

The Best New Books for K-3 Readers and Writers

Judson Literacy In Motion Conference 2016

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Note about Teaching Ideas References:

T. L. T. = *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards* (Walther, 2015)

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

Dyckman, A. (2016). *Horrible bear!* (Z. O'Hara, Illus.). New York: Little, Brown.

A red-headed girl gets VERY upset and yells at bear when he accidentally breaks her kite. Bear is "indignant" and plots to get her back. Use this book when discussing how to work out misunderstandings with peers.

Teaching Ideas: Read Like a Writer; Three Read Aloud Words: *indignant, barged, ruckus* (See M-by-M Reading p. 15-16)

BOOK TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjZ6MMbxof4&index=2&list=PL88D35C15FBEBDFE7>

Ko, S. (2015). *A dog wearing shoes*. New York: Random House.

Mini finds a lost dog wearing little yellow shoes and desperately wants to keep him until he runs away. After finding him at the animal shelter, she realizes how much his owner must miss him and works to reunite them. Will Mini adopt her own dog from the shelter?

Teaching Ideas: Pets; Animal Shelters; Making Thoughtful Decisions; Inferring Big Ideas (See M-by-M Reading p. 186)

Litwin, E. (2016). *Groovy Joe: Ice cream and dinosaurs*. (T. Lichtenheld, Illus.). New York: Scholastic.

If your students enjoy Eric Litwin's *Pete the Cat* books, they'll flip over his new character Groovy Joe. In his first book about sharing, Joe shares his ice cream with increasingly larger dinosaurs until there is none left. What will happen next? **LINK TO SONG:** <http://groovyjoestories.scholastic.com/>

Teaching Ideas: Song Picture Book; Beginning of Year; Sharing

Mantchev, L. (2015). *Strictly no elephants*. (T. Yoo, Illus.). New York: Simon & Schuster.

A boy and his tiny elephant don't fit in with the other members of the The Pet Club, so he and a skunk-owning girl where all are welcome.

Teaching Ideas: Accepting Differences, Developing Empathy and Social Imagination (See T.L.T. pp. 14-15)

BOOKS TO TEACH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Dale, P. (2015). *Dinosaur rocket!* Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

In the fourth book of her dinosaur series, Penny Dale launches the dinosaurs into space. This bright and lively picture book is filled with adjectives and onomatopoeias.

Teaching Idea: Grammar—Adjectives that describe feelings (brave, nervous, excited, proud, happy)

Jackson, R. (2016). *Have a look, says book*. (K. Hawkes, Illus.). New York: Atheneum.
A father and daughter take a whimsical, rhyming journey into a book filled with things to see and "touch."
Teaching Idea: Adjectives

BOOKS TO SPARK COMPREHENSION CONVERSATIONS

Atkinson, C. (2016). *Explorers of the wild*. New York: Disney/Hyperion.
An adventurous boy and an equally curious bear explore the wild forest. When they bump into each other, they discover that exploring together is much more fun! Can you find the snail hidden on every page?
Teaching Ideas: Think about Point of View (See T.L.T. p. 124); Friendship

Barton, C. (2016). *That's not bunny!* (C. Jack, Illus.). New York: Disney/Hyperion.
Fierce Hawk is perched on his nest ready to snatch his prey but he is outwitted by a clever rabbit.
Teaching Ideas: Pair with *My Lucky Day* (Kasza, 2005); Three Read Aloud Words: *fierce, dismayed, contents* (See M-by-M Reading p. 15-16)

Cummins, L. R. (2016). *A hungry lion or a dwindling assortment of animals*. New York: Atheneum.
A hungry lion is surrounded by his assortment of animal friends. After each page turn, a few animals disappear. Is Lion eating the animals or is something else occurring? Readers will be surprised more than once!
Teaching Ideas: Predicting (See M-by-M Reading p. 116-119), Unexpected ending

Fan, T., & Fan, E. (2016). *The night gardener*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
William lives in an orphanage on downtrodden Grimloch Lane. One morning he wakes to a surprise topiary created by the night gardener. Each day, a new topiary appears bringing hope and happiness to the townsfolk.
Teaching Idea: Use illustrations to describe characters, settings, and events (See T.L.T. p. 127)

Garoche, C. (2015). *The snow rabbit*. New York: Enchanted Lion.
This uniquely illustrated wordless picture book tells the magical tale of two sisters (one in a wheelchair) who go out to explore a wintry day.
Teaching Idea: Winter

Higgins, R. T. (2015). *Mother Bruce*. New York: Disney/Hyperion.
Bruce, the grumpy bear, likes his eggs cooked in fancy recipes. One day, Bruce finds a recipe for boiled goose eggs but instead of a delicious meal, he finds himself the mother to four goslings. After trying to scare them away, Bruce decides to make the best of the situation.
Teaching Idea: Compare and contrast with *The Perfect Nest* (Friend, 2007)

Miles, D. (2015). *Book*. (N. Hoopes, Illus.). Familius.
Add this book to your collection of read alouds about the unmatched power of the printed word.
Teaching Idea: The Power of Books

Santat, D. (2016). *Are we there yet?* New York: Little, Brown.
A boy and his family are headed on the long car ride to grandma's birthday party. As their car travels through time and space, you will read upside down and backwards (don't forget to scan the QR Codes). In the end, the boy discovers that "there's no greater gift than the present."
Teaching Idea: Inferring Big Ideas (See M-by-M Reading p. 186)

Yum, H. (2016). *Puddle*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.

One rainy day, a grumpy boy is bored until his mom coaxes him to draw with her.

Teaching Ideas: Think about Point of View (mom and boy's words written in different colors) (See T.L.T. p. 124); Inferring characters' feelings; Spring; Rain

Willems, M. (2015). *The story of Diva and Flea*. (T. DiTerlizzi, Illus.). New York:

Disney/Hyperion.

Diva, the dog, lives in a grand old apartment building in Paris. Flea, the cat, a flaneur, lives on the streets of the city. As their friendship develops, Diva and Flea introduce each other to a new view of life. Watch Mo Willems and Tony DiTerlizzi discuss the story in this YouTube Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkamO8G2oKg>

Teaching Idea: Character Transformation Chart (T. L. T. pp. 116-117)

BOOKS FOR WRITERS

Archer, M. (2016). *Daniel finds a poem*. New York: Penguin Random House.

After seeing a sign advertising a "Poetry in the Park" event, Daniel spends the week asking his animal friends, "What is poetry?" On Sunday, he combines all of their answers into his very own poem.

Teaching Ideas: Poetry, Sensory Images (T. L. T. pp. 149-150, M-by-M Reading Chapter 7, M-by-M Writing Chapter 7) If you want to share with your students a bit more about Micha Archer's collage techniques http://www.penguin.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/MichaArcher_CollageTechniques.pdf

Arnold, M. D. (2015). *Lost. Found.* (M. Cordell, Illus.). New York: Disney/Hyperion.

Bear's red scarf gets lost in the woods. Each woodland animal that finds the scarf uses it for a different purpose. In the end, the scarf is returned to Bear by his newfound friends.

Teaching Ideas: Inferring Big Ideas—Friendship (See M-by-M Reading p. 186); Pattern Books—See-Saw Pattern (TLT p. 144), Pair with *The Hat* (Brett, 1997)

Byrne, R. (2015). *We're in the wrong book*. New York: Holt.

Bella and Ben, the characters from *This Book Just Ate My Dog* (2014), get bumped off the page and end up on a journey through books of different genres including comic books, fairy tales, and more.

Teaching Ideas: Read Like a Writer; Introduction to different writing genres

Byrne, R. (2016). *This book is out of control!* New York: Holt

Bella and Ben, the characters from *This Book Just Ate My Dog* (2014) and *We're in the Wrong Book* (2015), are back in another interactive story about a remote control toy that's on the fritz.

Caswell, D. (2016). *Guess who, haiku*. (B. Shea, Illus.). New York: Abrams.

A very simple introduction to haiku style of Japanese poetry. All the poems in the books are riddles. If you are using this book as a guessing game, I would suggest not showing the illustrations right away as they are full of clues.

Teaching Ideas: Poetry, Haiku, Riddles

Dotlich, R. K. (2015). *One day, the end: Short, very short, shorter-than-ever stories*. (F. Koehler, Illus.). Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills.

"For every story there is a beginning and an end, but what happens in between makes all the difference." So begins this one-of-a-kind book where the middle of each story is told solely with illustrations.

Teaching Ideas: Use illustrations to describe characters, settings, and events (See TLT p. 127); **Launching Writing Workshop—Little Book Ideas**

Guiberson, B. Z. (2016). *The deadliest creature in the world*. (G. Spirin, Illus.) New York: Holt. The author/illustrator team that brought us *The Greatest Dinosaur Ever* (2013) and *The Most Amazing Creature in the Sea* (2015) have another intriguing offering. In this book, fourteen creatures from a golden poison dart frog to a Komodo dragon vie for the title of the deadliest creature in the world.

Teaching Idea: Communicate Opinions (T. L. T. pp.134-135)

O'Byrne, N. (2014). *Use your imagination (But be careful what you wish for!)* Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

One day, rabbit is bored. Along comes wolf posing as a librarian. Together they begin to "write" a story about a wolf and a rabbit. When wolf decides to chase and eat rabbit, rabbit uses his imagination to blast wolf into space.

Teaching Ideas: Writing workshop; Traditional Tales; Imagination

Saltzberg, B. (2015). *Inside this book (are three books)*. New York: Abrams.

Seymour's mom gives he and his siblings some blank little books. Seymour fills his with things he sees, hears, and his story. His sister Fiona makes a poetry book and his little brother Wilbur draws pictures and dictates his story.

Teaching Idea: Writing Workshop—Little Books (See T.L.T. pp. 65-67)

Twohy, M. (2016). *Oops pounce quick run! An alphabet caper*. New York: HarperCollins.

Written in alphabetic words and phrases, we follow the lively action of a dog chasing a mouse around the house. In the end, the mouse gives the dog a present and they become friends.

Teaching Ideas: Unique alphabet books; Springboard for writing

BOOKS FOR S. T. E. M.

Harkness, A. (2016). *Bug zoo*. New York: Disney/Hyperion.

Ben loves bugs and wants to open a bug zoo, but no matter how many bugs he collects, no one visits. Finally, he realizes that the bugs want to be free so he lets them go and uses the jars for honey.

Teaching Ideas: Pair with *Fireflies* (Brinkloe, 1986); Science—Insect Unit

Hood, S. (2016). *Leaps and bounce: A growing up story*. New York: Disney/Hyperion.

Poetic text and unique page design with several gatefolds (an oversized page that is folded into the book) take readers on a journey through a frog's life cycle.

Teaching Ideas: Life Cycle of a Frog; Repeated Line (*Changes come to all who grow*)

Judge, L. (2016). *Hoot and Peep*. New York: Dial.

This book is set in Paris and stars two adorable owls. Older brother Hoot wants to teach Peep "all his owly wisdom" but instead she wants to "sing about the mystery of things." Eventually Hoot realizes that Peep is on to something.

Teaching Ideas: October Animals; Individuality; Family (Siblings)

Logelin, M., & Jensen, S. (2016). *Be glad your dad . . . is not an octopus!* (J. Chapman, Illus.). New York: Little, Brown.

A humorous look at what would happen if your dad was an iguana, a skunk, a dung beetle, and more! A note at the end of the book gives readers more information about the animals in the book.

Teaching Ideas: Animal Dads; Fiction/Nonfiction Blend; Pair with *Animal Dads* (Collard, 2000)

Martin, D. (2016). *Shh! Bears sleeping.* (S. Johnson & L. Fancher, Illus.). New York: Penguin.

Rhyming text and realistic oil paintings take you through a year with a mother American Black Bear and her two cubs. An informative author's note details the difference between true hibernators (toads, groundhogs, bats, and snakes) and the winter lethargy of bears.

Teaching Ideas: Narrative nonfiction; Author's Note

Messner, K. (2015). *Up in the garden and down in the dirt.* (C. S. Neal, Illus.). San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.

A girl and her grandmother plant, care for, and harvest their garden while readers learn about what is happening under the ground. Read this book in the spring, during a science unit on plants, or to inspire writers to use sensory language. You can also help listeners notice the repetitive "see-saw" structure, "Up in the garden/Down in the dirt" that they could borrow in their own writing.

Teaching Ideas: Sensory Language; See-Saw Structure

Murray, D. (2016). *City shapes.* (B. Collier, Illus.). New York: Little, Brown.

With kaleidoscope in hand, a little girl (Bryan Collier's daughter) leads us through the city in search of shapes.

Teaching Ideas: Math, Geometry

Yolen, J. (2016). *What to do with a box.* (C. Sheban, Illus.). Mankato, MN: Creative Editions.

Jane Yolen's poetic text invites readers to consider the endless possibilities that a simple brown box plus an imagination offer.

Teaching Idea: Imagination

JUST FOR FUN!

Graves, K. (2016). *Puppy!* New York: Roaring Brook.

Cave boy Trog wants a puppy. So, he nabs an unsuspecting baby dinosaur and brings him home. Much to the chagrin of his family, all the dinosaur does is cry and eat. Soon Trog realizes that the dinosaur misses his family.

Teaching Ideas: Use illustrations to describe characters, settings, and events (See T.L.T. p. 127); Read with other cave boy books like *Little Grunt and the Big Egg* (dePaola, 1990/2006)

Jarvis. (2016). *Alan's big, scary teeth.* Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

Alan the alligator is best known for scaring with his "razor-sharp" teeth. Find out what happens when the animals discover Alan's secret—his teeth are fake.

BOOK TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTVaTrfzGNE>

Teaching Idea: Pair with *Grandpa's Teeth* (Clement, 1999)

Parr, T. (2016). *Teachers rock.* New York: Little, Brown.

A celebration of the passion teachers pour into their profession.

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of Year; Gift Book for Student Teachers

Redeker, K. (2016). *Don't splash the sasquatch!* (B. Staake, Illus.). New York: Disney/Hyperion. In the sequel to *Don't Squish the Sasquatch!* (2012), Sasquatch is relaxing by the pool hoping not to get splashed because his fur "gets all squizzlefied." As expected, the animals that come to the pool splash him.

Teaching Idea: End of Year/Summer

Zuill, A. (2016). *Wolf camp*. New York: Schwartz & Wade.

Homer the dog is yearning to attend wolf camp. Fortunately, his family lets him go and there he learns the ups and downs of being a wolf.

Teaching Ideas: Funny Books; End of Year (going to camp)/Summer; Pets

NEW BOOKS IN A SERIES

Tullet, H. (2016). *Let's play*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.

In Tullet's third interactive book reader follow the yellow dot and the wiggly line on an adventure through the pages.

BOOK TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HevJ7H5KQTg>

Willems, M. (2016). *The thank you book*. New York: Disney/Hyperion.

In the 25th and final Elephant and Piggie book, Gerald and Piggie thank all of the characters who joined them in the other books and, of course, their readers!

Teaching Ideas: Series Books, Thank-o-rama: <http://www.thankorama.com/>