

The Review Crew



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 9 Number 1

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Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.

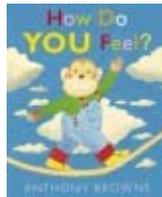
What we do!

- ☺ 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.)

Fiction

How Do You Feel?

By: Anthony Browne
Candlewick Press, 2011
ISBN: 9780763658625



Curriculum: Feelings

A chimpanzee asks the reader, "How do you feel?" and we see his feelings portrayed through the colors and details of the illustrations. White, empty pages show a very small monkey feeling lonely. When a curious monkey looks at a pop-up book, he is surprised as a paper snake jumps out on the next page. The large print is simple for primary students to read themselves, but the book would be great for a discussion about how we express emotions.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

An A to Z of Pirates

By: Caroline Stills
Illus. by: Heath McKenzie
Little Hare Books, 2011
ISBN: 9781921714221



Curriculum: Pirates; Alphabet books

This alphabet book is full of fun and surprises. Each letter is introduced by a rhyme describing some aspect of pirate life. "A is

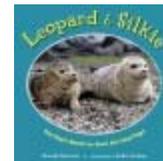
for adventure on an azure-coloured sea. Hoist the anchor, maties, 'tis a pirate's life for me." Each page is filled with a brightly colored, active illustration that readers will enjoy exploring as they attempt to identify objects representing a letter.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.

Leopard & Silkie

Nonfiction

Written by: Brenda Peterson
Illus. By: Robin Lindsey
Christy Ottaviano Books,
2012



ISBN: 9780805091670

Curriculum: Seals (animals) - conservation; Wildlife rescue

Seal pups coming up on shore are vulnerable to many things: predators, pollution, people, and more. Leopard and Silkie are two such pups that fortunately receive the protection of a group of people, including a young boy named Miles, determined to keep them safe. Seal Sitters will stand guard over the pups day and night to ensure their safety. Beautifully photographed and simply written, the message comes across clearly that one person, even a child, can make a differ-

ence in their community. This would be a helpful resource as students work on their interdisciplinary units.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
CMS Community School

El Tigre

Spanish!

By: Montse Ganges

Illus. by: Jordi Sales

Combel Editorial, 2011

ISBN:

9788498256260

Curriculum: Tigers

What is that? It's a tiger! But where does a tiger live? Does a tiger live at the butcher shop? No, No! This book is one in a series, *Zoo ¿Donde Vivo?*, asking questions in a story format and giving factual information about tigers.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni

Mi libro gigante de Dinosaurios

By: Priddy Books

Macmillan Iberia S.A.:

Tra edition 2012

ISBN:

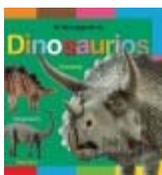
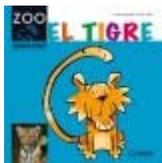
9788479427443

Curriculum: Dinosaurs; Science-Prehistoric animals

This Spanish language board book features brightly colored, foldout pages with large photos of various types of dinosaurs. A simple layout labels each animal, and one question at the bottom of each page asks the reader to identify a particular dinosaur from an embedded clue. To find the answer, the reader must unfold the page. Sure to delight the youngest dinosaur fan!

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco

Skinner M.S.



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

Rainmaker

By: Kevin Markey

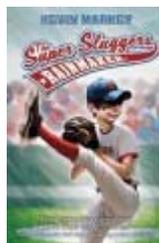
Harper, 2012

ISBN: 9780061152283

Curriculum: Baseball; Friendship; Self-confidence

Something is wrong with Slingshot Slocum the team's star pitcher. Every time he throws it starts raining and to make it worse, his pitches are off. The next season most of the players will be moving up to the next age division so they want to win their last championship. It does not look promising with Slingshot's pitching being off. His teammate are hoping that an upcoming team rafting trip will help pull Slingshot out of his slump.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA



Ted & me

By: Dan Gutman

Harper, 2012

ISBN: 0061234885

Curriculum: Time travel;

Baseball; Pearl Harbor;

Conduct of life

The FBI has figured out that thirteen-year-old Stosh can travel back in time. When he touches a baseball card he is transported to the year on the card.

The FBI wants to give Stosh a Ted Williams baseball card and travel to 1941 and have Ted help him convince the President that there will be an attack on Pearl Harbor. Stosh decides to ask his baseball coach about Ted Williams. "Williams had anger problems...He would throw bats, tear out the plumbing, punch the water cooler, knockout the lights. He'd spit at people." Stosh must decide if he will go back to try to warn the President about Pearl Harbor.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

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MSLA

Freckleface Strawberry: Best Friends Forever

By: Julianne Moore

Illus. by: LeUyen Pham

Bloomsbury, 2011

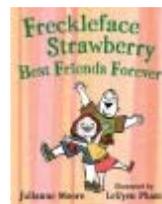
ISBN: 9781599905518

Curriculum: Friendship; Confidence

Once, Freckleface Strawberry, had a best friend, Windy Pants. They did everything together: read books, ate lunch, and stuck up for each other. That is, until the other kids start talking behind their backs, and the two friends started to question their relationship.

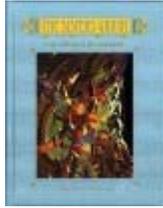
Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



Council of Mirrors

By: Michael Buckley
Illus. by: Peter Ferguson



Amulet Books, 2012
ISBN: 9781419701863

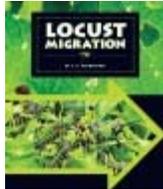
Curriculum: Good vs. Evil; Sisters
Sabrina and Daphne Grimm are gearing up for the fight of their lives. Granny Relda's body has been taken over by the Master. The council of mirrors is telling Sabrina that she is the only one who can lead the army successfully, but who is going to listen to a little girl, and a Grimm to boot? Even if they do decide to listen to her, can she really save them all? This is the ninth and final book in the *Sisters Grimm* series. There is a surprising amount of death and violence in this book so urge caution with younger readers.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

Locust Migration

By: L. e. Carmichael
A Child's World, 2012
ISBN:
9781609736231



Curriculum: Locusts; Migration; Swarms

Throughout history disasters have decimated crops and ruined habitats, but few things are as savage as locusts. Turning day into night, a swarming mass of locusts, which can take several hours to pass through, will eat every plant in sight leaving nothing behind. This title discusses the life cycle of locusts, the differ-

ent types of locusts, and their unpredictable migration patterns. Young researchers will find ample information for basic research and are treated to incredible (and creepy) photographs. Additional books, although somewhat dated, and a publisher-sponsored website are provided.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S

Life in the Ocean

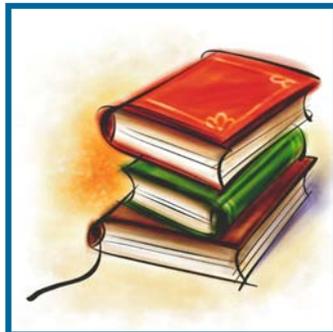
By: Claire A. Nivola
Frances Foster Books, 2012
ISBN:
9780374380687



Curriculum: Sylvia A. Earle; Marine biologists; Women explorers

As a young girl, Sylvia Earle fell in love with the ocean and explored it for the rest of her days. Her accounts gave people a glimpse into the marvels that exist deep below the water. She also illuminated the fragility of this undersea world and human impact on it. "You can't care if you don't know." The detailed illustrations will quickly bring readers to the realization of its extraordinary value. This story of a woman who followed her passion will inspire readers to think about where their dreams lie and what worlds they might explore.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
CMS Community School



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

Fiction

The Name of the Star

By: Maureen Johnson
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2012
ISBN: 9780399256608



Curriculum: Fantasy; London; Jack the Ripper; Ghosts

In a modern day London, Rory Deveaux begins a new life at a boarding school. This will be quite different from her home in Louisiana. The news is reporting a rash of brutal murders that appear to be like the Jack the Ripper cases. Rory sees someone that looks like the murderer, but no one else sees them. She discovers her ability to see and talk with spirits that roam the London Streets. Can she and her new friends be able to stop the killings? This book is hard to put down, once it's started.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Under the Never Sky

By: Veronica Rossi
Harper, 2012
ISBN: 9780062072030
Curriculum: *Survival;*
Trust; Relationships

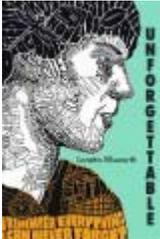


In another world, Aria is cast out from her safe, enclosed city and must now survive in the outer world, known as The Death Shop. She meets an outsider, Perry, who she views as a savage but is her only hope of survival. Perry finds she has information to help him with his quest. The two must create an alliance in a hostile world with storms that rain fire. An interesting bond develops between the two as they discover the truths of this world.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Unforgettable

By: Loretta Ellsworth
Walker & Company 2011
ISBN 9780802723055
Curriculum: *Memory;*
Synesthesia Impersonation; Dating



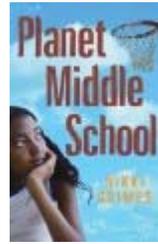
After a playground accident when he was three, Baxter Green was left with a brain condition, synesthesia, which enables (or burdens) him with the ability to remember everything that he sees, hears or feels. After his father dies, Baxter's mother begins to date a man who uses the boy's abilities to run a credit card scam for which he winds up in prison and Baxter winds up with the stolen cash. With the impending release of the con man, Baxter and his mother relocate to a town where he starts high school with his kindergarten love who doesn't remember him. Part love story and part crime drama, this novel is

a unique and entertaining coming-of-age story.

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

Planet Middle School

By: Nikki Grimes
Bloomsbury, 2011
ISBN: 9781599902845
Curriculum: *Coming of age; Family; Friendship*



Joylin has spent her life playing basketball on the street with the boys and grubby is just fine with her. Then her body starts to change and with those changes come new things to reflect about. Handsome Santiago has taken her eye and suddenly she can't think of anything except trying to get him to notice her. Is being the girl Santiago wants worth not being the girl she has always been? This novel in verse is a perfect fit for middle school.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Nonfiction

Kid Confidential: An Insider's Guide to Grown-Ups

By: Monte Montgomery
Illus. by: Patricia Storms
Walker and Company, 2012
ISBN: 9780802786432
Curriculum: *Children; Adulthood; Wit and humor*



Adult behavior can mystify the young. This humorous approach guides the curious through common facets of

grown-up demeanor in chapters such as *Why Adults Can't Keep Their Minds Off Their Bodies*, and *How to Get on a Grown-Up's Good Side, at Least Temporarily*. After poking much deserved fun, this hilarious offering ends on a gentle note focusing middle school readers on the benefits of maturity.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Alumni

The Fairy Ring, or, Elsie and Frances Fool the World

By: Mary Losure
Candlewick, 2012
ISBN:
9780763656706



Curriculum: *Fairies, England; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle 1859-1930; Spiritualism*

In 1917, nine-year-old Frances sees fairies by a waterfall near her home. Not able to convince the adults, she and her cousin Elsie devise a plan to "capture" the little people on film. Their deception spirals out of control, ensnaring even the rich and famous. This incredible true story is highlighted with the photographs in question. A captivating read.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Alumni

Baseball

By: Bo Smolka
Abdo, 2012
ISBN: 9781617831409



Curriculum: *Sports; Sports stars; Baseball*

It is hard to say where the game of baseball actually originated. For all practical purposes the game has been around for as long as balls and something to hit them with have been

around. There is mention of the game of "bases" at Valley Forge with General Washington. Perhaps Abner Doubleday can be credited with the invention but he certainly gets the credit for many of the rules that the game is played by. The book not only examines the history of the game but also the participants that are legendary.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.



Young Adults Deserve

Fiction

The Latte Rebellion

By: Sarah Jamila
Stevenson
Flux, 2011
ISBN:
9780738722788



Curriculum: Racial issues; High school; Clubs; Social Awareness

Asha and Carey are sick of being racially pigeon-holed. They are multi-ethnic honor students who don't

conform to any set of stereotype. They anonymously start the Latte Rebellion, a multiracial organization that will, they hope, fund an end-of-year trip through online t-shirt sales. This unapproved organization grows in popularity but also attracts angry protestors. With things spiraling out of hand, Carey distances herself, but Asha stays involved with serious consequences. Interspersed are scenes from Asha's expulsion hearing in April. Present this cautionary yet hopeful book to HS girls looking to raise their social consciousness.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Compulsion

By: Heidi Ayarbe
Balzer + Bray, 2011
ISBN: 9780061993862
Curriculum: Soccer; Obsessive-compulsive disorder; Dysfunctional families



Jake, 17, is the star of his HS soccer team which is poised to take their third straight championship. But Jake has a nearly debilitating case of obsessive-compulsive disorder that has him fixated on time, prime numbers, and rituals surrounding the two. Jake is convinced that if he maintains his rituals they will win the championship thus exorcizing his demons. Everything rides on this. Ayarbe weaves a painful yet realistic and compelling story of OCD. Recommend this to soccer fans, psychology students, and contemporary fiction readers. Some language and underage drinking make this appropriate for HS students.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

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Friends With Boys

By: Faith Erin Hicks
First Second, 2012
ISBN:
9781596435568



Curriculum: Relationships; Families; High school

Maggie has always been home-schooled, but now is entering high school, hesitantly making friends with siblings Lucy and Alistair. She has struggled with relationships, especially after her mother left. A ghost is also haunting her, and trying to find out what the ghost wants leads to a run-in with the police. This graphic novel has a cinematic style with close-ups, long shots, and effective wordless areas. Maggie is a character many teens will empathize with in her efforts to make her way in a new world.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8

Ashfall

By: Mike Mullin
Tanglewood, 2011
ISBN:
9781933718552



Curriculum: Volcanoes; Survival; Science fiction

While his parents take a trip to Illinois, fifteen-year-old Alex has the house to himself for the weekend. But the sudden eruption of a supervolcano in Yellowstone destroys his home. To find his family, he sets out on foot determined to travel cross country through an alien landscape cast into perpetual darkness and covered in layers of ash. He quickly learns that resources are scarce, trust is a luxury, and it only takes a few really

tough days to go from a boy to being a man.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.

Another Jekyll, Another Hyde

By: Daniel & Dina Nayeri
Candlewick, 2012



ISBN: 9780763652616

Curriculum: Fantasy; Magic; Demons; Murder

In this satisfying conclusion to the trilogy, the demon Nicola Vileroy is seeking immortality in the only way she has left: through her son. Using the bone dust, she starts the agonizing transformation process on her unwitting stepson, Thomas Goodwyn-Brown. Thomas resists as best he can, but Vileroy's son's spirit has her demonic strength to assist him. Fans will read this one over and over again.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

See You at Harry's

By: Jo Knowles
Candlewick, 2012
ISBN: 9780763654078



Curriculum: Coming of Age; Family issues; Coping with death

Twelve-year old Fern is starting middle school, which means riding the bus with her older brother. Fern realizes that her brother is gay and it causes trouble for him at school, on the bus, and at home. She feels forgotten in the wake of her baby brother's antics, which earn him a place as the face of the family restaurant. But when tragedy hits, the family must come together to overcome their grief. Get out the Kleenex; this tear-jerker will make the rounds quickly.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

Many things
we need can
wait. The
child cannot.
Now is the
time his
bones are
formed, his
mind devel-
oped. To him
we cannot
say tomor-
row, his name
is today.

Gabriela Mistral

Meet the review crew members - Past and Present!



Members from left to right: Michelle Jenson, Nancy Lucas, Chris Coble, Steve Bowley, Lynne Lopez-Crowley, Cat DeRose, Sudi Stodola, Karen Burns, Peggy Obert, Karen Shannon, Cheryl Joseffy, Karyn Pocernich.