

The Ramped-Up Read Aloud: Sparking Comprehension and Fueling Writers

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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)

It's a Book by Lane Smith

Book Trailer (without the mouse's words at the end!) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4BK_2VULCU

The Keys to Strategic Book Selection

Look for books with the following characteristics:

- Engaging, Diverse Characters
- Rich Language
- Fascinating Illustrations
- Thought-Provoking Themes
- Kid-Appealing Content
- Multi-Layered Plots
- Original Premise
- Unique Perspective
- Horizon-Broadening Subjects
- Curricular Ties

Source: *The Revved-Up Read Aloud: What to Notice as You Turn the Page* (Walther, 2018, Corwin)

ENGAGING, DIVERSE CHARACTERS

Cornwall, G. (2017). *Jabari jumps*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

Jabari has finished his swimming lessons, passed his swimming test and is ready to jump off the high dive, or is he? Something always seems to stop him—he has just eaten lunch, he can't decide which dive to do, or he needs to do some stretches. Finally, with encouragement from his dad, he is ready to "take the plunge."

Teaching Ideas: Inferring Characters' Feelings; Pair with *Nope! A Tale of First Flight* (Sheneman, 2017)

Sheneman, D. (2017). *Nope! A tale of first flight*. New York: Viking.

In this nearly wordless book, a young bird lives with his mama in a tall, tall tree. Afraid to fly, the bird imagines all kinds of dangers below until his mother lovingly gives him the nudge he needs to fly.

Teaching Ideas: Nearly Wordless Picture Books (See TLT p. 127); Pair with *Jabari Jumps* (Cornwall, 2017)

Kraegel, K. (2017). *Green pants*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

Jameson only wears green pants. In fact, he believes that wearing green pants gives him the power to do just about anything. When his cousin's fiancée, Jo, who he adores, invites him to be in their wedding he enthusiastically agrees. Then, his mother informs him he will have to wear a tuxedo with black pants. He eventually agrees after seeing Jo's excitement about her big day.

Teaching Ideas: Making Meaningful Connections (M-by-M Reading pp. 92-96); Decision Making and Social Skills

BOOK TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n30YO7XAGSs>

Gianferrari, M. (2017). *Hello goodbye dog*. (P. Barton, Illus.). New York: Roaring Brook.

Zara, who uses a wheelchair, has a dog named Moose. Story-loving Moose says "Hello" to school but is repeatedly "Good-bye" by teachers, librarians, and even the principal. Once Zara takes Moose to be trained as a therapy dog, he is welcomed at school to listen to children read. The Author's Note explains a bit more about therapy dogs. Kids who have dogs and those who love to read will relate to this book.

Teaching Idea: Making Meaningful Connections (M-by-M Reading pp. 92-96)

RICH LANGUAGE

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

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

MAKING OF BUG ZOO VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hROTWC2z4Hw>

FASCINATING ILLUSTRATIONS

Sterer, G. (2017). *Skyfishing*. (P. Bernatene, Illus.). New York: Abrams.

When grandpa comes to live in the city, he desperately misses fishing. His granddaughter, the narrator, tries to introduce him to different hobbies to no avail. When spring arrives, they decide to use their imagination and fish off of their balcony. The first fish they catch is a "Flying Litterfish." After that, their surprising catches will delight your readers and have them predicting what they might catch next. Notice that the front end papers have real fish and the back end papers have imaginary child-drawn fish. Gideon Sterer's debut picture book is original and creative!

Teaching Idea: Use illustrations to describe characters, settings, and events (See T.L.T. p. 127)

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)

Hadfield, C., & Fillion, K. (2016). *The darkest dark*. (The Fan Brothers, Illus.) New York: Little Brown.

BOOK TRAILER: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_Jp2CibUR4

THOUGHT-PROVOKING THEMES

Dyckman, A. (2016). *Horrible bear!* (Z. OHora, 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>

Read Alouds about Bullying and Standing Up for Others	
<i>Bully</i> (Seeger, 2013)	<i>Say Something</i> (Moss, 2008)
<i>Chester Raccoon and the Big Bad Bully</i> (Penn, 2009) *This is OK, not great	<i>The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade</i> (Roberts, 2014)
<i>Peanut Butter and Jellyfish</i> (Krosoczka, 2014)	<i>Two of a Kind</i> (Robbins, 2009)
<i>The Recess Queen</i> (O'Neill, 2002)	<i>Yoon and the Jade Bracelet</i> (Recorvits, 2008)

Kuefler, J. (2017). *Rulers of the playground*. New York: HarperCollins.

Jonah and Lennox both want to be rulers of the playground. So, they divide the playground in half and try to conquer their side by telling the other kids what to do. Soon the other children get tired of being bossed around, so they leave. Realizing their mistake, the rulers work together to solve the problem. Read this book if you have children who LOVE being in charge.

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

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)

KID-APPEALING CONTENT

Reynolds, A. (2017). *Creepy pair of underwear!* (P. Brown, Illus.). New York: Simon & Schuster.

Older and braver, Jasper Rabbit from the book *Creepy Carrots* (2012) is back. When shopping for underwear, he convinces his unwilling mom to buy him one pair of Creepy Underwear. When he discovers that they glow in the dark, he makes many attempts to get rid of them but they keep coming back. After burying the underwear deep underground, he realizes that their "gentle, greenish glow" helped him sleep. What do you predict he will do next?

Teaching Ideas: Predicting (See M-by-M Reading p. 116-119)

BOOK TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGuhRYoOB9M>

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

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

Higgins, R. T. (2017). *Bruce's big move*. New York: Disney/Hyperion.

Bruce, the grumpy bear, is tired of his "crowded, chaotic, and loud" house so he decides that he and the geese are going to move away from the three pesky mice. In their new, quiet home by the lake, Bruce realizes how much the geese miss the mice. Luckily, for the geese (but not for Bruce), the mice decide to join the family again.

Teaching Ideas: Read to laugh; Notice details in the illustrations

BOOK TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6IrGrPZOI4>

Magruder, N. (2016). *How to find a fox*. New York: Feiwel and Friends.

Do you know how to find a fox? In this book, a girl shows readers exactly how to find a sly fox but doesn't notice that he is hiding in plain sight on almost every page.

Teaching Ideas: Using Illustrations to Describe Characters, Settings, and Events (See T. L. T. pp 127-128)

MULTI-LAYERED PLOTS

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

ORIGINAL PREMISE

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)

McDonnell, P. (2016). *Tek: The modern cave boy*. New York: Little, Brown. Much to his parents' and friends' chagrin, Tek refuses to leave his cave and all of his electronic gadgets until a volcano explodes and he is disconnected. Outside of his cave, Tek discovers friendship and "THE BIG BEAUTIFUL WORLD."
Teaching Ideas: Create a text set with *Doug Unplugged* (Yaccarino, 2013) and *Hello! Hello!* (Cordell, 2012); Inferring Big Ideas—Technology vs. The Real World

Rubin, A. (2015). *Robo-sauce.* (D. Salmieri, Illus.). New York: Dial.
BOOK TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivQ2CQ+93rs>

UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

Petty, D. (2017). *Claymates.* (L. Eldridge, Illus.). New York: Little, Brown. A gray and a brown blob of clay sit waiting in an artist's studio. Soon, the sculpture enters and creates a wolf and an owl respectively. Once she leaves, the blobs of clay decide to have a little fun and transform themselves, and each other, into different creatures and objects. *Claymates* is playful, imaginative, and hilarious. Your students will want a blob of clay after reading this book.
Teaching Ideas: Creativity; Inspiration for Maker Space; Speech Bubbles
BOOK TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsalx6qsAxc&t=5s>

Pak, K. (2016). *Goodbye summer, hello autumn.* New York: Holt. A girl with a bright red scarf greets all the signs of the coming season and each responds. The dialogue is not marked in any way, so readers have to infer from the structure of the story and the text whether it's the girl or the natural world doing the talking. Later in the year, you can read *Goodbye Autumn, Hello Winter* (Pak, 2017).
Teaching Ideas: Point of View; Science—Changing Seasons

HORIZON-BROADENING SUBJECTS

Naberhaus, S. (2017). *Blue sky white stars*. (K. Nelson, Illus.). New York: Dial.

Naberhaus wrote this story to illuminate the parallels between America and its flag. She poetically uses the same or similar words to describe our country and its most prominent symbol. Kadir Nelson's stunning paintings help to make her words glow. To fully understand this book, your students will benefit from background knowledge about key points in American history. It will also be helpful for you to read the background information in the back matter and on the author's website.

Teaching Idea: Use illustrations to describe characters, settings, and events (See T.L.T. p. 127)

CURRICULAR TIES

Andros, C. (2017). *Charlotte the scientist is squished*. (B. Farley, Illus.). New York: Clarion.

Charlotte, the bunny scientist, doesn't have enough room to do her experiment. To solve her problem, she employs the scientific method and engineers a carrot-shaped rocket to blast her into space. When she finds space too lonely, she concludes she just needs her own space and finds it inside her rocket next to the crowded house.

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

Biggs-Tucker, K., & Tucker, B. (2015). *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards, 3-5*. Scholastic.

Fuhler, C. J., & Walther, M. P. (2007). *Literature Is Back! Using the Best Books for Teaching Readers and Writers Across Genres*. Scholastic.

Walther, M. P. (In Press). *The Revved-Up Read Aloud: What to Say as You Turn the Page*. Corwin.

Walther, M. P. (2015). *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards, K-2*. Scholastic.

Walther, M. & Biggs-Tucker, K. (In Press). *Blurring the Lines: An Integrated Reading and Writing Workshop*. Stenhouse.

Walther, M. P., & Fuhler, C. J. (2010). *Teaching Struggling Readers with Poetry: Engaging Poems With Mini-Lessons That Target & Teach Phonics, Sight Words, Fluency & More—Laying the Foundation for Reading Success*. Scholastic.

Walther, M. P., & Phillips, K. A. (2009). *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction*. Scholastic.

Walther, M. P., & Phillips, K. A. (2012). *Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom*. Scholastic.