

Best Books for Libraries 2014 – Elementary School

Prepared by

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

Main Library
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Parsippany
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Lake Hiawatha Library
68 Nokomis Avenue

Lake Hiawatha
973.335.0952

Mount Tabor Library
31 Trinity Park

Mount Tabor
973.627.9508

Picture Books

Bingham, Kelly. *Circle, Square, Moose*. Moose is back with his friend, Zebra and they are ready to explain shapes. This concept book turns into chaos as Moose tries to insert cats with triangle shaped ears and other creatures into every page and ultimately proves that he is truly the star of the show. (Grades K-2)

Escoffier, M. and DiGiacomo, K. *Take Away the A. An Alphabeast of a Book!* Have fun playing with words and letters in this imaginative alphabet book. Each double page spread tells the story of how subtracting a single letter changes a word into something completely different, making for some wacky wordplay and hilarious illustrations! (Grades 1-3)

Freeman, Tor. *Olive and the Embarrassing Gift*. Olive’s best friend Joe has made them matching best friend hats. The hat is hideous and the other creatures laugh at Olive when she wears it. Children who have received an unwanted gift especially clothes from a loved relative will relate to this story. (Grades K-2)

Gay, Marie-Louise. *Any Questions?* The author answers the question “Where does a story start?” and other questions that children ask her during school visits in this clever story-within-a-story. (Grades 1-4)

Jeffers, Oliver. *Once Upon an Alphabet*. Enjoy this collection of 26 interconnected, nonsensical mini-stories accompanied by humorous illustrations, for each letter of the alphabet. Meet the Puzzled Parsnip. Find out how many Elephants can fit inside an Envelope. You’ll want to re-read these stories and pore over the amusing illustrations! (Grades K-3)

Morris, Richard. *This is a Moose*. The movie director wants to capture the life of a typical moose on film but the moose's dreams of being an astronaut do not fit the director's expectations of how a moose should behave. (Grades K-2)

Otoshi, Kathryn. *Two*. Otoshi has tackled issues of bullying and self-esteem and in *Two*, she covers friendship and exclusion. What happens when your best friend becomes friends with someone else? Is there room for more than one friend in One's life? Colorful numbers and simple words convey an important message about friendship. (Grades K-2)

Rocco, John. *Blizzard*. The blizzard of 1978 created forty inches of snow in Rocco's Rhode Island town. It is up to ten year old John to trudge through the snow with tennis rackets tied to his feet. Will he make it to the store to purchase food for his family and neighbors? (Grades K-2)

Easy Readers

Hills, Tad. *Drop it, Rocket!* Emerging readers will find it hard to resist this easy reader about Rocket, the adorable dog who loves to collect words for his word tree. In this story, Rocket finds a red boot that he doesn't want to drop. How will his teacher, the little yellow bird, convince Rocket to let go of his boot for something even more desirable? (Grades K-1)

Lin, Grace. *Ling & Ting: Twice as Silly*. This easy reader consists of six chapters full of silly twin fun and goofy wordplay. Early elementary school children will enjoy the humor of Ling and Ting. (Grades 1-2)

McDonald, Megan. *Amy Namey in Ace Reporter*. Amy is looking for an above the fold story but the town of Frog Neck Lake is not very exciting. She enlists the help of her friend, Judy Moody to search for famous sea serpents and King Tut's gum. This book is a good choice for newly independent readers. (Grades 1-3)

Graphic Novels

Bell, Cece *El Deafo*. Four-year-old Cece contracts meningitis and loses her hearing in this fictionalized story of the author's childhood which explores her feelings about being different from other children in her class and neighborhood. Cece imagines herself as a superhero named El Deafo because she has the power to hear everything with her Phonic Ear even the teachers' conversation in the teachers' lounge. (Grades 3-6)

Telgemeier, Raina. *Sisters*. Raina's autobiographical tale of two sisters is told in flashbacks on sepia-toned pages while the main storyline is a long road trip from San Francisco to Colorado with Raina, her younger brother, sister, and mother stuck in a VW Microbus along with a pet snake who was thought to be dead. This is a humorous graphic novel that older and younger sisters will want to read. (Grades 4-6)

Hayes, Geoffrey. *Benny and Penny in Lost and Found!* Benny is in a bad mood because he cannot find his pirate hat so he sets off in the fog with little sister, Penny by his side to find his treasured possession. This fifth easy-to-read comic about Benny and Penny is appealing to emerging readers because of simple, repeating words and a realistic sibling relationship. (Grades K-2)

Kibushi, Kazu. Amulet Book #6:*Escape from Lucien*. This sixth book in the popular Amulet series includes a journey to a ruined city where danger awaits Navin, Emily, Treliss, and Vigo. (Grades 4-6)

Juvenile Fiction

Adler, David. *Danny's Doodles: The Squirting Donuts*. Fourth-grader Danny and his friend Calvin investigate their teacher's drastic personality change from mean to nice in this second book about two friends with opposite personality traits. (Grades 2-4)

Auxier, Jonathan. *The Night Gardener*. In this spooky Victorian ghost story, Molly and Kip find themselves working as servants in a house that seems to be under the sinister power of an ancient curse. Who is the shadowy figure creeping into the house each night? Why is the immense tree, growing nearby, sending its roots throughout the property and into the walls of the house? (Grades 4-6)

Clements, Andrew. *The Map Trap*. Sixth grader, Alton Ziegler, loves to draw maps, but not just the usual, run of the mill, maps. He makes maps about people, and if discovered, he could be in big trouble with classmates and teachers! When Alton's maps go missing, he doesn't know if he misplaced them or if someone stole them and wants to blackmail him. Can you solve the mystery of the missing maps? (Grades 4-5)

Barnhill, Kelly. *The Witch's Boy*. When Ned and his identical twin tumble out of their raft into a raging river, only Ned survives. The villagers think that the wrong boy lived, but Ned ultimately proves them wrong when he tries to safeguard the magic his family has been protecting for generations, with the help of a bandit's daughter and a mysterious wolf. This exciting fantasy is full of magic and mystery. (Grades 4-6)

Barshaw, Ruth McNally. *The Ellie McDoodle Diaries: Ellie for President*. This sixth installment of the Ellie McDoodle series features the classic story of an elementary school race for class president. Ellie has mixed feelings about running for class president especially when she has to give up her editor job at the school newspaper and campaign against a boy she likes. Ellie's diary is full of drawings of her family friends, campaign posters, and even step-by-step instructions for creating a paper airplane. (Grades 3-5)

Cronin, Doreen. *The Case of the Weird Blue Chicken*. Dirt, Sugar, Poppy, and Sweetie are back in this second misadventure of the Chicken Squad. They have a new case which involves a weird blue bird, a house-napper, Grumpy Squirrel, and a bunch of nuts. Children will love Cronin's wisecracking writing style and Cornell's illustrations of the goofy birds. (Grades 2-4)

Foxlee, Karen. *Ophelia and the Marvelous Boy*. Ophelia, whose mother has recently passed away, travels with her father and sister to a city where it always snows. Here, Ophelia finds a boy locked away in a forgotten room in a strange museum. The boy claims to be the prisoner of Her Majesty, the Snow Queen, and says he has been waiting hundreds of years for Ophelia's help. This adventure takes Ophelia and the Marvelous Boy on a quest to save the world. Terrifying creatures and unexpected dangers will keep readers on the edges of their seats. (Grades 4-6)

Graff, Lisa. *Absolutely Almost*. Albie has been kicked out of his private school for his academic failings and he feels that he is almost good at so many things. His move to a public school in fifth grade is not easy on a naive kid. Albie considers math to be impossible, fails spelling tests weekly, and likes to read *Captain Underpants* until his mother declares that the series is for babies. Albie's new babysitter, Calista is a source of support for him but she cannot protect him completely from the world and bullies in his classroom. (Grades 4-6)

Hale, Shannon & Dean. *The Princess in Black*. Princess Magnolia has the perfect hair, pink attire, and charming manners of a perfect princess but she has an alter ego. She is also *The Princess in Black* and she must fight villains while keeping her identity a secret from a nosy duchess and a suspicious goat boy. Colorful illustrations add to this comedic chapter book for independent readers. (Grades K-3)

Holm, Jennifer L. *The Fourteenth Goldfish*. Eleven-year-old Ellie's scientist grandfather, Melvin, has discovered the secret to eternal youth, and changed himself into a teenager. Laughs ensue when "young" Grandpa Melvin moves in with Ellie and her mom (Melvin's daughter), and attends Ellie's school! Holm, a three-time Newbery Honor-winning author, explores questions about family, friendship and immortality in this entertaining science fiction tale. (Grades 4-7)

Jennings, Patrick. *Odd, Weird & Little*. When Woodrow befriends Odd, Weird and Little Toulouse, the new kid in class, Woodrow learns how to stand up to the bullies and what it means to be a true friend. Be ready for some laughs and surprises! (Grades 4-6)

Larson, Kirby. *Dash*. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese-American Mitsi is forced to move to an incarceration camp with her family, and leave her beloved dog, Dash, behind. How will Mitsi cope with living in the camp, with its dusty floors, tight living quarters, and barbed wire fences, and, will she ever be reunited with Dash? (Grades 3-6)

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Fly Away*. Unlike the other singers in her family, Lucy says she can't sing at all. When her little brother goes missing during a storm and dangerous flood, Lucy must find her voice to save him. (Grades 3-6)

Martin, Ann M. *Rain Reign*. Rose, a fifth-grader diagnosed with high-functioning autism, is obsessed with homonyms, prime numbers and following the rules. She struggles daily in school where she is teased by classmates, and at home, where her single father is frequently absent and emotionally unsupportive. When Rose's dog, Rain, disappears during a storm, Rose musters up the strength to act outside of her comfort zone to find her beloved dog, and to make some hard but brave decisions. Readers will cheer for Rose at the conclusion of this moving, uplifting story! (Grades 4-6)

Perkins, Lynne Rae. *Nuts to You*. TsTs, Chai and Ned are squirrels who are best friends. When Ned is captured by a hawk, his friends embark on a journey to find him. On their way, they encounter frightening dangers, new realms, and meet new friends. This fast-moving adventure is filled with mystery, humor, and great illustrations! (Grades 3-6)

Schulz, Heidi. *Hook's Revenge*. Captain Hook's twelve year old daughter, Jocelyn is enrolled at a ladies finishing school against her wishes. She longs for adventure on the high seas and a letter from her dead father instructs her to avenge his death by going to Neverland and defeating the crocodile who took his hand. The cast of characters includes Mr. Smee, kitchen helper, Roger, cannibals, Lost Boys, and fairies as Jocelyn travels to Neverland with her pirate crew. (Grades 4-7)

Scieska, Jon. *Frank Einstein and the Antimatter Motor*. Frank Einstein's idea for the school science contest is stolen by villain, T. Edison and his chimp. The author includes science facts and a rapid pace which will appeal to reluctant readers. This is the first book in a new series. (Grades 3-5)

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*. This memoir-in-verse is the story of Woodson's childhood from her birth in 1963 through her moves to South Carolina and New York City. The book is about her memories and beginnings as a writer but she also shares with modern readers the experience of growing up at a time when the South was segregated.. (Grade 4-7)

Juvenile Nonfiction

Albee, Sarah. ***Bugged: How Insects Changed History***. There are 300 pounds of insects for every one pound of humans and bugs have clearly made a huge impact on humans throughout history. Mosquitoes transmit malaria, flies give almost unpronounceable diseases to humans, and bees were used as a defense weapon during medieval times. (Grades 5 and up)

Bausum, Ann. ***Stubby the War Dog: The True Story of World War I's Bravest Dog***. Dog lovers will enjoy this historical book about a faithful dog who was the companion to a soldier, James Robert Conroy from training camp to the battle trenches. Stubby even became a celebrity after the war. This book includes photographs from the time period, a timeline, index, research notes, and an introduction written by Conroy's granddaughter. (Grades 4-7)

Burns, Loree Griffin. ***Handle with Care. An Unusual Butterfly Journey***. In this unusual but fascinating look at butterflies, readers will learn about how butterfly pupae are shipped from a farm in the tropical forest of Costa Rica to a new home in the Boston Museum of Science. Once in the museum, the pupae hang silently from pins until butterflies emerge. Easy to understand text and strikingly beautiful color photographs combine to document this journey. (Grades 1-4)

Campbell, Sarah C. ***Mysterious Patterns: Finding Fractals in Nature***. What do river systems, lightning and trees have in common? What about mountain ranges and broccoli? Clear text and up-close color photos will help you find the answers in this book about fractals, nature's repeating patterns. (Grades 3-5)

Chin, Jason. ***Gravity***. The principle of gravity is clearly explained to young children through brief text and dramatic illustrations on double-page spreads. Additional information, including discussions on mass and distance, is included on the final two pages. (Grades K-3)

Davies, Nicola. ***Tiny Creatures: The World of Microbes***. Young children are given an age-appropriate introduction to the tiny world of microbes in a picture book format. The author compares numbers of microbes to the number of people in New York City in a way that children can understand. Although microbes are small, their jobs are amazing including wearing down mountains, transforming food into compost and milk into yogurt. Sutton's illustrations create pleasant pictures of microbes that look like daisies, necklaces, and spaceships. (Grades 1-3)

Janeczko, Paul. ***Firefly July: A Year of Very Short Poems***. This collection of poems was selected by poet Paul Janeczko and include William Carlos Williams' classic poem, *The Red Wheelbarrow*, *Dust of Snow* by Robert Frost, a perceptive poem, *Subway Rush Hour* by Langston Hughes and many more poems that use the perfect amount of words. The poems are divided by season and Melissa Sweet's mixed-media illustrations capture the feel of each season. (Grades K-4)

Jenkins, Steve and Page, Robin. ***Creature Features. 25 Animals Explain Why They Look the Way They Do.*** In a conversational and humorous style, 25 animals answer questions about the reasons for their unusual facial features. Fun facts and Steve Jenkins' striking collage illustrations make this a fun and informative book to read. Further facts about the animals' diet, habitat and relative sizes are included. (Grades K-2)

Jenkins, Steve. ***Eye to Eye. How Animals See the World.*** In another impressive work, Steve Jenkins explains how, for most animals, their eyes are the most important source of information about the world around them. Information on the four basic types of eyes, the evolution of the eye, and specifics about the unique characteristics of each animal's eyes, is presented. Amazing facts and up-close collage illustrations will impress readers. Additional facts on size, habitat and diet are provided at the end of the book. (Grades 3-6)

Judge, Lita. ***Born in the Wild. Baby Mammals and Their Parents.*** Appealing illustrations and facts, conveyed in simple, clear language, show the reader that baby animals are not so different from human babies! They need food, shelter, protection, love and guidance, too. This book will inspire young readers to learn more about these adorable creatures. Additional information about each animal is provided on the last few pages. (Grades K-2)

Muth, Jon J. ***Hi, Koo. A Year of Seasons.*** Caldecott honoree, Jon J. Muth, presents 26 haikus on the topic of the seasons, featuring the little panda bear, Koo. All poems describe familiar scenes young children can relate to. In his author note, Muth explains why he did not strictly use the traditional 5-7-5 poetic form, and asks readers to find the "alphabetical path through the book by following the capitalized words in each haiku." (Grades K-4)

Stewart, Melissa. ***Feathers. Not Just For Flying.*** Young scientists will enjoy this fascinating look at the varied and sometimes surprising functions of bird feathers. Sixteen bird species are featured, with accurately detailed illustrations and relative feather sizes shown. Younger readers can follow the main, larger font text, while more experienced readers will want to look over the additional information contained in the fact boxes on each page. (Grades 1-4)

Ward, Jennifer (Illus. by Steve Jenkins). ***Mama Built a Little Nest.*** Dramatic illustrations on full page spreads, along with rhyming text, introduce young naturalists and budding birdwatchers to facts about different kinds of birds' nests. An array of bird species is covered, from the more common cowbird and woodpecker, to less familiar species, including the weaverbird and hornbill. (Grades K-2)

Juvenile Biographies

Bryant, Jen. *The Right Word. Roget and His Thesaurus*. The life of Peter Mark Roget, inventor of the thesaurus, is depicted in this intriguing picture book biography. Fascinating, detailed collage illustrations of Roget's word lists will impart an appreciation of his word classification system. A detailed timeline also mentions Roget's other inventions, including the slide rule and pocket chess set. (Grades 3-5)

Ehlert, Lois. *The Scraps Book. Notes From a Colorful Life*. Using her signature collage illustrations, Ehlert provides a look at her career as an author and picture book illustrator, beginning with her early years, when she read "all the books on the library shelf," and thought that someday she "could make a book." Kids will love poring over the illustrations, many of which they may recognize from her well-known picture books. Words and pictures help explain the process of creating these familiar pages, and may inspire young readers to make their own collage artworks. (Grades 2-5)

Gandhi, Arun. *Grandfather Gandhi*. This picture book biography is a personal tale of Gandhi told from his grandson's point of view. Arun Gandhi spent two years living on the ashram with his grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi and one day Arun feared that his anger over a push on the soccer field meant he would never be peaceful like his grandfather. Gandhi spoke of how anger is like electricity and it can strike or "turn the darkness into light." (Grades 1-3)