

# The Best New Books for K-3 Readers and Writers

Judson Literacy In Motion Conference 2013

Compiled and Annotated by Maria Walther

www.mariawalther.com

Note about Teaching Ideas References:

M-by-M Reading = *Month-by-Month Reading for the Differentiated Classroom* (Walther & Phillips, 2012)

M-by-M Writing = *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* (Walther & Phillips, 2009)

Poetry = *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010)

L. I. B. = *Literature Is Back!* (Fuhler & Walther, 2007)

## BOOKS TO BEGIN THE SCHOOL YEAR

Breen, S. (2013). *Pug & Doug*. New York: Dial.

Even friends who both love listening to polka music and have a secret "pawshake" can have their own unique interests. When a misunderstanding threatens their friendship, Pug and Doug agree to, "... talk things over. Because that's what best friends do."

**Teaching Ideas: Beginning of the Year; Social Studies—Friendship, Conflict Resolution; (For more books on building community see *M-by-M Reading* p. 50) (For more beginning of school year books see L. I. B. p. 128)**

Klausmeier, J. (2013). *Open this little book*. (S. Lee, Illus.). San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.

The joys of reading one book after another are celebrated in this uniquely designed picture book.

**Teaching Ideas: Readers Read Book, After Book, After Book (*M-by-M Reading* Mini-Lesson p. 62) (For more books that celebrate reading see L. I. B. p. 33)**

O'Byrne, N. (2013). *Open very carefully: A book with bite*. (Words by Nick Bromley). Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

The ugly duckling finds a crocodile in the book he's reading aloud and with the help of his fellow readers he rocks the crocodile to sleep—but not for long!

**Teaching Ideas: Reading-Writing Connection, Reading Response—Where do you think the crocodile goes next?**

## BOOKS TO SPARK COMPREHENSION CONVERSATIONS

Hopkins, J. M. (2013). *Prairie chicken little*. (H. Cole, Illus.). Atlanta, GA: Peachtree.

Mary McBlicken the prairie chicken thinks a stampede is coming, so she and her friends run off to tell Cowboy Stan and Red Dog Dan. Then, a sly coyote spots them. Read to find out how this version of the Henny Penny tale ends.

**Teaching Ideas: Traditional Tales, CCSS RL9 - Compare & contrast two versions of same story (See mini-lesson in *M-by-M Reading* p. 142)**

Hodgkinson, J. (2011). *Goldilocks and just one bear*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick

In this version of the Goldilocks story, Bear wanders out of the woods, into the noisy city, and takes refuge in an apartment in "Snooty Towers" only to discover that the "mommy person" is his long, lost friend/foe Goldilocks.

**Teaching Ideas: Traditional Tales, CCSS RL9 - Compare & contrast two versions of same story (See mini-lesson in *M-by-M Reading* p. 142)**

Rosenthal, A. K. (2013). *Exclamation mark*. (T. Lichtenheld, Illus.). New York: Scholastic.  
Feeling alone in a world of periods, the exclamation mark tries everything to fit in and is about to give up when he meets the question mark. Question mark helps him discover his unique talent—exclaiming!  
**Teaching Ideas: Inferring Big Ideas—Accepting Differences**

Cordell, M. (2012). *Hello! Hello!* New York: Disney/Hyperion.  
Tired of her electronic devices and of being ignored by her family, Lydia ventures outside to discover a world of wonder and adventure. In the end, she entices her family to join her.  
**Teaching Ideas: Pair with *Doug Unplugged* (Yaccarino, 2013) Inferring Big Ideas—Technology vs. The Real World**

Yaccarino, D. (2013). *Doug unplugged*. New York: Knopf.  
Each day when Doug's parents leave for work, they plug him in so he can download lots of facts. One day Doug unplugs and experiences a new kind of learning that includes playing with a friend.  
**Teaching Ideas: Pair with *Hello! Hello!* (Cordell, 2012), Inferring Big Ideas—Technology vs. The Real World**

Marino, G. (2012). *Too tall houses*. New York: Viking.  
Good friends and neighbors, Owl and Rabbit, live in two small houses until the competition begins to make their houses taller and taller. When both houses are blown down, the two friends work together to build the perfect house.  
**Teaching Ideas: Inferring Big Ideas**

Reid, B. (2013). *Picture a tree*. Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman.  
Barbara Reid's unique Plasticine illustrations invite readers to notice that "there is more than one way to picture a tree."  
**Teaching Ideas: Mental Images, Different Perspectives (See mini-lessons in *M-by-M Reading* p. 183-184)**

Harness, C. (2013). *Mary Walker wears the pants: The true story of a doctor, reformer, and Civil War hero*. (C. Molinari, Illus.). Chicago: Albert Whitman.  
Mary Walker, an outspoken advocate for women's rights, received the Medal of Honor for bravery during the Civil War.  
**Teaching Ideas: Determining Importance in Biographies; Read when studying Abraham Lincoln**

Pinborough, J. (2013). *Miss Moore thought otherwise*. (D. Atwell, Illus.). New York: Houghton Mifflin.  
A biography of Anne Carroll Moore, a believer in quality literature for children, created and worked in the children's room at the New York Public Library. Connect this title to other library-related biographies like *The Librarian from Basra* (Winter, 2005), *Biblioburro* (Winter, 2010), *Librarian on the Roof! A True Story* (King, 2010), and *Miss Dorothy and Her Bookmobile* (Houston, 2011).  
**Teaching Ideas: Determining Importance in Biographies (See mini-lesson in *M-by-M Reading* p. 167)**

Stone, T. L. (2013). *Who says women can't be doctors? The story of Elizabeth Blackwell*. (M. Priceman, Illus.). New York: Holt.

This inspiring biography about the first woman doctor is written in such a way that it will inform and entertain young readers at the same time. An author's note including a photograph of Blackwell adds to the information found in the book.

**Teaching Ideas:** Determining Importance in Biographies; Pair with *Judy Moody* by Megan McDonald (her idol is Elizabeth Blackwell)

## INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

Bishop, N. (2012). *Snakes*. New York: Scholastic.

Nic Bishop draws his readers into the world of snakes through stunning photographs and interesting, well-written information. I usually read his books a few pages at a time, like a chapter book, so we can enjoy the experience! Nic Bishop's informational texts have earned him many awards and include the following titles: *Spiders, Frogs, Butterflies and Moths, Marsupials, and Lizards*.

**Teaching Ideas:** CCSS Grade 1 RL.5 Comparing Fiction/Nonfiction Pair with *My Snake Blake* by Randy Siegel (For more Fiction/Nonfiction pairings see L.I.B. p. 185, *M-by-M Reading* p. 212)

Cooke, L. (2013). *A little book of sloth*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Join Lucy Cooke, founder of the Sloth Appreciation Society, and visit Slothville, a sanctuary in Costa Rica for orphaned and injured sloths, to learn more about sloth's mellow ways.

**Teaching Ideas:** Create a multi-genre text set using: "Slow Sloth's Slow Song" (p. 65) of Jack Prelutsky's book *Something Big Has Been Here* (1990) and *Let's Look at Sloths* (Piehl, 2011); Fluency Fun Lesson (*M-by-M Reading* p. 71) (For a text set about Rocks see *M-by-M Writing* p. 152)

Goodman, S. E. (2012). *It's a dog's life: How man's best friend sees, hears, and smells the world*. (D. Slonim, Illus.). New York: Roaring Brook.

If you have any dog lovers in your class, this is the book for them! Told from the perspective of a furry mutt named Joe, this book will both educate and entertain young readers.

**Teaching Ideas:** Read Like a Writer - Nonfiction; CCSS Grade K/1 RI.9 Compare and contrast with another nonfiction book about dogs

## BOOKS FOR WRITERS

LaRochelle, D. (2012). *It's a tiger!* (J. Tankard, Illus.). San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.

Begin reading this boldly illustrated picture book on the front flap and continue to read, notice, and laugh at the young narrator's adventures as he narrowly escapes a tiger again and again!

**Teaching Ideas:** Mentor Text—Read Like a Writer; Creative Conventions; Repeated Line

Fleming, C. (2012). *Oh, no!* (E. Rohmann, Illus.). New York: Schwartz & Wade.

When a frog, mouse, loris, sun bear, and monkey fall into a hole, the tiger is ready to pounce. Then, elephant comes and saves the animals and tiger falls into the hole. Will the animals help him out? "Oh no!"

**Teaching Ideas:** Mentor Text—Read Like a Writer

Sheth, K. (2013). *Tiger in my soup*. (J. Ebbeler, Illus.). Atlanta, GA: Peachtree.

While trying to get his big sister to read to him, a boy imagines there's a tiger in his soup.

**Teaching Ideas:** Pair with *It's a Tiger* (LaRochelle, 2012); Multicultural

Jocelyn, M., & Jocelyn, N. (2013). *Where do you look?* Plattsburgh, NY: Tundra.

A playful, colorful, and kid-friendly look at homonyms.

**Teaching Ideas: Homonyms; Multiple-Meaning Words Mini-Lessons (*M-by-M Reading* pp. 181-182)**

Mack, J. (2012). *Good news bad news*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.

If you are looking for another picture book with a see-saw pattern to pair with *Fortunately* (Charlip, 1964), young readers will enjoy this tale of a rabbit and a mouse who, when trying to have a picnic, experience good news and bad news together.

**Teaching Ideas: Mentor Text—Pattern Books; See-Saw Pattern**

## BOOKS FOR POETS

Gerber, C. (2013). *Seeds, bees, butterflies, and more! Poems for two voices*. (E. Yelchin, Illus.). New York: Holt.

Pair your students for some poetry reading fun! Together, they can read Gerber's rhyming poems and learn about nature. This book is ideal for plant units and for sharing in the spring.

**Teaching Ideas: Fluency, Poetry Performance (*M-by-M Reading* p. 188), Pair with *Messing Around on the Monkey bars and Other School Poems for Two Voices* (Franco, 2009) (For other poems to perform see Poetry p. 73)**

Lewis, J. P. (2013). *Face bug*. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

Welcome to the Face Bug Museum with close-up photographs and poems about 14 different bugs. Ends with "And Now a Word from our Bugs" that tells readers, in first person point-of-view, where each bug lives, how it grows, what it eats, and what eats it.

**Teaching Ideas: Science—Insects; Poetry; Informational Text (For other science-related poetry titles see Poetry p. 107)**

Singer, M. (2011). *Caterpillars*. Waynesville, NC: Earlylight.

In this poetic nonfiction book, Singer begins with a poem, then continues to use each line of the poem on a separate page to describe the lives and life cycles of caterpillars. In addition, she uses photographs, labels, and captions to enhance the information found in the running text.

**Teaching Ideas: Science—Insects; Poetry; Informational Text (For other caterpillar poems see Poetry p. 94)**

Singer, M. (2013). *Follow, follow*. (J. Masse, Illus.). New York: Dial.

In Singer's sequel to the book *Mirror Mirror* she creates another collection of "reverso" poems about fairy tales.

**Teaching Ideas: Poetry; Different Perspectives**

## BOOKS FOR HISTORY BUFFS

Cole, H. (2012). *Unspoken*. New York: Scholastic.

This wordless picture book depicts a young girl's willingness to help a runaway slave and shows that "everyday people were brave in quiet ways."

**Teaching Ideas: Black History; U. S. History (See *M-by-M Reading*, pp. 164-166)**

Cline-Ransome, L. (2013). *Light in the darkness: A story about how slaves learned in secret.* (J. E. Ransome, Illus.). New York: Disney.

The story of Rosa and her mother who risk their lives to attend a "pit school" run by a literate slave.

**Teaching Ideas:** Black History; U. S. History (See *M-by-M Reading*, pp. 164-166)

## BOOKS FOR BOYS (AND GIRLS)

Duddle, J. (2013). *The king of space.* Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

Rex, who lives with his parents on a "moog farm" in the Gamma Quadrant, decides to create a warbot to conquer the universe. He succeeds and crowns himself "King of Space." But when the Galactic Alliance gets annoyed, his mother comes to his rescue!

**Teaching Ideas:** Books for Boys

Rocco, J. (2013). *Super hair-o and the barber of doom.* New York: Disney/Hyperion.

Rocco and his "superfriends" get their superpowers from their hair. Unfortunately, they all have to go to the barber. Will they get their powers back?

**Teaching Ideas:** Books for boys

Coh, S. (2013). *Princess on the run.* Philadelphia, PA: Running Press.

Princess Antonia has everything she can wish for, but she's still bored. One day she runs away from the castle and, along with her fellow princesses, discovers the joys of freedom.

**Teaching Ideas:** Reading during a unit on traditional tales

## NEW BOOKS IN A SERIES

Lester, H. (2013). *Happy birdday, Tacky!* (L. Munsinger, Illus.). New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Tacky's companions are planning a perfect birdday party for him, but with Tacky around the party becomes a bit imperfect!

**Teaching Ideas:** Books in a Series

Long, E. (2013). *The Wing Wing Brothers carnival de math.* New York: Holiday House.

The Wing-Wing Brothers (whose names all begin with the letter w) enjoy three different carnival amusements while counting up and back by 10s to 100.

**Teaching Ideas:** Math, CCSS Counting and Cardinality, Numbers and Operation in Base 10

Watt, M. (2013). *Scaredy squirrel goes camping.* Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can.

Instead of going camping, Scaredy decides to watch a camping show on television. There's only one problem—he needs to plug it in!

**Teaching Ideas:** Read Like a Writer, Books in a Series

Willems, M. (2013). *A big guy took my ball.* New York: Hyperion.

When a "big guy" takes Piggie's ball, Gerald sets out to get it back until he realizes that the big guy is REALLY big, yet misunderstood. In the end, the three friends figure out how to have fun together.

**Teaching Ideas:** Read Like a Writer, Books in a Series