid is far different from skating on the cow pond and the people who skate there are not always nice. (Great book, unfortunate cover!)

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

**Nonfiction**

**Inkblot : Drip, Splat, and Squish Your Way to Creativity**

Written and Illus. by Margaret Peot  
Boyd's Mills Press, 2011  
ISBN: 9781590787205



*Curriculum: Art; Painting technique; Creativity*

Fearsome faces, curious creatures, lush landscapes, incredible insects- there is no end to what the willing eye can spy in an inkblot. Imagination will take flight and artistic juices flow with the clear instructions, techniques, tips, materials lists, and copious examples in this creative offering. Though written on a middle school level, even young artists can find inspiration here.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose  
Trevista ECE-8

**Using Your Research: Your Family Tree**

By: Jim Ollhoff  
ABDO Publishing Co., 2011  
ISBN: 9781616134655



*Curriculum: Genealogy; Research Skills*  
Using varied resources one can find details of their family's past. In

searching for information efficiently and precisely one can look to the past and know from whence they came. Templates, recommended resources and tips for making the most of research to aid in growing your family tree are provided.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton  
South H.S.

**Young Adults Deserve the Best!**

**Fiction**

**Subway Girl**

By: P.J. Converse  
HarperTeen, 2011  
ISBN: 9780061575143



*Curriculum: Hong Kong; Friendship; China; Conduct of life*

Set in Hong Kong, Simon finds the courage to approach the aloof Amy (Subway Girl). Amy does not speak Chinese. Simon is failing English. They manage to communicate and form a bond that both desperately need amid their separate crises. The author lived in Hong Kong for an extended period of time making the cultural aspects of this book very interesting. Both Amy and Simon's characterization, actions, and dialogue are authentic. Date rape and

teen pregnancy make this book appropriate for older teens.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

### Prisoners in the Palace

By: Michaela MacColl  
Chronicle Books, 2010  
ISBN: 9780811873000

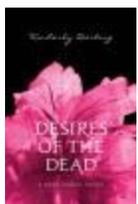


*Curriculum: Orphans; Queen Victoria; Historical fiction*  
Liza is preparing to make her debut into London society when her parents are tragically killed in a carriage accident. Now she is penniless and needs to find a job. Not having any skills and destitute she is lucky to land a job as a lady's maid for Princess Victoria. Liza discovers that the princess is kept isolated and is controlled by her mother and Sir John Conroy. Knowing that they both would like Victoria's mother to rule through a regency, Liza decides to battle them both by combating the rumors they spread about the princesses' incompetency.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley  
MSLA

### Desires of the Dead

By: Kimberly Derting  
HaperCollins 2011  
ISBN: 9780061779848



*Curriculum: Mystery; Psychics; Romance*

In the sequel to *The Body Finder*, Violet once again finds herself on the trail of a killer. This time, however, it may be someone closer than she thinks, and there is an FBI consultant who would like to ask her a few questions. With the romance from book one solidified, this book stays focused on the mystery and is

an even better read than the first.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola  
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

### A Touch Mortal

By: Leah Clifford  
GreenWillow 2011  
ISBN: 9780062004994



*Curriculum: Paranormal Romance; Angels; Suicide; Afterlife*

When Eden meets Az and Gabe on the beach, the last thing she is expecting is a romance that will take her breath, and her life, away. Eden is a "Sider," but she is unlike others who have taken their lives, she has a special ability and there are those who would destroy her to use it as a weapon for their side in the battle of good against evil.

Sudi Stodola  
Thomas Jefferson H.S.

## Series Books

### Fact Finders



By: Various authors  
3rd and up  
Readers investigate current issues and how they affect us.

### The Looking Glass Wars



By Frank Beddor  
YA  
This fantasy/sci-fi twist on *The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland* is a wholly satisfying adventure that readers will swallow whole and beg for more.

## Review Crew Staff

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Nancy Lucas  
JFK High School

### Secretary:

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TJ High School

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Park Hill Elementary

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Leah Rounds  
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### From ETLs:

Dave Sanger  
Karen Shannon  
Antonio Nicotera

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