



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

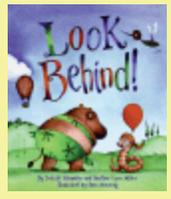
Brought to you by the Denver Public Schools Book Review Committee.

Volume 5 Number 1
September 2008

Fiction

Look Behind! Tales of Animal Ends

By: Lola M. Schaefer
Illustrated by: Jane Manning
HarperCollins Publishers, 2008
ISBN: 0060883942

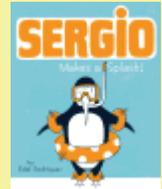


Curriculum: Animals; Alphabet
Colorful, watercolor illustrations enhance the zany A to Z alpha-butts found in this compelling book. Young readers should enjoy reading about such unusual butts as: blubber butt, invisible butt, popping butt, rainbow butt, yoga butt, and many others. With each animal and insect comes a fairly detailed paragraph, "Quill butt ... Beware! A porcupine's body is covered with hair and thousands of quills. Quills are stiff spines with hooks called barbs on their ends." A fun yet informative book that should have readers laughing as well as learning.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell
Retired

Sergio Makes a Splash

Written and illus by: Edel Rodriguez
Little, Brown and Co, 2008
ISBN:0316066168



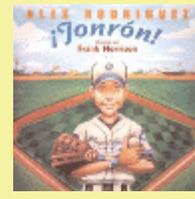
Curriculum: Penguins; Swimming; Fear
The three things Sergio most loves are soccer, fishies, and water. Sergio is a penguin that has never learned to swim. When his class goes on a field trip to learn how to swim, he is very excited - and really scared. He brings his snorkel, goggles, life preserver, and floaties. Yes, he can swim! But can he swim without his floaties?

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill ECE-8

Spanish!

¡Jonrón! (Home run!)

By: Alex Rodríguez
Illustrated by: Frank Morrison
Harper Collins, 2007
ISBN: 9780061151972



Curriculum: Baseball; Persistence; Sports
Although Alex is nervous about his role in the approaching baseball playoffs and championship game, he soon figures out how to fix his mistakes, become a better player, and make his family and friends proud of him. Children may be inspired by

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.)

(Continued on page 2)

Alex's efforts and persistence to excel.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish reviewer

Nonfiction

Spanish!

Usar las rocas (Using Rocks)

By: Sharon Katz Cooper
Heinemann, 2007
ISBN: 9781432902421

Curriculum: Science; Rocks; Use of Natural Resources

This is an introduction to rocks in an easy chapter book to learn about their composition, formation, location, and uses. It ends by applying what was learned by having children describe rocks according to color, texture, and possible origin. Children will enjoy the text which is supported with colorful photographs.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish reviewer

Do You Take Turns?/¿Te turnas con otros?

By: Joanne Mattern
Weekly Reader, 2008
ISBN: 9780836882865

Curriculum: Sharing; Friendship; Fairness; Values

Taking turns is not only necessary to be good friends, but also helps develop patience and a sense of fairness

to others. English-Spanish bilingual text appears on the same page, allowing for easy comparison of expressions rather than literal word by word translation. The text is well organized with colorful photographs.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish reviewer

When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature.

If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young.
~ Maya Angelou ~



The Best for Upper Elementary

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

Fiction

Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad



Written and illus. by: James Rumford

Roaring Brook Press, 2008
ISBN: 1596432764

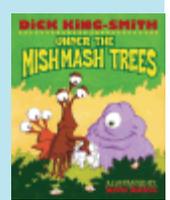
Curriculum: Calligraphy, Arabic; Iraq war; Baghdad; Iraq

Ali lives in Baghdad. He loves playing soccer, loud music, and dancing. Most of all he loves calligraphy. Yakut, a master calligrapher who lived 800 years ago, used this ancient form of drawing letters to endure the war that was happening then. Ali uses calligraphy to help himself withstand the sounds and smells of the war happening all around him in Iraq.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill ECE-8

Under the Mishmash Trees

By: Dick King-Smith
Illustrated by: Nick Bruel



Roaring Brook Press, 2008
ISBN: 1596433256

Curriculum: Imaginary creatures; Friendship

In this imaginary land, there are gombrazils who eat filogogs and sweets, as well as slobbadunks who spend their days eating slippysloppy grass. Gombrazils Og and Ut become fast friends with Tumblerum Wollycobble, a slobbadunk. Together they happily share a nest and raise babies together until a terrible storm creates

(Continued on page 3)

havoc.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin

Park Hill ECE-8

Spanish!

Sopa de cactus (Cactus Soup)

By: Eric A. Kimmel

Illustrated by: Phil Huling

Marshall Cavendish Children, 2007

ISBN: 9780761453444

Curriculum: Folklore; Mexican Revolution; Sharing

A troop of hungry soldiers comes to San Miguel during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1922). The townspeople have hidden all the food, but the soldiers cleverly charm them into helping make a soup from water and a cactus thorn. As an illustrated folk tale, it will appeal to children for its colorful content.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly

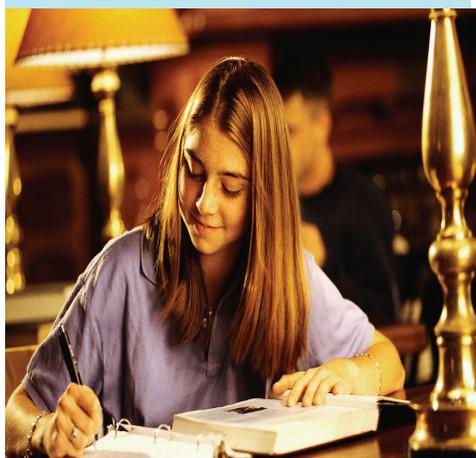
Spanish reviewer



creatures (cockatrice, hobgoblins, will-o'-the-wisp, and many more) parade across the pages of this exquisite book. The first letter of each creature's name is reminiscent of Medieval illuminations. The paintings are filled with vibrant color, emotion and details that make the creature appear to be ready to fly, swim, walk or gallop from the pages. A mythological world full of imagination and mystery emanates from the poetry.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell

Retired



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Nonfiction

Imaginary Menagerie: A Book of Curious Creatures

By: Julie Larios

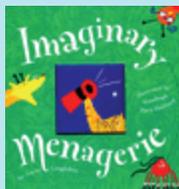
Illustrated by: Julie Paschkis

Harcourt, Inc., 2008

ISBN: 0152063252

Curriculum: Poetry; Animals-Mythical

Fourteen wonderful and unusual



Fiction

Sure Fire

By: Jack Higgins and Justin Richards

G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2007

ISBN: 9780399247842

Curriculum: Adventure; Twins; Family; Spies

Rich and Jade are 15 year old twins who have just lost their mother, the only parent they knew. Chance, their father, learns about the two children at the funeral. It's an uneasy relationship at the beginning. Then when their father disappears, they find out that he is a spy. They become involved in adventure and intrigue and must learn quickly who they can trust. Rich and Jade are bright and have good instincts as they do what they can to get their father back. This new family is going to make a great spy team.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Rishel M.S.



Spellspam

By: Alma Alexander

Eos, 2008

ISBN: 9780060839598

Curriculum: Fantasy; Magic; Computers

The second book in the "Worldweavers" series provides an interesting blend of the computer world with magic. Thea and her friends know that you can't send spells through email...or can you? When their friends begin receiving emails with disastrous results for those that open them, they must find out how this is happening. Thea has the ability to weave her way into other worlds and it falls on her to



(Continued from page 3)

help discover the cause. She travels through some unusual worlds on her way to the answers. It's helpful to read the first book, but one can read this book and still enjoy it. There is enough reference to the first story to easily understand what is happening with this one.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Rishel M.S.

Juliet's Moon

By: Ann Rinaldi
Harcourt, Inc., 2008
ISBN: 0152061708



Curriculum: United States-History-Civil War, 1861-1865; Self-reliance; Orphans

A multifaceted story with characters who will tug at readers' hearts. It deals with the tough issues of war: espionage, betrayal, death, grieving, imprisonment, fear, murder and much more. Juliet Bradshaws genteel Southern world is pulled asunder by the Civil War. She witnesses the burning of her home and land and the murder of her Father all because her brother Seth rides with William Quantrill's renegade Confederate Army. A "violent, dramatic, romantic and flowery time" that young adults should enjoy reading about.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell
Retired

The Buddha's Diamonds

By: Carolyn Marsden
Candlewick Press, 2008
ISBN: 9780763633806



Curriculum: Fishing; Responsibility; Multicultural - Vietnam

Tinh is proud that he is able to help his father catch fish for his family and also to sell in the market. He is proud of their beautiful bamboo boat. It is still so new that the wood glows like gold next to all the other boats. One day while Tinh and Ba are out fishing a storm rises. They make the run to shore in time but the storm is fierce. Ba leaves Tinh to secure the boat but the storm is so strong he is unable to do it alone and there is no one else to ask. So he runs for home. Now the boat is damaged, but worse than that, the trust that Ba put in him is damaged also.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner MS

Hurricane

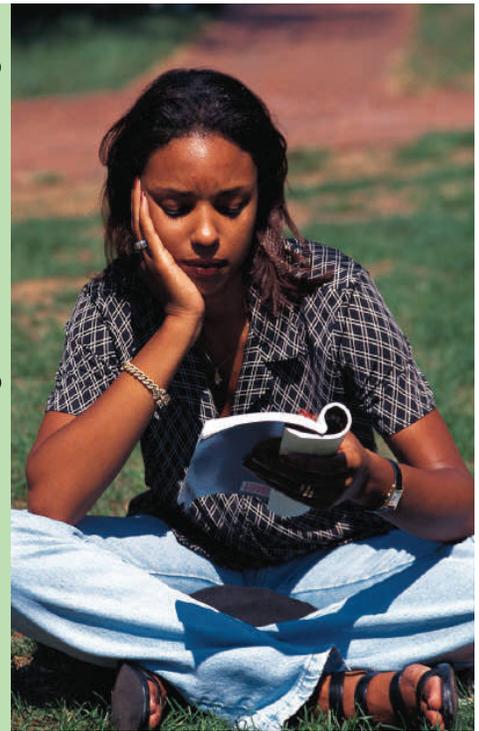
By Terry Trueman
HarperCollins, 2008
ISBN: 9780060000196



Curriculum: Hurricanes; Responsibility; Multicultural - Honduras

Jose loves his little village. He knows everyone and everything about everyone. He loves to play soccer with the other boys on the one dirt street. One day Jose is playing soccer in the road and the next a devastating storm has erased everything that he has ever known. Most of the people he has known all his life are dead, his father, brother and sister are missing and the surviving villagers are in desperate need of aid. It is at least twenty miles to the next town and the roads are gone. Jose sets off anyway, determined to bring aid to the people of the village.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner MS



Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Fiction

Nugr190 (Sadie)

By: Cheryl Dellasega
Illustrates by: Karina
LaPierre



Marshal Cavendish, c2007
ISBN: 9780761453758

Curriculum: High schools; Blogs; Divorce; Relationships; Depression

Sadie's life, as told through her blog, begins to unravel as her parents separate. She, her older goth sister, and mom move and Sadie becomes nugr190 at her new high school.

Here, Sadie meets BB (aka Buff Boy)

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

who becomes her boyfriend despite many warnings and signs that BB has serious anger issues. Sadie must decide whether to protect BB or lose him by reporting the actions she fears BB may enact. Sadie's family and blog support system help her through this adolescent crisis. A "Clicktionary" is included which greatly assists nontexters in understanding the slang in this teen problem novel. The blog diary-like format will entice many middle school and high school girl readers.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK HS

Me, the Missing, and the Dead

By: Jenny Valentine
HarperTeen, 2007

ISBN: 9780060850692

Curriculum: Abandonment; Death; Coming of age; Families; Self-discovery; Missing

Whether it is fate, coincidence, or a call from beyond the living, Lucas Swain, nearly 16, becomes obsessed with Violet Park. Violet is dead and residing in an urn that Lucas discovers in a taxicab building and decides he must possess. Lucas is certain that Violet is communicating with him to help him solve the mystery of his dad's disappearance several years ago, and follows the trail of clues that reveal an unforeseen connection between Violet and his dad. This clever, unique mystery draws readers in and holds them with curious twists and an exciting unpredictable conclusion.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK HS



**Denver Public Schools
Book review committee**
**This is a wonderful
committee to sit on,
but don't be fooled,
it is a lot of work.**
**We are given between
25 and 30 books to
read each month. Of
those books we must
write and publish, on-
line, 15 books re-
views. In addition to
those 15 reviews we
are asked to write at
least 2 mini reviews
for the Review Crew
each month. We
meet on the after-
noon of the third Fri-
day of each month
and our principals
must agree to pay for
our substitutes or we
must be able to close
the library. What is
the pay-off? We get
to keep two thirds of
the books we receive
for our libraries:**

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

Danette Baltzer
Grant Middle School

Irene Bell
Retired

Karen Burns
Rishel Middle School

Cat DeRose
Trevista@Horace Mann

Brenda Earnest
Merrill Middle School

Ethel Hammerly
Spanish Reviewer

Leah Jungers
Pioneer

Lynne Lopez-Crowley
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