

The Review Crew

Early Elementary Fiction

My Superhero

By: Chris Owen

Illus. by: Moira Court

Fremantle Press, 2015

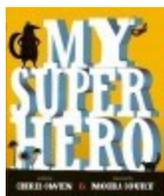
ISBN: 9781921888977

Curriculum: Superheroes;

Animals; Family

Superheroes come in many sizes and shapes in this display showing the powers of the animal kingdom. Mountain goats leap obstacles in a single bound, cheetahs race around the world to fight crime, and eagles use their amazing vision to fly faster than jets, but this story is really about a young numbat comparing his father to each powerful animal. Pages with flaps open to reveal the father's amazing parenting skills. Illustrations in muted colors, rhyming text, and onomatopoeia add to the richness of this sweet story of love. This is a great book for read aloud time and features additional animal facts in the back.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni



The Stone Lion

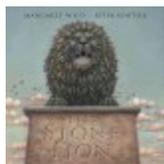
By: Margaret Wild

Illus. by: Ritva Voutila

Little Hare Books, 2014

Curriculum: Empathy; Fairy tales; Talking animals

Only the fervent wish of a generous heart can bring a stone animal to life, and then just briefly. Seemingly forever a stone lion has crouched near some library steps, longing to prowl and pounce. One snowy night the lion



learns that by morning two homeless orphans will be as silent and frigid as he. A spark of pity ignites his heart and he finds himself able to move. In minutes his life will be spent—but how? Margaret Wild elegantly relates a modern fairy tale reminiscent of Faithful John and Iron Hans. Voutila's striking full-page illustrations will make it easy for young children to retell the story by reading the pictures.

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.

Eat, Leo, Eat!

By: Caroline Adderson

Illus. by: Josee Bisailon

Kids Can Press, 2015

Curriculum: Italian culture; Cooking; Extended families

Poor Leo doesn't care for dinner at grandma's house. Although he finds his extended family simpatico, pasta leaves him feeling flat. Grandmas are wise, and soon this Nonna is spicing up each meal with the adventures of a boy and his pasta. Stelle, chiancaredde, farfalle--stars, paving stones, butterflies—each takes the stage. Bite by bite Leo's appetite succumbs to Grandma's delectable tales. Any pasta epic must include an encounter with occhi di lupo--wolves' eyes. How does our young hero escape? Only spaghetti and his own quick wits can save him! Bisailon's striking collage illustrations are full of detail and fun surprises. Note the Italian glossary. Buon appetito!

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.



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

Volume 12 Number 3

November 2015

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.)

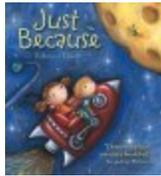
Just Because

Written and Illus. by:
Rebecca Elliott
Lion Children's Books,
2014

ISBN:
9780745964607

Curriculum: Love; Siblings; Disabilities
Clemmie's younger brother relays the experiences he shares with his older disabled sister. He loves her unconditionally "just because." This is an endearing story with which many children will identify—the love for their siblings.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
South H.S.



The Pet Itch

By: Elli Woollard
Illus. by: Elina Ellis
Maverick Arts, 2013
ISBN:9781848861077

Curriculum: Families; Pets
Mossy the Monster dreams of having his very own pesty pet Itch. One with a horrible growl would be perfect he thinks! His granny, aunty, sister, and uncle dissuade him by arguing that he's too young to take care of a pet. When sister comes around to Mossy's point of view, she devises a plan to trick the grown-ups into taking care of the pet Itch. Comical illustrations will appeal to young children. This is a situation that most P-2 kids find themselves able to relate to.

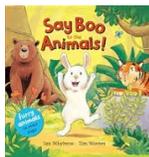
Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.



Say Boo to the Animals

By: Ian Whybrow
Illus. by: Tim Warnes
MacMillan Children's
Book, 2012
ISBN:9780230757462

Curriculum: Courage; Tactile books
In this touch and feel book, baby bunny romps through the woods, meeting successively bigger, and scarier animals. Along the way, she encourages



readers to be brave by saying "boo" to each animal they encounter. Recommended for ECE classrooms, this book could help young readers face their fears.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.

Who Eats First

By: Ae-hae Yoon
Illus. by: Hae-won Yang
Tan Tan Publishing,
2015

ISBN: 9781939248008
Curriculum: Animals; Math; Comparing; Ordering; Friendship

The animals find a juicy, ripe peach. They must decide who will take the first bite. Giraffe believes the tallest should go first, and they learn how to measure. Then maybe the heaviest should go first, then perhaps the one with the biggest mouth. When caterpillar suggests they should be ordered from smallest to largest, she should go first. This is a clever book to introduce measuring, comparing and ordering.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

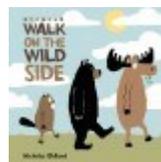


Upper Elementary Fiction

Walk on the Wild Side

Written and Illus. by:
Nicholas Oldland
Kids Can Press, 2015
ISBN: 9781771381093

Curriculum: Friends; Adventure; Working together; Helping
Beaver, Bear and Moose are friends and enjoy adventures. One day, they decide to climb a mountain. To make it more exciting, they want to make it a race to the top. Moose is in the lead when a boulder comes down the



path toward him. He jumps out of the way, over the side of the mountain and into a tree. Bear comes along, and tries to help, but he winds up in the tree as well. Beaver hears their cries for help, chews down a tree and makes a ladder. They decide by slowing down the pace and working together, it is a much more enjoyable climb.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Upper Elementary Nonfiction

Queen of the Diamond: the Lizzie Murphy Story

Written and illus. by:
Emily Arnold McCully
Farrar Straus Giroux,
2015

Curriculum: Baseball; Biography; Women's issues

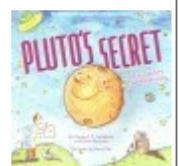
Lizzie Murphy played men's professional baseball from 1918 to 1935. In McCully's account chutzpah and hustle mark Lizzie's play. Early on she convinces her brother's team to let her serve as batboy. Seeing her throw, field, and hit, they move her to first base. As a pro, Lizzie competes with baseball's top men, leveraging her ability and star power to earn equal pay. McCully's prose reads like an announcer's play-by-play. Detailed and historically-accurate watercolors illustrate Lizzie's days on and off the field.

Reviewed by: Nick Bleckley
Cheltenham Elem.



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

By: Margaret A.
Weitekamp and David
DeVorkin
Illus. by: Diane Kidd



Abrams, 2012
 ISBN: 9781419704239
 Curriculum: Planets, Astronomy, Space
 Published in association with the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, *Pluto's Secret* chronicles the discovery and study of Pluto from 1930 until 2006. Cartoon Pluto giggles as he reveals the differences between himself and other planets. This humorous story teaches readers the criteria for planets and why Pluto was declassified as one in 2006. A nice addition to any school library or 3rd - 5th grade classroom.

Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
 Carson Elem.

Middle School Fiction

Anywhere But Paradise

By: Anne Bustard
 Egmont Publishing, 2015
 ISBN: 9781606845851
 Curriculum: *Relocation; Bullying; Growing Up*



The year is 1960. When her father gets a new job in Hawaii, 12-year-old Texan Peggy Sue has to move with her family and make a big adjustment to a new life. Life is not easy for this girl, whose beloved cat Howdy is stuck in animal quarantine. She misses her friends and, to make matters worse, an 8th grade Hawaiian bully is threatening her. Peggy Sue finds solace in her new friend Malina, her hula dance lessons, and her sewing abilities (which she uses to create dresses to earn spending money). When a hurricane hits the island, Peggy Sue must be brave and

stay optimistic about the future. Find out how things turn out.
 Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer
 South H.S.

The Fire Artist

By: Daisy Whitney
 Bloomsbury, 2014
 ISBN: 9781619631328
 Curriculum: *Magic; Fire; Wishes; Love; Family*



Aria is a fire artist. In her world, she is a much sought after performer. Those in this society that can manipulate wind, water and fire receive contracts to perform for thousands of dollars. Her power, however, has a drawback. When her reserves run low, she must steal her fire from lighting storms, which breaks one of the many rules in existence. Aria begins to look for a granter, who has the power to fulfill wishes but always with a price. She must decide if she wants the power enough to pay the price. As she gets to know Taj, the granter, she falls in love with him. Aria begins to think she will wish for his freedom instead, even though it will mean her own enslavement.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
 Place Bridge Academy

The Forbidden Stone

By: Tony Abbott
 Katherine Tegen, 2014
 ISBN: 9780062194473
 Curriculum: *Mystery; Family; Clues; Copernicus; Treasure*

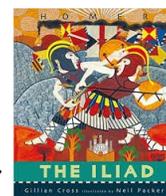


This is the first book in a new series, "The Copernicus Legacy." Wade Kaplan gets an unusual mes-

sage with a star chart from his uncle. Soon after, they find out that his uncle was killed under mysterious circumstances. His dad, Roald, and three friends travel to Germany to go to the funeral. Uncle Henry leaves them a mysterious message with clues to find a magical relic. The friends along with Roald Kaplan, wind up traveling all over the world trying to solve the mystery, with a group of bad guys on their tail. The kids use science, math and Copernicus' theories to solve the riddle.
 Reviewed by: Karen Burns
 Place Bridge Academy

The Iliad

By: Gillian Cross.
 Illus. by: Neil Packer.
 Candlewick, 2015
 ISBN: 9780763678326
 Curriculum: *Trojan War; Greek Mythology*



The lyrical prose and captivating illustrations in this book vividly brings to life the classic tale of The Illiad for young readers. Divided into 18 chapters, this book retells the story of the tragic war between the Trojans and the Greeks. It begins with an illustration of two men in battle gear quarreling. The facing page is a brief text introduction. One is immediately drawn in by the beautiful paper of the pages, accompanying graphics and illustrations reminiscent of ancient Greek art. This common interaction between text and illustrations is carried out throughout the book and keeps readers wanting more. It is an epic story book for all ages. Intended for readers 8-12 years old this book actually will appeal to many. A Greek alphabet and epilogue are included.

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez
 North H.S.



The Sword of Summer

By: Rick Riordan
Hyperion, 2015
ISBN: 9781423160915

Curriculum: Norse mythology; Quest; Family
Magnus has been living on the streets for two years, since the death of his mother. On his sixteenth birthday he hears from some of the other homeless that people are looking for him. They show him the flier a man and girl, allegedly his uncle and cousin, are passing out. Time to run! Time to hide! (And by the way, Magnus' cousin's name is Annabeth Chase - ring any bells?) This is the first book in a new series.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College



High School Fiction

Raining Fire

Written by: Alan Gibbons
Orion Books, 2014
ISBN: 9781780621272

Curriculum: Gangs; Guns
Ethan and his brother Alex are growing up in the projects in northern England where it's expected that boys join one of the local gangs. Ethan is trying to use soccer as a way out of this lifestyle, and Alex also wants to free himself when a feud between rival gangs pulls them in. Both boys are wounded and Ethan must make life-changing decisions about revenge and overcoming peer pressure. The action is tense and fast-paced with dialogue that is emotional and realistic. Loyalty, friendship, and family are powerful themes in this story about the culture of guns.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Alumni

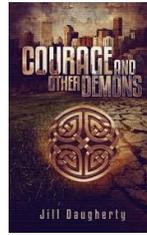


Courage and Other Demons

By: Jill Daugherty
Open Mike Publishing, 2013

ISBN: 9780988728400
Curriculum: Fairies; Folklore; Teen Relationships
Maggie O'Neill views herself as a typical Denver high schooler, until transfer student, Simon, shows up at her door with a story about her being responsible for saving the human race! In an old Celtic prophecy, a girl with her name is destined to save mankind from evil faeries who want to take over the world and kill the human race. With his faerie powers of persuasion, Simon convinces Maggie to head to Ireland for the fight of her life. The first in a trilogy. Students will enjoy the references to Denver landmarks. Warning: Mature Content.

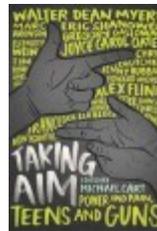
Reviewed by: Denise Cushing
Carson Elem.



Taking Aim: Power and Pain, Teens and Guns

By Michael Cart
Harper Teen, 2015
ISBN: 9780062327352

Curriculum: Gun Violence; School Violence; Current Events; Contemporary Literature
Taking Aim is a timely collection of short stories by sixteen authors that explores the impact of guns, teens, and violence in America. The book opens with an introduction by Michael Cart and a prologue that explores the *Culture of Guns* in society today. *Love Packs Heat* by Eric Shanower is a standout as the only graphic novel. In it Eros, the Greek God of Love, is confused and disheartened when his infamous weapon of choice, the bow and arrow, is replaced. In *The Bodyguard: A Fable* by Ron Koertge, the hunters become the hunted. And in *The Dragon*



by Francesca Lia Block a teacher is torn regarding the law to carry a weapon when in the classroom. A book of varying insights and perspectives, *Taking Aim* does not provide any answers to this heated debate but is likely to raise many thoughtful questions and discussions.

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez
North H.S.

I'll Meet You There

By: Heather Demetrios
Henry Holt and Co., 2015

ISBN: 9780806097965
Curriculum: War; Disabilities; Family; Friendship

Skylar lives in the small, hot town of Creek View in Northern California. She can't wait to go to college in San Francisco on an art scholarship. Josh is on medical leave from the Marines where he loses his leg and his best friend. The novel takes a hard look at what war really costs in the way of human suffering. There is humor, anger and hope rolled up to make a memorable young adult novel. This will be best in high school.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
CEC Early College



Autumn Fires
Robert Louis Stevenson

In the other gardens
And all up the vale,
From the autumn bonfires
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over
And all the summer flowers,
The red fire blazes,
The gray smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!

High School Nonfiction

Battle of the Bulge

By: Rick Atkinson
Henry Holt and Company, 2015

ISBN:

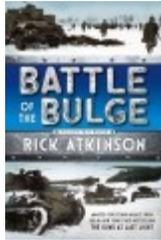
9781627791137

Curriculum: World War II; Famous battles; Ardennes, France

In a desperate bid to drive a wedge between Allied armies, German Führer Adolf Hitler initiated a surprise attack on American forces on December 16, 1944. The German army needed a victory in order to break the Allies' advance and put an end to the war. Unprepared for the crushing force of two panzer armies, the Allied forces lost ground and many lives. Determination, courage, and luck allowed them to rally and push the German army back. The bloody battle lasted six weeks and came to be known as the deadliest, most decisive battle in American military history. Atkinson's account, though a difficult read at times, provides a fascinating perspective on a pivotal battle in this YA adaptation of *The Guns At Last Light*.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

Thomas Jefferson H.S.



With no resistance from Denmark's leaders, it became a 'protectorate' of Germany. For one group of teenage boys, their country's action were an embarrassment. The boys formed a club committed to fighting the Germans. Named after the British Prime Minister, The Churchill Club committed countless act of sabotage from cutting communication wires and changing directional signs to arson and theft of weapons. The boys were eventually caught and imprisoned. But their exploits inspired their country and a full-blown insurgency was ignited.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

Thomas Jefferson H.S.

Hitler's Last Days

By: Bill O'Reilly

Henry Holt, 2015

ISBN: 9781627793964

Curriculum: Hitler; World War II

Here is a chilling look at the last days of Hitler and the army that was intended to cleanse the world of undesirables. The writer, through the use of photographs and maps, takes readers inside the bunker where Hitler spent his final days as well as through the bitter fields where battles were fought. The carnage was great both on the battle fields and in the camps. Through the use of pictures the story of Hitler's insanity and the lack of human compassion are clearly denoted. While this book is not difficult to read, it will be best in high school due to the alarming content.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

CEC Early College



The Boys Who Challenged Hitler

By: Phillip Hoose

Farrar Straus Giroux,
2015

ISBN:

9780374300227

Curriculum: Denmark; Resistance movements; World War II

In April 1940, the German Army threatened to invade Denmark.



Review Crew Staff

Committee Chair:

Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

Michelle Jensen

TJ/GW High School

Secretary:

Peggy Obert

Alumni

Editor:

Chris Coble

CEC Early College

Reviewers:

Nick Bleckley

Cheltenham Elem.

Denise Cushing

Carson Elem.

Jutta Gebauer

South High School

Emily Hungerford

Barnum Elem

Sarah Martinez

North High School

From ETLs:

Karen Shannon

Antonio Nicotera

Sudi Stodola