

Best Books for Libraries 2016 – Elementary School

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Parsippany-Troy Hills Public Library System www.parsippanylibrary.org

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449 Halsey Road	68 Nokomis Avenue	31 Trinity Park
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Picture Books

Antony, Steve. *I’ll Wait, Mr. Panda.* (Grades Preschool-Kindergarten) Mr. Panda is back in this adorable picture book that teaches a clear message in a simple way. This time, Mr. Panda’s black and white animal friends are curious what he’s making, but only one has the patience to stick around.

DiPucchio, Kelly. *Dragon was Terrible.* (Gr. K-2) In this appealing story, a trouble-making dragon stomps on flowers, scribbles in books, and even steals candy from baby unicorns! The king and knights cannot figure out how to stop him. It takes one little boy to think of a solution to tame the dragon! Colorful, comic illustrations add humor to the story. Dragon lovers and book lovers, alike, will enjoy this witty tale!

Ellis, Carson. *Du Iz Tak?* (PreK - Gr. 3) Open the cover of this book to enter a world of tiny insects who speak in their own unique language. “Du iz tak?,” the damselflies ask as they observe a tiny plant unfurling. Have fun deciphering their words and unraveling the plot using picture clues from the elaborate, beautifully detailed illustrations. This book challenges the imagination and begs to be pored over again and again! Perfect for practicing inference and decoding skills!

Hall, Michael. *Frankencrayon*. (Grades K-2) An all crayon production of Frankenstein is threatened by a giant scribble on the set. Students will love this wacky tale which features cut paper collage and colored crayoned drawings. Pair this book with *The Day the Crayons Quit*.

Jeffers, Oliver. *A Child of Books*. (Grades 1 and up) A striking picture book that tells the story of a young girl who loves to read and meets a little boy who seems lonely so she leads the boy off on an adventure of stories. Beautiful words from classical books are included in this masterpiece of a picture book.

Polacco, Patricia. *The Mermaid's Purse*. (Grades 2-4). Polacco tells a story based on her grandmother's early years in 19th century Michigan. The story is lovely, with the message that books can teach anyone about everything. Suitable as both a read aloud and one on one and small group setting.

Rex, Adam. *School's First Day of School*. (Grades K-2) Many children are nervous on the first day of school but this story features a worried School. School only knows the janitor and he overhears a group of older students state that they hate school. This is a delightful twist on the traditional first day of school books.

Wenzel, Brendan. *They All Saw a Cat*. (Grades PreS-3). This playful exploration of perspective presents its strolling subject through a range of animal lenses; the resulting views comprise a kaleidoscope of physical and psychological interpretations. An excellent first purchase that belongs in all library collections.

Willems, Mo. *Nanette's Baguette*. (Grades PreS-Gr 2) Mo Willem's new picture book follows Nanette, a young frog, on her first big solo trip to the bakery. Will Nanette get the baguette from the bakery and make it home or will she devour the whole piece of bread by herself? This is a tale of forgiveness and hugs.

Easy Readers

Adler, David. *Don't Throw it to Me* (Grades K-2) Mo Jackson is a little boy with a big passion for sports. He may not be the biggest, the strongest or the fastest player, but he won't let that stop him from playing. Mo is the youngest on the team and while his classmates don't mind, the kids on the rival team tease him for being a "butterfingers" who is too tiny to catch the ball. But Mo's coach has a plan to turn Mo's little size into a big win.

Landry, Leo. *What's Up, Chuck?* (Grades K-2)

Chuck Wood is an award winning sculptor until a new resident, Scooter Possum moves to the forest. Scooter is an abstract painter and a good baker which makes Chuck jealous. This engaging upper level beginning reader would be a good selection for readers who liked the *Frog and Toad* series.

Keller, Laurie. *We are Growing!* (Grades K-1) Elephant and Piggie endorse this new easy reader about grass growing. This is the funniest book about blades of grass and perhaps the only book about blades of grass. Funky green illustrations complete this wacky tale.

Willems, Mo. *The Thank You Book.* (Grades K-2) A wonderful addition to a popular series. Reflecting on her good fortune and many blessings, Piggie decides to thank everyone who is important to her. Gerald, her best friend, does not think this is a good idea in case she forgets someone. The 25th installment in an award winning series is a must have for all collections.

Yoon, Salina. *Duck, Duck, Porcupine!* (Grades K-1) Three short chapters depict a funny trio of animals - Big Duck, Little Duck, and Porcupine. This is an excellent choice for beginning readers and the colorful, digitally created illustrations fit the story well.

Juvenile Fiction

Anderson, John David. *Ms. Bixby's Last Day.* (Grades 4-6) Topher, Brand, and Steve have classified the many types of teachers at their school. They have determined that Ms. Bixby is one of a kind and when they learn that she is too sick to continue teaching, they are determined to make her last day special.

Brown, Peter. ***The wild robot.*** (Grades 5-7) A robot named Roz becomes stranded on a desert island, with no memory of how she got there. The only way to survive is to learn about her environment from the wild animals that live on the island. At first, the animals think Roz is a monster. Will Roz win the trust of the island inhabitants, or will she be an outcast for the rest of her robot life? Readers will root for Roz in this exciting, fast-paced adventure!

Bryan, Ashley. ***Freedom over me. Eleven slaves, their lives and dreams brought to life.*** (Grades 4-6) The fictional stories of eleven slaves portrayed in this beautifully illustrated picture book are based on the lives of actual slaves who lived on a southern plantation in the early 1800s. Stories of their daily lives, as well as their hopes and dreams, are movingly told through easily accessible narrative poetry. These men and women were bought and sold for a price, but their dreams and pride could never be taken away. An excellent choice to read aloud during Black History Month.

Davies, Jaqueline. ***Nothing But Trouble.*** (Grades 5-8) A book about two sixth grade girls who are determined to liven up their town-one prank at a time. Maggie's friendships with two of the so-called popular girls come to an end due to their new interests leaving Maggie bored in her small town of Odawahoka. Lena, a new girl, changes this for Maggie when she arrives in town and the two girls become fast friends while creating pranks in the school using their different talents. Friendship and family fun make this a page turner. This pitch perfect start to a new series captures the power dynamics between adults and children and allows for the realization that everyone has a story worth hearing.

DiCamillo, Kate. ***Raymie Nightingale.*** (Grades 4-7) Raymie has a plan to make her father so proud by winning the Little Miss Central Florida Tire Contest that he will return to her family. She takes baton twirling lessons with two girls, destructive Beverly and delicate-looking Louisiana. Initially the three girls do not get along but they soon form a trio nicknamed the Three Rancheros. They set out on a search and rescue mission to find a missing book and a cat. Fans of *Because of Winn-Dixie* will want to read this book.

Dillard, Sarah. ***Mouse Scouts.*** (Grades 2-4) Best friends Violet and Tigerlily are working to earn a Sow It and Grow It scouting badge in this new illustrated chapter book series. Girl Scouts will enjoy reading excerpts from the Mouse Scout Handbook and the story may spark interest in scouts and gardening. There are three other titles in the series.

Gidwitz, Adam. *The Inquisitor's Tale: Or, the Three Magical Children and their Holy Dog.*

(Grades 5 and up) This medieval adventure is told by various travelers at an inn in France during the year 1242. Three children are the stars of the story: Jeanne is a peasant with visions that scare the other villagers, William is a teenager from a monastery whose dark skin causes ignorant folk to fear him, and Jacob is a Jewish boy forced to leave his destroyed village. The children are accompanied by Jeanne's dog, Gwenforte who has been brought back from death. The world was a cruel place in 13th century France but the unlikely friends continue on their quest. This book deals with serious themes including xenophobia but there is humor and a farting dragon to provide levity.

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *Children of Exile.* (Grades 4-8) A first in a series of

science-fiction thrillers that explores the issue of prejudice. For the past twelve years, adults called "Freds" have raised Rosi, her younger brother Bobo, and the other children of their town, saying it is too dangerous to stay with their parents, but now that they are older they are all being sent back. Their home is like nothing Rosi expected, nothing like the Freds prepared them for. Will they be able to adapt to this new lifestyle? Rosi has many questions and she is wondering if she can still trust the Freds like she always had. An ideal selection for younger readers eager for a dystopian read. This book will keep readers on the edge of their seats.

Hale, Shannon. *The Princess in Black Takes a Vacation.* (Grades 1-3) The Goat Avenger who bears a close resemblance to Duff, the goat boy, suggests that the Princess in Black needs a rest from fighting monsters. She heads off to a beach vacation while the Goat Avenger stays home and perfects his skills while training a squirrel as an assistant. The two storylines unfold in alternate chapters.

Krulik, Nancy. *Science No Fair! Project Droid.* (Grades 2-4) In the first installment of this new and fun series, Logan's mom shares her latest invention: a lifelike boy android named Java, who she plans to send to school with Logan and introduce as his cousin. Logan is not happy about this because Java has a tendency to do things that make him stand out. Then Java creates a disaster at the science fair. Children will be really eager to read book two in this funny series.

Lin, Grace. ***When the Sea Turned to Silver***. (Grades 3-6) In this fast-paced fantasy, filled with beautifully detailed illustrations and based on Chinese folklore, Pinmei's grandmother, a well-known storyteller, is kidnapped by the Emperor's soldiers. Pinmei knows the only way to rescue her is to find the Luminous Stone That Lights the Night and bring it to the Emperor. Pinmei and her good friend, Yishan, embark on an adventure filled with danger and fantastical obstacles. While on the journey, Pinmei realizes she has grown into a storyteller, just like her grandmother. Although this is the last in the trilogy of related stories, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, and *Starry River of the Sky*, this tale can be read on its own.

MacLachlan, Patricia. ***The poet's dog***. (Grades 3-5) This is a simple, beautifully written tale by Newbery Medal winner MacLachlan, about an extraordinary dog, Teddy, and the relationship that blossoms between him and two lost children he rescues in a blizzard. Teddy had learned words from Sylvan, a poet who rescued him from a shelter and read to him every day, so that Teddy was able to use his "words" with poets and children. As the children and dog wait to be rescued, they begin to form a bond of friendship and love. What will happen to Teddy once the children are found? The heartwarming, magical conclusion is filled with a surprise or two!

Martin, Ann M. ***Missy Piggle-Wiggle and the Whatever Cure***. (Grades 2-5) In the classic "Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle" series, the title character "cured" children of annoying habits without belittling them. By helping the children understand how their behavior affects others, Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle taught empathy in a humorous way. The tradition lives on in Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle's great niece who learned a lot from her great aunt when she would visit her as a child. Missy is called to take over for her great aunt who has left to go find her husband in search of pirates. A fun family read aloud, this version will win new fans without alienating fans of the original series.

Medina, Juana. ***Juana & Lucas***. (Grades 2-4) Juana lives in Bogota, Columbia. She loves many things, including Lucas her dog, drawing, and comic book superhero, Astroman. She does not like learning English in school! Then, Juana is told she will be taking a trip to Spaceland Amusement Park in the USA and may meet Astroman! She quickly decides that learning a new language may not be such a bad idea after all! This is a fast-paced, humorous story, filled with entertaining color illustrations. Spanish words, interspersed throughout the text, lend authenticity and are easy to decipher in the context of the story. Fans of Judy Moody and Clarice Bean will love Juana!

Peck, Richard. *The Best Man*. (Grades 4-6) Archer tells the story of two weddings and everything that happened in between the two events. He has excellent male role models in his life as he navigates through sixth grade. There are sweet moments in this story between father and son and hilarious incidents including Archer's gig as ring bearer. When Archer finds out that his teacher and his uncle are gay, it surprises him because he doesn't always notice what is happening around him. Ultimately this is a story of a loving family that has room for more members.

Pennypacker, Sara. *Pax*. (Grades 4-7). A story of war, loss and the power of friendship. Set in an intentionally undefined time and a place that could be a near future America, this novel begins with heartbreaking scene of a child being separated from a tame fox that has been a pet and best friend to him since his mother died a few years before. His father now must go to war and Peter, the boy, has to live with his grandfather and can not keep his fox, who is named Pax. Peter runs away from his grandfather and travels hundreds of miles through the wild to find Pax. Meanwhile, Pax must learn how to live in the wild on his own. Perspectives alternate between the boy and fox and both face adventure and friendship in trying to find their way back to one another.

Peterson, Mary. *Snail has lunch*. (Grades 1-3) In this appealing, humorous story, snail's best friend, Ladybug, convinces him to leave his safe comfortable home, a rusty old bucket, to join her for lunch in the garden. Snail is reluctant to venture out, but is forced to when a farmer picks up Snail's bucket, accidentally spilling him out onto the ground. Finding himself in unfamiliar surroundings, Snail experiences both fun and frightening adventures. This easy chapter book, filled with humorous, color illustrations and some amusing surprises, is a great choice for children who are hesitant to try something new.

Graphic Novels

Clanton, Ben. *Narwhal: Unicorn of the Sea*. (Grades 1-3) Narwhal and Jelly are an unlikely pair that star in this trio of comics. The mostly blue and gray illustrations feature other sea

creatures, waffles, and an angry robot. A funny sea monkey and even a narwhal song are included. Readers will eagerly await the next book in this series.

Seagle, Steven. *Camp Midnight.* (Grades 4-6) Skye is upset when her father and stepmother send her away to camp for the summer. She notices that the campers are unusual and soon discovers that she is the only human at a camp for monsters. She makes friends with Mia, a pale girl that no one notices and spots a cute but very hairy boy. Everyone at camp is encouraged to show their true forms. Will Skye reveal her true identity to the monster campers?

Telegemeier, Raina. ***Ghosts.*** (Grades 4-7) Catrina and her family have just moved to Northern California and Cat is not happy about leaving her friends behind. Her sister, Maya, has cystic fibrosis and the move will help her condition due to the cool, salty air that comes from the sea. As the girls explore their new home, they discover that there are ghosts in Bahia de la Luna. Maya wants to meet one but Cat wants nothing to do with them. Cat must learn to put away her fears for her own sake and her sister. Telegemeier's bold colors, superior visual storytelling and unusual subject matter will keep readers engrossed. A can't miss addition to middle grade graphic novel shelves.

Biography

Bowman, Donna Janell. ***Step Right Up: How Doc and Jim Key taught the World about Kindnes.*** (Grades 2-6) A profile of William "Doc" Key and his relationships with animals, specifically his horse Jim. Key was born a slave in the 1830s. After the civil war he built a veterinary where he sold his homemade remedies and became very successful. Referred to as "Doc" Key, trained a clumsy colt named Jim to amaze audiences with his uncanny ability to spell and do math. A great biography and story about human rights.

Kulling, Monica. ***Sky High: George Ferris's Big Wheel.*** (Grades 1-2) George loved watching waterwheels turn when he was a child. His wife encouraged him to enter a contest to design something for the World's Fair in 1893. George's idea of a giant wheel that would give people a fantastic view of the fair and Lake Michigan was rejected several times. This step into reading biography of the inventor of the ferris wheel will inspire young children to create their own designs.

Levy: *I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsberg makes her mark.* (Gr. 3-5) As a child, Ruth Bader Ginsberg was not afraid to fight for what she thought was right. Naturally left-handed, she insisted on using her left hand for writing, even when her teachers wanted her to use her right hand. She wanted to take shop class in school, rather than the traditional sewing and cooking classes. When she earned her law degree, she was not afraid to dissent when she saw racial injustice and religious prejudice in the world around her. This inspiring picture book biography of a famous Supreme Court Justice may spur young readers to speak up for what is right and become social activists!

Sweet, Melissa. *Some writer! The story of E.B. White.* (Gr. 4-7) The life of the well-known author of *Charlotte's Web*, *The Trumpet of the Swan* and *Stuart Little*, is told, through easily accessible text, photos, excerpts from E.B. White's letters, as well as beautiful collage illustrations. Readers will want to pore over this wonderful book again and again.

Nonfiction

Fleming, Candace. *Giant squid.* (Gr. 2-4) With each page turn of this nonfiction picture book, readers will learn a little more about this mysterious creature of the deep. Informative poetic text and dramatic illustrations work together to convey the enormity of the giant squid. Although scientists have just recently caught glimpses of it on camera, they have assembled bits of information from clues provided by pieces of the cephalopod washed up on shore, or pieces of its beak found in a whale's stomach. The author supplies references and websites for further research to satisfy the curiosity of science-minded readers.

Jenkins, Steve. *Animals by the numbers.* (Gr. 2-6) Do all the insects in the world weigh more than all the humans? Which animal's tongue is longer than its body? Find the answers to these and more intriguing questions in this eye-catching, engaging book by Caldecott Honor winning author, Steve Jenkins. Facts and figures about animals from around the world are compared using infographics, clear text and Jenkins' signature collage illustrations. Amazing facts about size, speed, defenses, survival, migration, and more, are compared in various types of graphs, logic trees, maps, and diagrams. Visually appealing and accessible, this is a great choice for browsing or for delving more deeply into learning about the animal kingdom.

Raczka, Bob. *Wet cement. A mix of concrete poems.* (Gr. 3-6) Concrete or shape poems are so much fun to read! Words are placed on the page in a layout that reflects the subject or meaning of the poem. What do you think concrete poems about a firefly, tunnels or lightning would look like? Check out this book to find out! This engaging poetic form may entice children to try their hands at writing their own concrete poems!

Thornhill, Jan. ***The tragic tale of the great auk.*** (Gr. 3-5) In this nonfiction picture book, the author chronicles events that, over centuries, led to the extinction of this species by the mid 1800's. Easily accessible narrative text pairs with dramatic illustrations to convey the heartbreak of this extinction story. Although the auk were swift swimmers, they could not fly or walk very well, and so were at a disadvantage when they had to lay their eggs on land. In addition to the negative impact of climate change over centuries, the auk's struggle to survive became impossible once humans were able to reach them by sea. Ironically, the auk's extinction was the impetus for the birth of the conservation movement. The moving narrative connects with the reader on an emotional level and brings home the importance of protecting endangered species.

Tonatiuh, Duncan. ***The princess and the warrior. A tale of two volcanoes.*** (K - Gr. 2) This is a retelling of the ancient Mexican legend about the origins of two majestic volcanoes overlooking Mexico City. In this story, Izta, the most beautiful princess in the land, falls in love with Popoca, a brave warrior in the emperor's army. Izta's father, the emperor, will allow them to marry only if Popoca defeats his enemy Jaguar Claw. But, Jaguar Claw has a plan to outsmart Popoca. Who will be victorious, and how did the two volcanoes, standing side by side, come to be?

Zommer, Yuval. ***The Big Book of Bugs.*** (Grades 2-4) This oversized book includes information on more than 25 bugs. There are several facts on each page and seek-and-find features which encourage reader interaction. Colorful digital illustrations add to the appeal. Kids will love to browse this book although they will need additional information for a full report about a specific bug.