



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 6 Number 1

September 2009

Fiction

Princess Prissyants Wishes the World Pink



By: Ashley Putnam Evans

Pink Angel Press, 2009

ISBN: 9780979338144

Curriculum: Birthdays; Colors

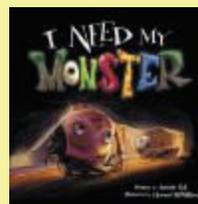
Princess Prissyants decides on her birthday to make just one wonderful wish. Since she loves the color pink so much, she wishes that everything in the world would become pink. However, her mother the Queen soon orders her to unwish that wish. Everyone misses all their favorite colors and it is just too dangerous to live in a world that is ALL ONE COLOR.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill Elem.

I Need My Monster

By: Amanda Noll

Illus by: Howard McWilliam



Flashlight, 2009

ISBN: 9780979974625

Curriculum: Friendship; Relationships; Monsters

Ethan is a little boy who can't fall asleep without the 'ragged breathing and claw-scratching' of his favorite monster, Gabe. But Gabe has left a note that he's gone fishing, so Ethan knocks on his floor to summon a series of substitute ghoulies. But the substitutes just don't do it for Ethan. The book is balanced between creepy and comforting, but especially endearing is Gabe's early return home as he huddles beneath the bed like a faithful dog and says, "Now, if you don't mind, I'd like to start the evening with an ominous puddle of drool." That's friendship for you.

Reviewed by Megan McQuinn

Howell K - 8

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.)



Nonfiction

Spanish!

Pesados y ligeros/Heavy and Light



By: Nathan Olson

Capstone, 2009

ISBN: 9781429632522

*Curriculum: Animal opposites;
Animals weight*

The bilingual series *Animal Opposites* introduces a variety of basic contrasting concepts that in this book focus on weight. Supported with appropriate photographs, animals from throughout the world are used to illustrate the contrasts between light and heavy. Interesting facts in blocked text about some of the animals presented will appeal to older readers as well. An additional section entitled "Did you know?" provides more unusual information.

The concepts are presented in a clear way and youngsters are exposed to vocabulary for a number of unusual animals. A glossary, internet sites, index and notes to parents and teachers are also included.

(p. 17: "una hormiga pueden" should be "una hormiga puede")

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly
Spanish reviewer

The Best for Upper Elementary

Fiction

A Chair for Always

By: Vera B. Williams

Greenwillow Books,
2009

ISBN: 9780061722790

*Curriculum: Chairs; Babies; Family
life*

In this touching companion story, Rosa's character reminds readers of the importance of family, history, and love. The chair that her family had purchased in hard times holds many memories and stories for Rosa. Even though things have improved, there are stories she doesn't want forgotten, covered over, or given away. She convinces her grandma that it represents who they are as a family and should be with them forever. Rosa's character is captured so well by Williams through the girl's words and approach to the importance of the chair. The gentle full-color illustrations create warmth that is felt as each page is turned.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
Ford Elem.



My Darlin' Clementine

By: Kristiana Gregory

Holiday House, 2009

ISBN: 9780823421985



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

*Curriculum: Frontier and pioneer
life; Family life; Sisters*

Have you heard the song *Oh My Darlin' Clementine*? It was written about this Clementine and the choices she was forced to make to escape her unbearable life in a mining camp in Idaho in 1866. The details of life in the town and of the process of mining present a vivid mental picture of the ups and downs of coping in the 1860s. An excellent read-aloud to complement the study of pioneer life and mining.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill Elem.

Fortune's Folly

By: Deva Fagan

Henry Holt and Company,
2009

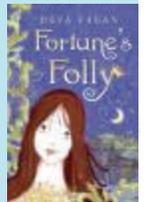
ISBN: 9780805087420

Curriculum: Fairy Tales

Since her mother's death, Fortunata's father has lost his ability to make beautiful shoes. Forced into fending for themselves, she and her father join a traveling band of performers. Fortunata is trained to tell fortunes. When the unsavory leader of the group promises the Queen of Doma that Fortunata can tell Prince Leonato's fortune, Fortunata is faced with making sure the Prince's fortune comes true or her father will be sentenced to die. Readers will delight in this book.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-
Crowley

MSLA



Escape Under the Forever Sky

By: Eve Yohalem

Chronicle Books, 2009

ISBN:

9780811866538

Curriculum: Ethiopia; Survival; Kidnapping

Lucy Hoffman's mother is the United States Ambassador to Ethiopia. Her mother is very protective and Lucy is allowed very little freedom. Lucy and her best friend sneak out to a restaurant where Lucy is kidnapped. Realizing that her situation is dire, Lucy escapes and now has to survive in the wilderness. Loosely based on a true story the author is able to weave the beauty of Africa and the Ethiopian culture into an exciting adventure. This book comes highly recommended.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA



Spanish!

Un sillón para siempre

By: Vera B. Williams

Illus. by: Santiago Cohen

Harper Collins, 2009

ISBN: 9780061722837

Curriculum: Emotional attachments; Symbols of permanence

After a fire destroys all their furniture, Rosa and her mother are living with relatives. They manage



to save enough to buy a nice velvet armchair around which all their activities are centered. As time goes on the armchair shows its age and the mother is looking to replace it but Rosa will not allow it, claiming that the chair is as much part of the family as her cousin Benji.

Young readers will love this story as it is likely that they feel emotionally attached to something and will be able to identify with Rosa. The text flows naturally with first person narration, dialogue and vocabulary appropriate for early readers, supported with complementary drawings.

Reviewed by: Ethel Hammerly

Spanish reviewer

Nonfiction

Roly-Poly Ravioli and Other Italian Dishes

By: Nick Fauchald

Illus. by: Ronnie Rooney

ISBN:

9781404851863

Curriculum: Cookery; Italian Cooking

What's not to like about a cookbook that starts with dessert? Thirteen easy, intermediate and advanced yummy Italian recipes are presented in this colorful book with multi-ethnic kids cooking up a storm. Easy to follow illustrated instructions are accompanied by an ingredient and tool list. Kids will gobble this one up.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem.



The Kids' Guide to Paper Airplanes

By: Christopher L. Harbo

ISBN: 9781429622745

Curriculum: Paper airplanes; Paper folding

Follow the easy step-by-step photos to make a Sonic Dart, a Double Arrow, or an Angry Finch. These are just some of the dozen paper airplane designs that are graded by impressiveness and complexity. A "Flying Tip" accompanies each model. Kids will flip over these folded forms.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem.



Bizarre, Creepy Hoaxes

By: Kelly Regan Barnhill

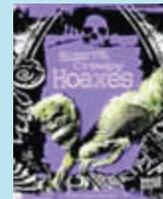
Capstone Press, 2009

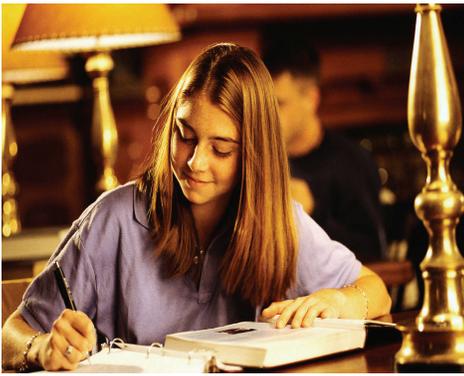
ISBN: 9781429622943

Curriculum: Hoaxes; Imposters and frauds

This title explores nine infamous hoaxes. A few mentioned are Piltdown Man (human skull fossil proved to be that of an orangutan), the Hitler diaries (proved to be written in the 1970s), and Snowball, the monster cat (photos altered to make Snowball appear to be the size of a big dog). This is a highly entertaining quick read for elementary school students, but MS, HS and adult readers who appreciate a well-thought-out scam will also enjoy this title. Photos enhance the text and readers will want to learn. Luckily, additional books and a "FactHound" website are provided.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.





Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Fiction

Soldier's Secret: The Story of Deborah Sampson



By: Sheila Solomon
Klass

Christy Ottariano Books,
2009

ISBN: 9788805082005

Curriculum: Gannett, Deborah Sampson; United States history; Revolutionary War

"Of one thing I am certain: I never wanted to be a boy or a man. What I always wanted was to be the equal of any boy." This is a fictional first-person account of how Deborah Sampson lived once she enlisted in the Continental Army - as a man. She lived with the other soldiers, slept in the same tent with the men, and fought beside the men. This entire story is based on historical facts that help us understand why she

chose this life.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill Elem.

Princess of the Midnight Ball

By: Jessica Day
George

Bloomsbury U.S.A.,
2008

ISBN: 1599903229

Curriculum: Fairy Tales; Magic; Princesses; Dancing

Princess Rose and her eleven sisters are under a curse. Every night, they leave the castle to travel to the world of the evil King Under Stone to dance with his sons. When Galen, a young soldier, returns from the war, he falls in love with the oldest princess. He is determined to discover their secret and set the princesses free. He is helped by an old woman who gives him magic yarn, and an old man who helps protect him from the evil magic. Galen's ability to knit, gives him some unusual tools to save the princesses. This is based on the fairy tale of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*.



Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

The Amaranth Enchantment

By: Julie Berry

Bloomsbury U.S.A.,
2009

ISBN: 9781599903347

Curriculum: Fairy Tales; Magic; Princesses; Orphans

Lucinda has memories of her parents leaving for a ball and never returning. She works in her uncle's shop with her aunt. Her aunt makes her clean, cook and mind the shop. One day, a mysterious gem, a mysterious woman and a prince come to the shop. The woman, known as the Amaranth Witch offers Lucinda the opportunity to regain the name she lost. She has adventures and gets help from unusual sources including a street thief and a very wise goat. Based loosely on the Cinderella story, Lucinda must right a wrong and win the prince.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy



Lifting the sky

By Mackie D'Arge

Bloomsbury Children's Book, 2009

ISBN:
9781599901862

Curriculum: Ranch life; Single parent families; Animal rescue

Blue has been in four schools so far this year and now her mom is taking her out again. Blue's mom is a ranch hand and she doesn't like staying in one place for more than a few weeks. Blue is hoping this time will be different. This time it is a tumbledown old ranch at the edge of the Wind River Reservation. This ranch felt just like home from the very beginning. What will it take to convince her mom that this is a place worth staying?

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

Diego: Bigger Than Life

By: Carmen T. Bernier-Grand

Illustrated by: David Diaz



Marshall Cavendish, 2009

ISBN: 9780761453833

Curriculum: Rivera, Diego, 1886-1957

The many joys, sorrows, and challenges of Mexican painter Diego Rivera are uniquely depicted through both poems and illustrations in this biography. Rivera suffered losses of siblings, a child, and women he loved but through it all he continued his artistic works around the world. Not always popular, he continued to paint and create frescoes according to his beliefs - he "fought a social revolution with his brush." The combination of Bernier-Grand's poems and Diaz's distinctive illustrations works well to capture many of the key events in the controversial painter's life. Additional biographical information helps to fill in gaps the reader might have.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
Ford Elem.

The Worst-Case Scenario Survival handbook: Middle School

By: David Borgenicht

Illus by: Chuck Gonzales

Chronicle Books, 2009

ISBN: 9780811868648



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

Irene Bell
Retired

Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Dana Clark
Greenwood K—8

Cat DeRose
Trevista@Horace Mann

Ethel Hammerly
Spanish Reviewer

Cheri Hilton
South High School

Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Marilyn Martin
Park Hill Elem.

Megan McQuinn
Howell K—8

Karyn Pocernich
Ford Elem.

Leah Rounds
Carmen Sanjurjo
Retired

From ERS:

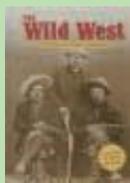
Dave Sanger
Karen Shannon
Antonio Nicotera

Curriculum: Middle School; Social problems; Life Skills

Lockers, homework, and popularity...middle school has no shortage of perils. The 'Worst-Case Scenario' is a survival guide for those who are facing this big transitional time. The handbook is packed with funny-but-useful tips for the trickiest situations that crop up in middle school like how to make new friends, and how to stay out of a fight. The solutions offered are both appropriate and funny, like 'make the rumor mill work for you by starting a true rumor'.

Reviewed by Megan McQuinn
Howell K - 8

**The Wild West:
An Interactive
History Adventure**

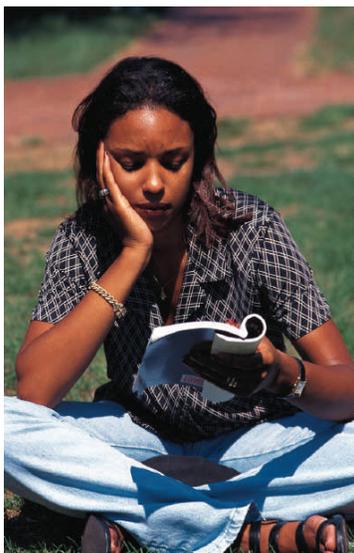


By: Allison Lassieur
Capstone Press, 2009
ISBN: 9781429623421

Curriculum: American history; Westward expansion

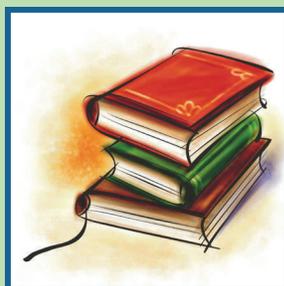
In this informational book the reader gets to choose from three career paths that might have occurred in the Wild West. The reader can choose to be a lawman,

Young Adults Deserve the Best!



and outlaw or a gold seeker. When the reader has chosen his career path he can then choose what actions he will pursue on that path. Along the path the reader is presented with historic situations and people. Not every path ends well, but then the reader can always choose another. Books in this series are the grown-up relatives of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* novels of the past.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.



Fiction

Absolutely Maybe

By: Lisa Yee
Arthur A. Levine Books,
2009
ISBN: 9780439838443



Curriculum: Mothers and daughters; Runaways; California; Fathers; Friendship; Coming of Age

Maybelline "Maybe" takes off to California looking for her biological father after her alcoholic ex-beauty queen mother's newest husband-to-be makes a pass at her. Armed only with her father's first name and her best friends she struggles emotionally and financially. Eventually she finds work and Sammy, husband #2 and #4, but will she find her biological father and will finding him permanently solve her troubles? *Absolutely Maybe* will strike a chord with female HS readers seeking contemporary problem novels. Eccentric characters and periods of hilarity punctuate the drama and readers cannot help but root for Maybe.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.