

# 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)

Swanson, M. (2017). *Everywhere, wonder*. (R. Behr, Illus.). New York: Imprint.

Through the magic of reading, a boy is transported to breathtaking locations around the world. Then, back in his neighborhood he takes time to wonder about commonplace occurrences in his everyday life.

**Teaching Ideas: Launching Writing Workshop—Little Book Ideas (Little Books See TLT pp. 65-67)**

## 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
- Original Premise
- Unique Perspective
- Horizon-Broadening Subjects

Source: *The Ramped-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 and 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-byed" 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>**

Messner, K. (2017). *Over and under the pond*. (C. S. Neal, Illus.). San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.

In the third book of the "Over and Under" series, a mother and her son are out paddling around the pond when, like the other books, the secret world hiding under the water is illuminated. In the Author's Note, Kate Messner briefly describes how, in the book, she's shown the interactions among the organisms that thrive in a mountain pond ecosystem and invites readers to return to the text to look for such interactions. This book would pair nicely with Denise Fleming's Caldecott Honor Book *In the Small, Small Pond* (1993).

**Teaching Ideas: Nonfiction Mentor Text; Sensory Language; Science—Ecosystems**

Neal, K. J. (2017). *Words and your heart*. New York: Feiwel.

"Your words are amazing and powerful!" "The words that go into your ears . . . can actually affect your heart!" In her debut picture book, Kate Jane Neal takes readers on a journey to witness the ways in which words can and should be used.

**Teaching Ideas: Word Choice; Kindness; Using Your Social Filter**

## **FASCINATING ILLUSTRATIONS**

Banks, K. (2017). *How to find an elephant*. (B. Kulikov, Illus.). New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.

From the team who brought you *Max's Words* (2006), comes an innovative and eye-appealing adventure. A young boy takes readers along as he searches for an elephant. Your children will delight in finding the hidden elephant pictured on every page and on the wrap-around cover.

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

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)**

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)

## THOUGHT-PROVOKING THEMES

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>

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)

Santat, D. (2017). *After the fall: How Humpty Dumpty got back up again*. New York: Roaring Brook.

Bird-watching Humpty Dumpty's accident "changed his life." Even though the king's men put him back together, he is afraid of heights and can no longer watch the birds from his wall. So, Humpty replaces his beloved birds with paper airplanes. When an airplane gets stuck on the wall, Humpty has to overcome his fear to rescue it. Dan Santat dedicated this book to his wife who suffered from anxiety for most of her life. See Dan explaining more about this on Colby Sharp's Blog: <https://sharpread.wordpress.com/2017/09/27/after-the-fall-is-a-love-letter-to-my-wife-dan-santat/>

If you have a hardcover copy, "unwrap" the book to notice that the jacket is different than book case.

**Teaching Ideas:** Nursery Rhymes; Overcoming Fears; Inferring Big Ideas (See M-by-M Reading p. 186)

**BOOK TRAILER:** <http://safeyoutube.net/w/2K7c>

## 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>

## ORIGINAL PREMISE

Barnett, M. (2017). *The wolf, the duck, and the mouse*. (J. Klassen, Illus.). Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

After a mouse is eaten by a wolf, he is surprised to find a duck living (in a fully-furnished home) inside the wolf's stomach. After the duck convinces him how nice and safe it is in wolf's stomach, mouse decides to stay. But soon trouble finds the wolf, in the form of a hunter. With hints of Aesop and Grimm, this fable-like tale is sure to delight.

**Teaching Ideas:** Funny Books; Original Ideas; Story Elements—Setting; Pourquoi Tales

**BOOK TRAILER:** <http://safeyoutube.net/w/8K7c>

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+t93rs>

## 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

Barnes, D. (2017). *Crown: An ode to the fresh cut*. (G. C. James, Illus.). Chicago, IL: Bolden.

In the author's words, "With this offering, I wanted to capture that moment when black and brown boys all over America visit 'the shop' and hop out of the chair filled with a higher self-esteem, with self-pride, with confidence, and an overall elevated view of who they are." (Derrick Barnes, Author's Note)

**Teaching Ideas:** Books for Boys; Self-Esteem; Pair with *Super Hair-o and the Barber of Doom* (Rocco, 2013)

Winter, J. (2017). *The world is not a rectangle: A portrait of architect Zaha Hadid*. New York: Beach Lane.

Dame Zaha Hadid (1950-2016) is known for her unique architectural designs. She was "daring, original, and spoke her mind." In this biography, Winter captures Zaha's spirit, drive, and work in a compelling way. A perfect book to inspire your young dreamers, designers, and engineers.

**Teaching Ideas:** Biographies; Inspiring Individuals; S.T.E.M.; Persistence; Woman in History

Yousafzai, M. (2017). *Malala's magic pencil*. (Kerascoët, Illus.). New York: Little, Brown.

When Malala was little, she dreamed she had a magic pencil, one that could solve any problem. As she grows up, she realizes that it is words and ideas, not magic, that fosters change.

**Teaching Ideas:** Biographies; Inspiring Individuals; Persistence; Woman in History

**BOOK TRAILER:** <http://safeyoutube.net/w/NK7c>

## 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!* Scholastic.

Walther, M. P. (2018, July). *The Ramped-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*. 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.