



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 5 Number 2

October 2008

Fiction

Winnie's Midnight Dragon

By: Valerie Thomas

Illus. by: Korky Paul

HarperCollins, 2006

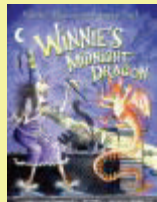
ISBN: 9780061173141

Curriculum: Families; Problem-solving

Appearing one night the baby dragon and his flames create havoc in Winnie the Witch's house. Using her wand Winnie tries different ways to solve the problem of the energetic little dragon. Not giving up, she finally reunites baby with mother. Well-written humorous story with appealing illustrations.

Reviewed by: Megan McQuinn

Howell K-8



Silly Lilly and the Four Seasons

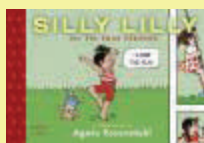
By: Agnes Rosenstiehl

Raw Junior, 2008

ISBN: 9780979923814

Curriculum: play; four seasons

Follow Lilly and her Teddy as they explore the four seasons through this beginner comic book formatted for small hands. Cute and simple pictures accompany this easy to read comic book, though it is more a story of a



little girl playing than any kind of introduction to the four seasons.

Reviewed by: Leah Jungers

Pioneer Charter

Crazy Like a Fox: A Simile Story

By: Loreen Leedy

Holiday House, 2008

ISBN: 0823417190

Curriculum: Similes; Surprises; Birthdays; Parties; Foxes; Animals; Friends

Rufus, who's crazy as a fox, chases Babette until she's mad as a wet hen. Rufus runs into a cave as dark as night, and Babette follows him, blind as a bat. What she finds in there makes her happy as a pig in clover. A great introduction explains similes, idioms, sayings, and clichés, and there is a fun story writing extension at the end. This enjoyable tale, told completely in similes, will be a hit with kids.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier

Stedman Elem.



Say Hello

By: Jack Foreman

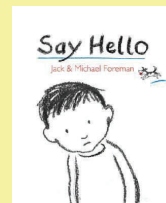
Illus. Michael Foreman

Candlewick Press, 2008

ISBN: 9780763636579

Curriculum: Making friends; Loneliness

(Continued on page 2)



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.)

One word describes this touching book - sparse. Each two-page spread contains only a few words of text and black and white illustration with few color touches. Yet this book speaks loud and clear - no one needs to be lonely, all it takes a friendly Hello! Kids will relate to being on the outside, lonely and ignored. They will love the welcoming feeling of a big Hello.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier Stedman Elem.

Divali Rose

Written by: Vashanti Rahaman

Illus. by: Jamel Akib

Boyd's Mills Press, 2008

ISBN: 9781590785249

Curriculum: Trinidad; Immigrants; India; Divali

Ricki's grandfather has two special rosebuds that will not only bloom for Divali, they will be the color of Divali. When Ricki accidentally breaks off one rosebud, Grandfather blames the new Indian neighbors. Will Ricki have the courage to confess it was really his fault?

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill ECE-8



Papa and Me

By: Arthur Dorros

Illus. by: Rudy Gutierrez

Rayo, 2008

ISBN: 9780060581565

Curriculum: Fathers and sons

This book centers around a Latino boy and his father spending the day with each other. Together they cook breakfast and visit the park. In the park the boy splashes in puddles, climbs a tree, and draws in the sand. The boy and his father then board a



bus to visit Abuela and Abuelo. The story ends as the sun sets and Abuela and Abuelo answer the door and hug their two visitors. Infused throughout the story are Spanish words. The artwork on the endpapers have Spanish words and their English translations. The colorful illustrations help bring this simple story of a boy and his father spending the day together to life.

Reviewed by: Lynne Lopez-Crowley Johnson Elem.

Spanish!

El capitán Cheech (Captain Cheech)

By: Cheech Marin

Illus. by: Orlando L. Ramirez

Harper Collins, 2008

ISBN: 9780061132094

Curriculum: Competition; Adventure

Children riding Cheech's school bus wanted to participate in a sailing race. They transform the bus, with Cheech's consent, into a sailing boat by attaching barrels to it. The event turns into a hilarious adventure as water and marine life flow in, while Captain Cheech attempts to keep it afloat. As the closest competitor approaches them, Cheech comes up with an idea only school bus drivers can use: the Stop sign! Very attractive colorful drawings not only support the story, but add to it. (While the narration is in Spanish, the text on signs that appear on the illustrations has not been translated into Spanish.)

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish Reviewer



Sweet Dreams/Dulces sueños

By: Pat Mora

Illus. by: Maribel Suárez

Harper Collins, 2008

ISBN:

9780060850418

Curriculum: Bedtime; Family

Outside the rabbits, birds, and squirrels are asleep, while inside the house Grandma is lovingly hushing children as she snugly tucks them into bed, and outside the moon is smiling and the stars are shining. This is a very attractive English-Spanish picture book, with simple text, to quiet down youngsters at bedtime.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish Reviewer



Nonfiction

Sparrows

By: Hans Post & Kees Heij

Illustrated by: Irene Goede

Boyd's Mill Press, 2006

ISBN: 9784590785706

Curriculum: Life Science; Life Cycles

The life cycle of the European House Sparrow is beautifully depicted in flowing text and realistic watercolor illustrations. The bird's-eye views give readers an uncommon perspective as short paragraphs describe seasonal nest building, feeding, cleaning, fledgling activities, enemies and mating-a lovely introduction which will

(Continued on page 3)



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

help children appreciate the characteristics of this common of bird.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8

The Kids' Yoga Book of Feelings

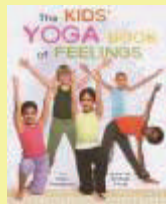
By: Mary Humphrey

Photos by: Michael Frost

Marshall Cavendish Children, 2008

ISBN: 9780761454243

Curriculum: Physical Education; Body Awareness



Starting with the premise that "feelings get trapped inside your body like words hidden in the pages of a closed book," the author describes how yoga can help release bottled up emotions utilizing breathing, poses and affirmations. Though the text describing each pose is clear and the affirmations helpful, the children posing do not display the necessary alignment and conscientious posture one would hope for in photos meant for introductory instruction.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8

Where is human nature so weak as in the bookstore?
~ Henry Ward Beecher ~

Fiction

Halloween Night

By: Marjorie Dennis Murray

Illus. by: Brandon Dorman

Greenwillow, 2008

ISBN: 9780061351877

Curriculum: Poetry; Holidays

The old familiar 'Twas the Night Before Christmas' poem is rewritten for Halloween. This easy picture book takes the reader on a rollicking good time as the zombies and mummies get their old creaky house ready for the best Halloween party ever! Bright colored and detailed illustrations help to make this book a must-have for Halloween.

Reviewed by: Megan McQuinn

Howell K-8



Goof-Off Goalie

By: Betty Hicks

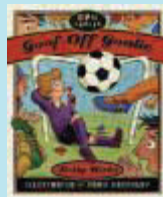
Illus. by: Adam McCauley

Roaring Brook Pres, 2008

ISBN: 9781596432444

Curriculum: soccer; teamwork; perseverance

Goose's birthday wish comes true in this beginner sports chapter book, that the goalie on his soccer team would move away and he'd become the new goalie. This book is recommended for reluctant readers, with its short chapters, many illustrations, easy vocabulary, and can be



used as a perseverance and teamwork lesson.

Reviewed by: Leah Jungers

Pioneer Charter

The Mystery of the Martello Tower

By: Jennifer Lanthier

Laura Geringer Books, 2008

ISBN: 0061257124

Curriculum: Art thefts; Brothers and sisters; Mystery and detective stories

Filled with engaging characters (both heroes and heroines), witty dialogue, and lots of action. It is an exciting blend of adventure, whodunit, and comedy. It is summer vacation for Hazel and Ned who look forward to sleeping late, spending time with their art-dealer Father and Frankie, shooting hoops and building stink bombs. When their Father disappears to Turkey, the baby-sitter leaves town, their apartment is burgled with everything cleaned out of their Father's office and two unsavory ruffians start turning up everywhere, Hazel and Ned realize they have a problem.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell

Alumni



Allie Finkle's Rules for Girls: Moving Day

By: Meg Cabot

Scholastic Press, 2008

ISBN: 9780545039475

Curriculum: Moving; Families; Friendship
Move over Ramona, Junie, Amber here comes Allie. Meg Cabot has created a feisty, likable new character for



(Continued from page 3)

younger readers. Each chapter is started with one of Allie's rules for getting through life like: It's not polite to correct a grown-up, Licorice is gross, You can't let your guests starve.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

You Can't Do That, Amelia

By: Kimberly Wagner Kher

Illus. by: Kathleen Kemly

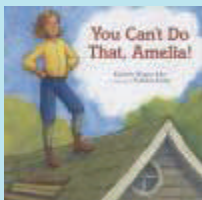
Calkins Creek, 2008

ISBN: 978-1-59078-467-9

Curriculum: Earhart, Amelia; Women air pilots

"You can't do that, Amelia" was a phrase Amelia Earhart heard (and ignored) over and over during her life. Even as a young girl, she dreamed of flying and was determined to make that dream come true. This account of her life presents many of her accomplishments, but it does not detail her final flight and disappearance (except in the notes that follow.) Its large, vivid illustrations enhance the story of this ambitious and courageous woman. Many additional features - a biography, timeline, websites, and more - are given for readers whose curiosity is peaked by this well-done account of Earhart's life.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
Ford Elem.



Race Cars

By: Ian Graham

Heinemann, 2008

ISBN:9781432916473

Curriculum: Automobiles, racing

Have you ever wanted to drive a race car? Learn how the fastest cars on the track are designed, built, and driven. A chart of facts such as engine size, engine type, engine power and more is included for each of the six types of cars that are included.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill ECE-8



Underwear: What We Wear Under There

By: Ruth Freeman Swain

Illus. by: John O'Brien

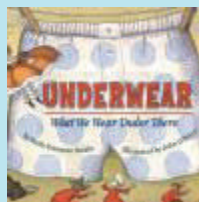
Holiday House, 2008

ISBN: 0823419207

Curriculum: Underwear

Swain tackles a subject sure to be popular with readers. She presents the chronological history on underwear in a fun lighthearted way from the breechcloths to modern day briefs and a glimpse of futuristic underwear. Diapers are also covered in the book. The illustrations add to the sense of fun in this book although at times don't support the accuracy of the text. For instance, in one illustration women are drifting from balconies, their hoops providing a parachute like descent. Nevertheless readers will enjoy reading this book. Readers will find a time line and resources for further information in the back of the book.

Reviewed by: Lynne Lopez-Crowley
Johnson Elem.



Spanish!

Combustibles fósiles (Fossil Fuels)

By: Nigel Saunders and Steven Chapman

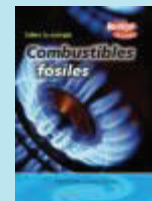
Raintree, 2008

ISBN: 9781410931825

Curriculum: Fossil fuels; Energy sources; Alternative fuels

As part of the "About Energy" series, this book defines fuel and then introduces in one chapter each the fossil fuels: coal, petroleum, and natural gas. They explain their extraction, how energy is derived from them and then how this energy is applied to meet society's needs. Chapters on problems related to using fossil fuels and what to look forward to as replacements complete the text. The concepts are clearly explained and well illustrated and provide a good introduction to the subject for a science unit. A bibliography, web search resources, plus a glossary and index are also included. (The word "años" is missing after "30,000" on p. 19, and "principal el gas natural" should be "principal del gas natural" on p. 32.)

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish Reviewer



Books, I found, had the power
to make time
stand still, retreat or fly into
the future.
~ Jim Bishop ~

(Continued on page 5)

Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

(Continued from page 4)

Fiction

Jinx

By: Meg Cabot

HarperTeen, 2007

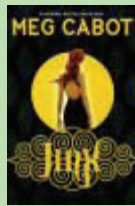
ISBN: 9790060837655

Curriculum: Adventure; Teen Issues; Family; Witchcraft

Jean has just moved to New York City to live with her aunt and uncle. Tory, her cousin, does not appear to want her there. Tory has her own dark secret that her parents don't even know. Tory believes her grandmother was a powerful witch and she has inherited her power. Jean, nicknamed Jinx, because unusual things seem to happen around her, tries to talk Tory out of dabbling with black magic. Tory also believes that Jean may also have the power. Tory makes life difficult for Jinx, especially when she falls for the boy next door. The girls find out that everything has a consequence for both good and evil.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Rishel M.S.



Undercover

By: Beth Kephart

HarperTeen, 2007

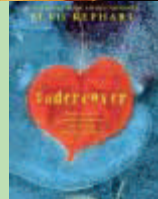
ISBN: 9780061238949

Curriculum: Teen Issues; Family Problems; Poems; Ice Skating

Elisa is a loner in high school. She feels she is not pretty like her older sister, and is considered odd. However, Elisa has a talent with words. She writes notes and poems for boys to give to their girlfriends. There is conflict at home as well. Elisa is close to her father, but business takes him away from home for long periods of time. Her letters to him keep them in touch. Through poems, letters and her secret skill at ice skating, we watch Elisa discover the wonderful girl she really is. It is not an easy journey with problems, jealousy and others not wanting her to succeed. She perseveres and comes out triumphant.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Rishel M.S.



Bird Lake Moon

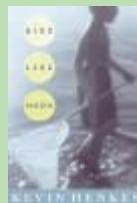
By: Kevin Henkes

Greenwillow Books, 2008

ISBN: 978-0-06-147078-3

Curriculum: Divorce; Grief; Friendship

Mitch and Spencer each have some healing to do when their families come to stay at Bird Lake for the summer.



(Continued on page 6)

Review Crew Staff

Committee Chair:

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Sudi Stodola

TJ High School

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Stedman Elementary

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Grant Middle School

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Retired

Karen Burns

Rishel Middle School

Cat DeRose

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Ethel Hammerly

Spanish Reviewer

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Johnson Elem.

Marilyn Martin

Park Hill K-8

Megan McQuinn

Howell K—8

Karyn Pocernich

Ford Elem.

From ERS:

Jody Gehrig

Karen Shannon

Antonio Nicotera

(Continued from page 5)

Mitch's parents are getting divorced and Spencer's family is still grieving the death of his little brother eight years earlier. Through their friendship, each boy finds strength and confidence that help them deal with the losses and difficulties they face. Through this story (which alternates narration between the two boys) Henkes simply, yet craftily depicts their struggles and how they come to accept their family situations. This book could be of support to readers facing similar situations.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
Ford Elem.

The Diamond of Drury Lane

By: Julia Golding
Roaring Brook Press,
2008

ISBN: 1596433515

Curriculum: Orphans; London (England)-History-18th Century

This book is fast-paced, but other strengths are its description of Drury Lane Theater of the 1790's in London and the principal characters involved with the theater. The information is skillfully woven into the story, providing details that heighten reader's interest.

"Reader, you are set to embark on an adventure about 1 hidden treasure, 2 bare-knuckle boxers, 3 enemies and 438 rioters."

Reviewed by: Irene Bell
Alumni



Nonfiction

Sisters and Brothers: The Ultimate Guide to Understanding Your Sibling and Yourself

By: Elizabeth Siris Winchester

Franklin Watts, 2008

ISBN: 0531138704

Curriculum: Science and Life Issues

How do siblings influence your development? Does birth order effect your personality? Is sibling rivalry inevitable? Issues concerning adopted, foster, half, middle, oldest, step, twin, youngest and only children are addressed through stories of real teens in an attractive concise format incorporating blue highlights as well as black and white photographs of a diverse set of young people.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8



King George: what was his problem?

By: Steve Sheinkin

Illus. by: Tim Robinson

Flash Point, 2008

ISBN: 1596433191

Curriculum: United States history; U.S. history anecdotes

With a chatty, familiar style, author Steve Sheinkin digs down into his bag of writer tricks and presents the "stories you haven't heard" from the American Revolution. With ink cartoon like drawings and short reader friendly headings, this page turner gives the inside scoop on such untold sagas as the battle where patriot soldiers went onto the battlefield "as naked as they were born" and the revolutionary leader who



wanted dinner more than he wanted to fight. So fun, reluctant readers won't be the only ones who can't put this one down!

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer
Grant M.S.

For Boys Only: The Biggest, Baddest Book Ever

By: Marc Aronson

Feiwel and Friends, 2007

ISBN: 9780312377069

Curriculum: Curiosities and wonders; Miscellanea

Would you like to learn how to land an airplane in an emergency? Or perhaps you would like to know how to get free if you were tied to a kitchen chair. Or maybe you need to know how to wrestle and alligator - and win. Do you know what the greatest mysteries in the world are? Or how about the greatest daredevil stunts? This book is packed with puzzles, facts about everything you can think of and a bonus code to figure out.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.



A good book is the
best of friends,
the same today
and forever.
~ Martin Farquhar
Tupper ~

Young Adults Deserve the Best!

(Continued from page 6)

Fiction

Dead is the New Black

By: Marlene Perez
Harcourt, 2008
ISBN:
9780152064082



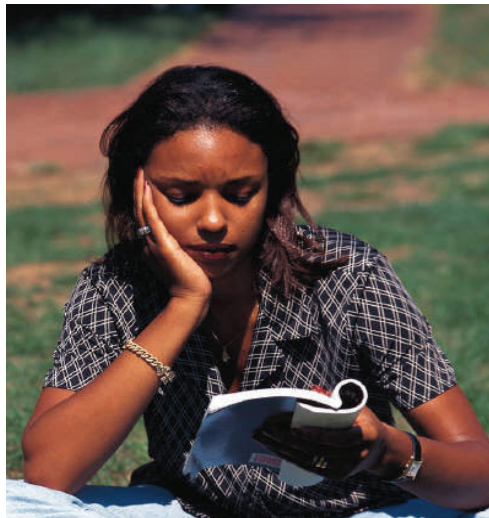
Curriculum: Vampires; Supernatural abilities; High schools; Cheerleading

High school junior, Daisy, is the only one in her family lacking psychic abilities, but when strange events start occurring in her town, Daisy cannot help but secretly get involved in her family's involvement in the police investigation. Cheerleaders are falling by the wayside, and those that are not are looking a bit dead. Can Daisy and her hunky possible boyfriend, also the police chief's son, discover what is happening before the entire squad falls victim? Perez fills the void left by the completion of Meyer's *Twilight* series in supernatural vampire fiction with this engaging, light, high school oriented mystery also suitable for middle school students.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
Kennedy H.S.

All We Know of Heaven

By: Jacquelyn Mitchard
HarperTeen, 2008
ISBN: 9780061345784



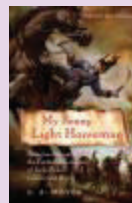
Curriculum: Mistaken identity; Grief; Coming of age; Car accidents

Nearly identical best friends, Bridget and Maureen, are in a horrible car accident on their way to a cheerleading event on an icy road right before Christmas. The accident leaves one girl dead and the other horribly injured and in a coma. One family grieves their loss while the other stands vigil by the bedside of the survivor. The unfolding events, based upon a true story, lead the reader on a heart-wrenchingly painful journey of mistaken identity, sorrow, and survival. High school students, mature middle school students, and adults should not miss this highly recommended novel.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
Kennedy H.S.

My Bonny Light Horseman

By: L.A. Meyer
Harcourt Press, 2008
ISBN: 0152061876



Curriculum: Historical fiction; Napoleonic wars, 1800-1815; Pirates; British navy; Spies.

With the same light, droll touch that characterizes the first five books in his series, Meyer once again heads onto the high seas with the cast of characters

now familiar to Bloody Jack fans. When tumultuous heroine Jacky is captured (again!) and sure to face the noose, she avoids her fate by facing her most dire circumstances to date: a date with Napoleon! Rollicking and raucous, bordering on the bawdy, Meyer brings adventure back to the reading room with a flare that grabs hold of readers and keeps them to the final utterance. A challenging (the series is lexiled in mid 1100s) riotous read and a "do you have it yet?" no-brainer.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer
Grant M.S.

This edition of the Review Crew is dedicated to the memory of our friend and colleague Brenda Earnest who passed peacefully on October 4th. We will greatly miss her serenity and gentle sense of humor. We will miss seeing her quietly crocheting a baby blanket for the next new arrival. We will miss her consistent words of encouragement and support. We will miss her dedication to the students of the Denver Public Schools.