

The Review Crew



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 10 Number 3

November 2013

Fiction

Pick a Circle, Gather a Square: a Fall Harvest of Shapes

By: Felicia Sanzari Chernesky

Illus. by: Susan Swan

Albert Whitman, 2013

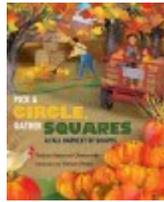
ISBN: 9780807565384

Curriculum: Shapes; Farm life; Autumn

As a father and his two children travel to a farm for pumpkin picking, they notice the colorful shapes around them, including the golden circles of the sun and apples, cubes of hay, and the rectangles of the red barn doors. Warm autumn tones fill the collage illustrations in this combination fall and shape book that works perfectly with the rhyming text.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8



fects. "Smacky smack," "Licky lick," and "Pouncy pounce" accompany his kittenish activities. At the end he yawns and nods and snoozes, but blasts awake when a ball of red yarn appears - "Looky look!" Cat lovers will enjoy the bold color illustrations on the white pages, as well as the feline antics.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8

Yum Yum

By: Francesca Simon

Illus. by: Emily Bolam

Orion Children's Books, 2011

ISBN: 9781444002003

Curriculum: Animals; Friendship; Envy

In this humorous tale, Lola the cat is bored with her gourmet food and goes in search of something better. After conversing with all the other cats and dogs in the neighborhood about their dinner choices, she settles on scraps in a trash can. At the end of the book, children are asked a series of questions to check for understanding of the story. This is an excellent early reader for Kindergarten through 2nd grade.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer

Green Valley Elem.



Thumpy Feet

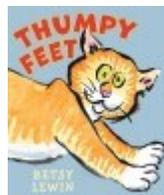
Written and illus. by: Betsy Lewin

Holiday House, 2013

ISBN: 9780823429011

Curriculum: Cats

A silly orange tabby cat gallops through his day, embellished by descriptive sound ef-



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.)

My Blue is Happy

By: Jessica Young

Illus. by: Catia Chien

Candlewick Press, 2013

ISBN: 9780763651251

Curriculum: Colors; Emotions

This beautifully illustrated picture book portrays colors with poetry and emotion that is different for every person. Gray is "cold like the sky before a storm" or "cozy as a curled up kitten" or the "sound of soft rain on the roof." Red is a "dragon's burning breath," or "brave as a fire truck." And all these emotions are validated in a young girl's mind.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer

Green Valley Elem.



Where is Fred?

By: Edward Hardy

Illus. By: Ali Pye

Egmont, 2012

ISBN:

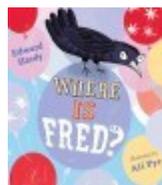
9781405254038

Curriculum: Hiding

Fred is a lovely, fluffy, white caterpillar. Gerald is a big, black crow. Gerald would very much like to have Fred as a snack but Fred is very clever at hiding. He can hide in a bit of dandelion fluff and he can hide in a cloud or in the froth on the top of cup of milk. Young readers will love finding Fred in all of his multiple, clever hiding places. Gerald, who isn't too bright, will add a touch of humor.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

CEC Middle College



What Am I? Where Am I?

Written and illus. by:
Ted Lewin

Holiday House, 2013

ISBN:

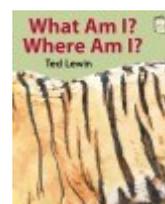
9780823428564

Curriculum: Wild animals; Habitats; Look-and-find

What animal is hiding in there? And where does it live? A lion lives in the grassland, a reindeer lives in the tundra, and a camel lives in the desert. Read along and play the game to discover animals in their habitats.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



Empty Fridge

Written and illus. by:

Gaetan Doremus

Wilkins Farago, 2009

ISBN: 9780987109934

Curriculum: Neighbors; Sharing

After a busy day of chatting, biking, and playing music, the occupants of one apartment building discover they have forgotten to shop and now have nothing to eat. One occupant decides to share his three carrots with whatever his neighbor can add. Soon he is going from apartment to apartment asking each neighbor to contribute ingredients until finally there are enough fixings to make a quiche for all to share. This contemporary *Stone Soup* provides a wonderful lesson on the benefits of sharing.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

TJ H.S.



Nonfiction

Backyard Wildlife:

Spiders

By: Megan Borgert-Spaniol

Bellwether Media,

2014

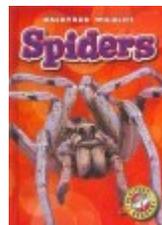
ISBN: 97805312847

Curriculum: Spiders; Insect characteristics and behavior

One in a series, *Backyard Wildlife*, this book focuses on the characteristics and behaviors of spiders. Brilliant photographs help to highlight the simple facts on each page. This series is an ideal addition to an animal research unit with young students.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



"Reader's Bill of Rights"

1. The right to not read
2. The right to skip pages
3. The right to not finish
4. The right to reread
5. The right to read anything
6. The right to escapism
7. The right to read anywhere
8. The right to browse
9. The right to read out loud
10. The right to not defend your tastes"
— Daniel Pennac



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

One + One = Blue

By: MJ Auch

Henry Holt, 2013

ISBN:

9780805094053

Curriculum: Synesthesia; Friendships; Mothers and sons

Entering sixth grade after a life of homeschooling, Basil is resigned to being a friendless freak until a strange new girl, Tenzie, shows up. She shares the same condition that he has, seeing numbers as colors, and they form a relationship that is threatened when Basil's long lost mother shows up and tempts them to leave town to follow her. Their friendship survives and thrives in this coming-of-age story.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8



Maude

By: Lauren Child

Illus. by Trisha Krauss

Candlewick Press, 2012

ISBN: 9780763665159

Curriculum: Family life; Shyness

The Shrimptons love to be noticed. From mom with her elaborate peacock hat to the youngest son who is quite funny, especially to himself. Shy Maude, however, blends into the background. She doesn't stand out, draw attention to herself, or do anything especially well. And that is just how she likes it. When the Shrimptons come face to face with a hungry tiger, Maude's meek demeanor is suddenly an advantage. Filled with dark humor and lively illustrations, students will enjoy this story with a heroine that is as unassuming as Maude.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

TJ H.S.



Grumbles from the forest : fairy-tale voices with a twist : poems

By: Jane Yolen and Rebecca Kai Dotlich

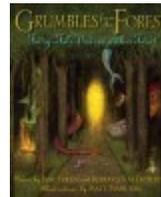
Illus. by: Matt Mahurn

WordSong, 2013

ISBN: 9781590788677

Curriculum: Fairytale poetry; Poetry

Fifteen traditional fairy tales (e.g. Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Rumpelstiltskin) are retold in various poetic forms (free verse, haiku, cinquain) from the perspectives of different characters. The princess sets the record straight - it wasn't



the pea that kept her awake; it was too many mattresses! And the pea laments that he misses his pod siblings. Notes briefly summarizing the original tales add substance. The artwork is scrumptious.

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

Nonfiction

Stanley Hotel

By: Denny Von Finn

Bellweather Media, 2014

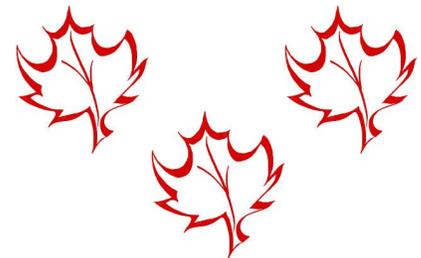
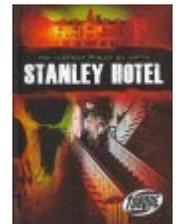
ISBN: 9780531290552

Curriculum: Stanley Hotel; Estes Park, CO; Haunted hotels; Ghosts

The Stanley Hotel is most famous for its role in Stephen King's *The Shining*, but its spooky reputation extends past the novel and movie. Many claim to have heard children playing or footsteps in the night. Some have seen lights flicker on and off. Also included are brief histories of the Stanley Hotel and its builder, F.O. Stanley. Reservations are being taken for those wishing to experience the scary Stanley Hotel for themselves! This title should be popular among 3rd-5th grade spooky story fans. Whether skeptic or believer, this book will be a hit.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK H.S.





Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Fiction

Zero Tolerance

By: Claudia Mills

Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013

ISBN: 9780374333126

Curriculum: *Rules; Zero tolerance; Relationships*

Sierra is the perfect student. She is an honor student, a student leader, and has never been in trouble. When she accidentally brings a paring knife to school by picking up her mother's lunch by mistake, her perfect world is turned upside down. Due to the zero tolerance policy, the principal suspends her and starts the legal process for expulsion. Everyone becomes involved including her lawyer father, the school board, the media, and the other students. This is a good "out of the news" story that should provoke discussions.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy



Wednesdays in the Tower

By: Jessica Day George

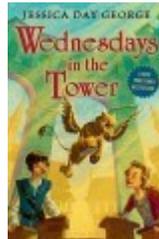
Bloomsbury, 2013

ISBN: 9781599906454

Curriculum: *Castles; Griffins; Magic; Princesses; Secrets*

This is the second book in the *Tuesdays in the Castle*. Princess Celie lives in a castle that is forever creating new rooms, moving them, or making them disappear. When Celie discovers a new staircase, she finds a tower with a large, orange egg. The castle wants Celie to take care of the egg, and she watches it hatch into a griffin. The castle only wants a select few to know about the griffin, and begins leading them to discover secrets regarding the history of the castle and the relationship with the griffins. It is helpful to read the first book, and the ending will have the reader waiting for the third.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy



Tallstars Revenge

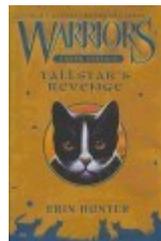
By: Erin Hunter

Harper, 2013

ISBN: 9780062218049

Curriculum: *Cats; Fantasy*

This epic edition (503 pages) relates the hero's journey of the famous head of the WindClan from mewling Talkit to Tallpaw, the apprentice tunneler, to Talltail, the warrior (bent on revenge for the death of his father), - and finally as Tallstar the revered leader. Fast paced and full of action, the novel does not require any prior knowledge of the Warrior series. Character chart and maps are included.



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

Nonfiction

Rollercoasters: From Concept to Consumer

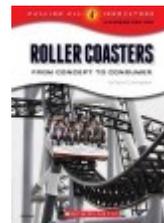
By: Kevin Cunningham
Children's Press, 2014

ISBN: 9780531220092

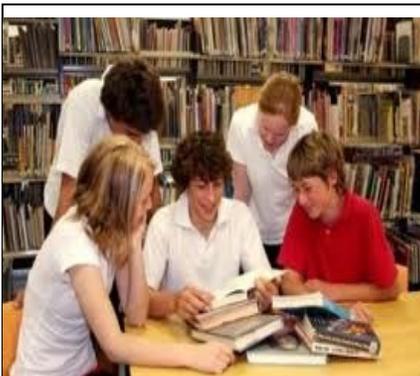
Curriculum: *Roller coasters; Engineering; Career information*

This book highlights the evolution of the roller coaster. From their early wood days to today's incredibly advanced gigacoasters, people with imagination and knowledge of physics and engineering keep finding ways to make coasters more extreme yet safe and fun. Also provided are details on education, background, and skills one needs to become a roller coaster engineer. Terrific photographs show various famous coasters from around the world. MS/HS students will enjoy the history of coasters and the insight into what it takes to become a coaster creator.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.



**"It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it."
— Oscar Wilde**



Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Fiction

Gorgeous

By: Paul Rudnick
Scholastic, 2013
ISBN:
9780545464260



*Curriculum: Identity;
Beauty; Self-esteem;
Princesses; Princes*

When her mom dies, Becky, 18, discovers a mysterious phone number. With one call she is on her way to NY where famous designer, Tom Kelly, promises to transform her from ordinary, small-town girl to the most beautiful woman in the world...with one condition. She must fall in love and marry in one year. Becky accepts and becomes the gorgeous Rebecca. But with fame, luxury, and privilege, can Rebecca remain Becky inside, and is Becky worthy of the love professed for Rebecca? Part fairy tale and part *My Fair Lady*, Becky's personal journey reminds readers to value

life and stay true to oneself. Recommend to fans of Meg Cabot.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

The Boyfriend App

By: Katie Sise
Balzer + Bray, 2013
ISBN: 9780062195265

*Curriculum: High school;
Dating; Technology*



Audrey is a geek extraordinaire. When the popular phone company offers a \$20,000 scholarship for the most innovative new app, she is pretty sure she can come up with something. And since her father's death, there is no money for her to go to college any other way. Audrey creates the Boyfriend App, an app that tells a girl when her best choice of boyfriend is nearby. The app sails off the charts with popularity but then the problems start. The story is filled with mean girls, hot boys and geekiness beyond belief.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Middle College

**"Books are the
ultimate Dumpees:
put them down
and they'll wait
for you forever;
pay attention to
them and they al-
ways love you
back."
— John Green**

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