

The Best New Books for K-3 Readers and Writers

JUDSON LITERACY IN MOTION 2011

Compiled and Annotated by Maria Walther

www.mariawalther.com

BOOKS TO BEGIN THE SCHOOL YEAR

Al Abdullah, R., & DiPucchio, K. (2010). *The sandwich swap*. New York: Disney/Hyperion.

In this story of tolerance and acceptance, Salma and Lily eat different kinds of sandwiches and each girl voices her distaste for the other's food. This attitude snowballs resulting in a school-wide food fight. In the end, the best friends work together to organize a multicultural feast for all.

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of the Year; Social Studies—Accepting Differences

Banks, K. (2010). *The eraserheads*. (B. Kulikov, Illus.). New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Three eraserheads sit atop a boy's pencils waiting to erase mistakes. They soon find themselves in the middle of an adventure and, with a little erasing and a bit of help from the boy, they are able to travel safely back home.

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of the Year; It's O.K. to Make Mistakes

Casanova, M. (2011). *The day Dirk Yeller came to town*. (A. Hoyt, Illus.). New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux.

Dirk Yeller arrives in town looking for something "to keep jumping beans from jumpin'!" After a few unsuccessful stops around town, Dirk follows young Sam to the library where he meets Miss Jenny and the world of books.

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of the Year; Reading

Husband, A. (2010). *Dear teacher*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.

When Michael gets a letter from his principal inviting him back to school, he writes a series of imaginative letters to his teacher explaining why he will be not be able to join her. Original, funny, and boy-friendly, this book is a worth adding to your beginning of the year collection.

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of the Year; Letter Writing; Imagination

Pearson, S. (2011). *How to teach a slug to read*. (D. Solnim, Illus.). Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

This would be the perfect book to read aloud to parents on curriculum night. It highlights, in a humorous way, the importance of reading aloud nursery rhymes, talking about vocabulary words, and repeatedly reading books.

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of the Year; Reading; Share with parents and families with young children

Robbins, J. (2009). *Two of a kind*. (M. Phelan, Illus.). New York: Atheneum.

If you are looking for a book to spark a conversation about kindness and healthy friendships, this is the one! Kayla and Melanie are exclusive friends and known as "two of a kind." Julisa and Anna are also friends. When Melanie "befriends" Anna, Anna discovers that being friends with Kayla and Melanie means making choices that exclude her friend Julisa.

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of the Year; Social Studies—Bullying, Healthy Friendships

Rosenthal, A. K. (2010). *One smart cookie: Bite-size lessons for the school years and beyond.* (J. Dyer & B. Dyer, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins.

Rosenthal's latest addition to the "cookie" series is ideal for reading at the beginning of the year to help illustrate words like "prompt," "organized," and "prepared."

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of Year; Social Studies—Character Education, Decision Making

Seeger, L. V. (2010). *What if?* New York: Roaring Brook.

Laura Vaccaro Seeger uses only 6 words in varying combinations to tell a tale three different ways. This book will spark a conversation about friendship and considering the feelings of others. It is also ideal for pointing out the difference between predicting and inferring.

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of Year; Social Studies—Friendship; Inferring

Young, C. (2011). *Ten birds.* Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can.

Ten birds are trying to figure out how to get to the other side of the river. The first one named "Brilliant" uses stilts. Bird number two, dubbed "Quite Advanced," bubbles underwater. Wait until you find out what the one they call "Needs Improvement" chooses to do.

Teaching Ideas: Traditional Tales—Fables; Inferring Big Ideas; Beginning of the Year; Counting Book

BOOKS FOR READERS

Czekaj, J. (2011). *Cat secrets.* New York: HarperCollins.

If you are looking for an interactive read aloud to engage young learners, reach for this humorous book where three felines try to determine if their readers are cats so that they can reveal their "Cat Secrets."

Teaching Ideas: Read Like a Writer—Talking to the Reader, Speech Bubbles, Italics

DiCamillo, K., & McGhee, A. (2010). *Bink and Gollie.* (T. Fucile, Illus.). Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

Three stories about two girls, Bink and Gollie, who have unique personalities but are still "marvelous companions." In the first tale, they make a compromise over a pair of, in Gollie's opinion, outrageous socks. The second tale finds Gollie on a journey to the Andes Mountains. The book ends with a story about Bink's new goldfish.

Teaching Ideas: Vocabulary—Three Read Aloud Words: compromise, journey, companion; Identifying a Character's Feelings

Elya, S. M. (2010). *Rubia and the Three Osos.* (M. Sweet, Illus.). New York: Disney/Hyperion.

This retelling of the traditional Goldilocks tale offers readers a new twist by sprinkling Spanish words throughout the text (with a glossary for pronunciations) and adding a surprise ending. Elya's rhyming text is perfectly paired with Sweet's colorful illustrations.

Teaching Ideas: Text-to-Text Connections with Traditional Goldilocks Tales; Bilingual book with glossary of Spanish words

Hills, T. (2010). *How Rocket learned to read.* New York: Schwartz & Wade.

A little yellow bird entices Rocket, the dog, to learn about the "wonderous, mighty, gorgeous alphabet" by reading captivating books aloud.

Teaching Ideas: Beginning of Year; Reading; Vocabulary—Three Read Aloud Words: disturbed, captivated, mighty

Javaherbin, M. (2010). *The secret message*. (B. Whatley, Illus.). New York: Disney/Hyperion. Based on an ancient Persian poem, "Parrot and the Merchant" by Rumi, this is a tale of a wealthy merchant who keeps a parrot in his shop to attract customers. When he asks the parrot what he wants from India, the parrot requests that the merchant tell his wild bird friends about him. Their secret message leads to the parrot's freedom.

Teaching Ideas: Comprehension Conversation—Questioning; Multicultural Literature

Laminack, L. (2011). *Three hens and a peacock*. (H. Cole. Illus.). Atlanta, GA: Peachtree.

When peacock arrives at Tuckers' farm he tries to make himself useful and ends up standing by the road attracting visitors to the farm. All is well until peacock overhears the hens complaining about him. The birds switch roles only to discover that the peacock's job is tougher than it appears.

Teaching Ideas: Comprehension Conversation—Predicting, Inferring Big Ideas (Be your best self)

LaRochelle, D. (2010). *1 + 1 = 5 and other unlikely additions*. (B. Sexton, Illus.). New York: Sterling.

The book begins with the math equation $1 + 1 = 3$. Upon turning the page, readers discover the answer is 1 unicorn + 1 goat = 3 horns. The book continues with a lot of other unique $1 + 1$ equations. Careful readers will notice clues in the illustrations to help them to infer the answer.

Teaching Ideas: Higher-Level Thinking; Inferring

Lichtenheld, T. (2010). *Bridget's beret*. New York: Henry Holt.

Bridget was "drawn to drawing" and always wore her beret as she created her masterpieces. One day, her beret blows away and with it, she believes, her ability to draw. After a feudal search for her beret, her little sister Jessie asks her to make a sign for her lemonade stand. Grumpily, Bridget agrees and before she knows it she has decorated the neighborhood with her paintings.

Teaching Ideas: Inferring Big Ideas; Monarch 2012

Lichtenheld, T. (2011). *Cloudette*. New York: Henry Holt.

Little Cloudette wants to do big and important things like her fellow clouds. When a storm blows her to a new neighborhood she discovers that even a little cloud can make a big difference.

Teaching Ideas: Comprehension Conversation—Inferring Big Ideas; Weather—Pair with *Clouds* (Rockwell, 2008).

Otoshi, K. (2010). *Zero*. San Rafael, CA: KO Kids.

In the sequel to *One* (2008), Otoshi explores the importance of numbers and the big idea of self-worth.

Teaching Ideas: Inferring Big Ideas; Math—The Importance of Zero

Palatini, M. (2011). *Goldie and the three hares*. (J. E. Davis, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins.

Loud, obnoxious, and demanding Goldilocks falls down the rabbit hole after being chased by the bears. She hurts her foot, so the Hare family has to take care of her until they can't stand it any longer and scare her away by threatening to call, "Da Bears."

Teaching Ideas: Traditional Tales—Compare and contrast with other versions; Character study of Goldilocks

Stein, D. E. (2010). *Interrupting chicken*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick.

Little Red Chicken keeps interrupting her papa's bedtime reading of the classic folk tales until they are out of stories. She can't go to bed without a story so she decides to write her own.

Teaching Ideas: Writing Traits—Ideas; Reading Genres—Folk Tales; Monarch 2012

Stevens, J., & Steven Crummell, S. (2011). *The little red pen*. (J. Stevens, Illus.). New York: Harcourt.

The story begins like the traditional tale with Little Red Pen trying to grade all the papers without the help of her fellow school supplies. It then veers off into a rollicking adventure as the school supplies work together to save Little Red Pen from the dreaded trashcan.

Teaching Ideas: Traditional Tales—Compare and contrast with other versions

Watt, M. (2011). *You're finally here!* New York: Hyperion.

A rabbit is impatiently waiting inside this picture book for a reader to arrive. Thank goodness that, "You're finally here!"

Teaching Ideas: Read Like a Writer—Talking to the Reader, Speech Bubbles, and much more!

Williams, L. E. (2010). *The can man*. (C. Orback, Illus.). New York: Lee and Low.

When Tim's parents can't afford to buy him a new skateboard for his birthday he is looking for ways to earn money. Along comes Mr. Peters, a homeless man dubbed "The Can Man" for collecting cans, giving Tim an idea. Soon, Tim discovers that he has taken away Mr. Peters' only source of income.

Teaching Ideas: Inferring big ideas; Social Studies—homelessness; Pair with *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting

BOOKS FOR WRITERS

Black, M. I., & Hawkes, K. (2010). *A pig parade is a terrible idea*. (K. Hawkes, Illus.). New York: Simon & Schuster.

Why would a pig parade be a terrible idea? Read this persuasive picture book to find out.

Teaching Idea: Persuasive Writing

Graves, K. (2010). *Chicken big*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.

When Chicken Big is born, his coop-mates try to figure out what this humongous creature could be. You and your students are sure to laugh your way through this quirky cartoonlike tale that has hints of the classic "Chicken Little" woven throughout. Notice that all of the transition words and phrases in this book are "big and bold."

Teaching Ideas: Read Like a Writer—Begins before title page, Read with Chicken Little Books, Writing Traits: Sentence Fluency—Transition Words and Phrases

Himmelman, J. (2010). *Pigs to the rescue*. New York: Holt.

In the sequel to *Chickens to the Rescue*, Farmer Greenstalk and his family have some problems on the farm. Fortunately (or not!), the pigs are always ready to lend a helping hand. In the end, Lulu, the cat, spills her milk. Guess who will come to the rescue next?

Teaching Ideas: Little Books; Pattern Book Immersion; "Days of the Week" Pattern

Malaspina, A. (2010). *Yasmin's hammer*. (D. Chayka, Illus.). New York: Lee & Low.

Yasmin longs to go to school and finally finds a way when she and her family move from their village to Dhaka, Bangladesh to find a better life.

Teaching Ideas: Writing Genres—Personal Narrative; Multicultural Literature

Scillian, D. (2010). *Memoirs of a goldfish*. (T. Bowers, Illus.). Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press.

Read the comical journal of goldfish's life as he goes from a lonely swimmer in his own bowl to a frustrated fish in an overcrowded bowl. Will he get his own bowl back?

Teaching Ideas: Writing Traits—Ideas; Elaborating and Adding Descriptive Language; Monarch 2012

BOOKS FOR POETS

Hopkins, L. B. (2010). *Amazing faces*. (C. Soentpiet, Illus.). New York: Lee & Low.

Chris Soenpiet's vibrant, realistic illustrations shine in this collection of 16 poems about people from diverse cultures. Two of my favorite poems include "Me x 2" by Jane Medina about a child who speaks English and Spanish and Jude Mandell's poem about a boy who is not included in the group entitled "I'm the One." Some poems are more appropriate for intermediate grade students.

Teaching Ideas: Poetry; Multicultural Literature

Peters, L. W. (2010). *Volcano wakes up!* (S. Jenkins, Illus.). New York: Holt.

A day on an imaginary Hawaiian volcano is described from five different perspectives including the fern's, the lava flow cricket's, the small black road's, the sun and moon's, and, of course, the volcano's. The back matter tells a little about each perspective and may be helpful to read prior to reading the poems.

Teaching Ideas: Nonfiction Poetry—Told from Different Perspectives

Raczka, B. (2011). *Lemonade and other poems squeezed from a single word*. New York: Roaring Brook.

Bob Raczka writes each poem using different combinations of letters from just one word.

Teaching Ideas: Poetry; Word Study—Enrich Making Words Lessons

Wardlaw, L. (2011). *Won Ton*. (E. Yelchin, Illus.). New York: Holt.

The story of a rescued shelter cat told in a form of Haiku called senryu. Pair this with *Oh, Theodore: Guinea Pig Poems* (Katz, 2007).

Teaching Ideas: Writing Genres—Poetry

BOOKS FOR HISTORY BUFFS

King, M. G. (2010). *Librarian on the roof! A true story*. (S. Gilpin, Illus.). Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman.

Based on a true story about a Texas librarian who camped out on the roof of the oldest library in the state to raise money for the children's section. Connect this title to other library-related biographies like *The Librarian from Basra* (Winter, 2005), *Biblioburro* (Winter, 2010) and *Miss Dorothy and Her Bookmobile* (Houston, 2011).

Teaching Ideas: Read Like a Writer—Notice the use of vertical two-page spreads; Writing Genres—Biography

Kittinger, J. S. (2010). *Rosa's bus: The ride to civil rights*. (S. Walker, Illus.). Honesdale, PE: Boyds Mills.

In 1948, Bus #2857 rolled off the assembly line at the General Motors factory in Michigan. Travel along as you learn the story of Rosa Parks and the bus boycott from a unique point of view. The bus is now on permanent display at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, MI.

Teaching Ideas: Black History—Rosa Parks

Malaspina, A. (2009). *Finding Lincoln*. (C. Bootman, Illus.). Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman.

Louis wanted to learn more about young Abraham Lincoln and knew he would find the answers he needed in a book in the library. But, because he was an African American boy growing up in Alabama in 1951, he couldn't use the library until a brave librarian chooses to let him in after hours.

Teaching Ideas: Black History—Segregation, Jim Crow Laws

Mason, M. H. (2010). *These hands*. (F. Cooper, Illus.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Joseph's grandpa's hands can do many things, but back when he worked in the Wonder Bread factory, they were not allowed to touch the bread dough until workers united to change this practice. Floyd Cooper's distinctive illustrations add to this moving picture book about the Jim Crow era.

Teaching Ideas: Black History—Jim Crow Laws

McCully, E. A. (2010). *Wonder horse: The true story of the world's smartest horse*. New York: Holt.

Bill Key, also known as Doc Key, was born a slave. He became a doctor who treated both humans and animals. He believed in treating animals with kindness and with that mindset he trained a horse he named Jim Key to do remarkable things.

Teaching Ideas: Writing Genres—Biography; Black History

Obama, B. (2010). *Of thee I sing: A letter to my daughters*. (L. Long, Illus.). New York: Knopf.

Introduce your students to 13 of our country's icons and heroes along with their virtues such as Georgia O'Keefe's creativity and Jackie Robinson's courage.

Teaching Ideas: Writing Genres—Biography

Perdomo, W. (2010). *Clemente!* (B. Collier, Illus.). New York: Holt.

A young boy who is named after Clemente tells the story of Roberto Clemente, the first Latin American baseball player inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Teaching Ideas: Writing Genres—Biography, Multicultural Literature

Ramsey, C. A. (2010). *Ruth and the Green Book*. (F. Cooper, Illus.). Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda.

Ruth and her family are excited to be going on a road trip from Chicago to rural Alabama in their new 1952 Buick! They soon find out that, because of the Jim Crow laws, African American travelers had limited choices for gas, food, and lodging along the way. Luckily, a friendly attendant at an Esso station gave them a copy of *The Negro Motorist Green Book* to help guide their way to friendlier places.

Teaching Ideas: Black History; Writing Genres—Personal Narrative; 1st Person Voice

Slade, S. (2010). *Climbing Lincoln's steps: The African American journey*. (C. Bootman, Illus.). Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman.

"Change. It happens slowly. One small step at a time." Slade repeats these powerful lines as she retells key moments in African American history including those that occurred on the marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Teaching Ideas: Black History; Read Like a Writer—Repeated Lines

Winter, J. (2010). *Biblioburro: A true story from Columbia*. New York: Beach Lane/Simon & Schuster.

Introduce your students to Luis and his trusty "Biblioburros" Alfa and Beta who carry books to young readers in the remote villages of rural Columbia.

Teaching Ideas: Writing Genres—Biography; Pair with *The Librarian from Basra*

BOOKS FOR BOYS

Barton, C. (2010). *Shark vs. train*. (T. Lichtenheld, Illus.). New York: Little, Brown.

Who will win? Will it be shark or train? Well, that depends on what the competition entails. Enjoy reading this humorous, visually-rich picture book again and again.

Teaching Ideas: Read Like a Writer; Books for Boys; Monarch 2012

Collins, R. (2011). *Doodleday*. Chicago, IL: Albert Whitman.

Harvey's mom warns him not to draw on "Doodleday" but he doesn't listen. When his drawings come to life and take over his house and neighborhood his clever mom comes to the rescue.

Teaching Ideas: Pair with *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (Johnson, 1955); Imagination