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Favorite Books for Second-Graders

Our panel of children's book experts recommends these great books for your second-grader.

By GreatSchools Book Nook Experts

Fiction

Adventure

The Adventures of Taxi Dog

by Debra & Sal Barracca, illustrated by Mark Buehner (Puffin, 2000).

A stray dog in New York City is adopted by a taxi driver, with whom he rides and shares adventures each day. 32 pages.

Second-grader Read to Self. PBS Bookfinder

Nim's Island

by Wendy Orr, illustrated by Kerry Millard (Yearling Books, 2001).

Take a spunky heroine competently surviving on her own on a deserted island (the ultimate kid fantasy). Add in animal friends who seem to understand, the vaguest of villains hovering in the background and easily overcome, a smattering of scientific information effortlessly absorbed and a very satisfying conclusion. Then write it in breezy style, making the various pieces of the

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Nonfiction

Animals	story fit together in a nicely coincidental, jigsaw-puzzle way.
Biographies	All together it makes for one delightful story. 125 pages.
History	Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.
How Things Work	Read Aloud: Age 7.
Science and Nature	Read Alone: Age 8.
Seasonal	Common Sense Media
Sports and Health	
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Sneakers, the Seaside Cat

by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Anne Mortimer (HarperTrophy, 2005).

Sneakers goes on a trip to the seaside, where he finds many curious creatures. He discovers fish to catch in the ocean and amuses himself with playful shrimp and crabs. Anne Mortimer's bright and beautiful illustrations portray the cat's spirited adventure in a way that your child will surely enjoy. 32 pages. Second-grader Read to Self. PBS Bookfinder

All About Friends

Dear Max

by Sally Grindley, illustrated by Tony Ross (Simon & Schuster, 2006).

Max develops a friendship with his favorite author through the lost art of letter writing. The two give each other advice about writing, friendship and life in this touching story. 144 pages. Children's Choices

Dogku

by Andrew Clements, illustrated by Tim Bowers (Simon & Schuster, 2007).

Dogku is a clever and sweet little story about a stray dog who finds a loving home. Such plots are a staple of children's literature and entertainment, but what sets this book apart is the method of telling the tale — each page is written in haiku. ... For example, Clements writes: "Morning brings children/Hugs, licks, barking, and laughing./Warmer than sunshine." The oil on canvas illustrations by Tim Bowers are just as warm and cheerful as the text. There is a helpful author's note at the end of the book, giving a simple and enthusiastic explanation of haiku for the child reader. ... A novel way for young children to experiment with language. 40 pages. © Parents' Choice

Fox and His Friends

by Edward Marshall, illustrated by James Marshall (Scholastic,

1995). How can Fox have fun with his friends when his little sister tags along everywhere he goes? Your child will love finding out if Louise really does spoil all the fun. 56 pages. Reading Level: Grade 1, Read Aloud; Grade 2, Read to Self. PBS Bookfinder

Frog and Toad Together

by Arnold Lobel (Harper Collins, 1972). Frog and Toad are best friends who will do anything for each other. Your child will enjoy finding out about their escapades in five short chapters as the amphibious duo bake cookies, test their bravery and plant a garden together. If your child enjoys this chapter book, he may also like *Frog and Toad All Year and Days with Frog and Toad*. Newbery Honor, 1973. 64 pages. Reading Level: Grades 1-2, Read to Self. PBS Bookfinder

We Are Best Friends

by Aliki (Greenwillow, 1982). In this story, Robert and Peter struggle with how they can remain best friends after Peter moves away. Aliki's simple illustrations and text capture the boys' loneliness while sending a reassuring message that your child will appreciate. 32 pages. Reading Level: Grade 1, Read Aloud; Grade 2, Read to Self. PBS Bookfinder

Books About Art

Painted Dreams

by Karen Lynn Williams (HarperCollins, 1998). Little Marie dreams about being an artist. Whenever she is not doing chores for her family, she uses leftover paints, feathers and goat hair to create new works of art. This beautifully illustrated story set in Haiti presents details about Haitian art and ways of life. PBS Bookfinder

Books About the Joy of Reading

Clara and the Bookwagon

An I Can Read Book by Nancy Smiler Levinson, illustrated by Carolyn Croll(Harper Collins, 1991). The year is 1905 and young Clara would like nothing more than to go to school with the other kids. However, life on the farm takes a lot of work and she is needed to help out with chores and her younger siblings. The new town librarian has devised a way of using a wagon to bring books to the farmers and their families who can't get to the library. Can Clara and the librarian persuade father to let her learn to read? Based on a true story. Krishna Roach

Could You? Would You?

by Trudy White (Kane/Miller, 2007). This wonderful book allows children to imagine the things they would do if they could. This is a story everyone can relate to,

no matter his or her background. 89 pages. Children's Choices

Evangeline Mudd and the Golden-Haired Apes of the Ikkinasti Jungle

by David Elliott, illustrated by Andrea Wesson (Candlewick, 2007).

In this first book in a series, the main character, Evangeline, has a pair of primatologist parents. When her parents are called away on a research trip to the Ikkinasti Jungle and mysteriously fail to return, it's up to Evangeline to find them. With a wild, fast-paced adventure and illustrations that drive the narrative, this book about a plucky heroine will have your child asking for the next book in the series. Perfect for those "climb into a tree and read" summer days. 196 pages. Danielle Marshall and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

Mom and Dad Are Palindromes

by Mark Shulman, illustrated by Adam McCauley (Chronicle Books, 2006).

Children don't often want to be singled out by their teachers, but this is just what happens when Bob learns that he - horror of horrors! - is, in fact, a palindrome. Soon Bob begins to spot these forward/backward verbal oddities everywhere - in his family, out on the street, even while running away on a ship (where the available jobs involve radar or the rotor). Bob's manic struggle to escape this bothersome label is both silly and clever, and his final "solution" to the dilemma is the book's punch line. Author Mark Shulman and illustrator Adam McCauley embed more than 101 palindromes in the text and pictures, making this wacky story a highly visual exercise in wordplay. ... A fun read-aloud for children and parents (or teachers) to share. 36 pages. © Parents' Choice

Mr. George Baker

by Amy Hest, illustrated by Jon J. Muth (Candlewick, 2004).

Mr. George Baker is one hundred years old! Monday through Friday, he sits on his porch with his 6-year-old neighbor, Harry, awaiting the arrival of the big yellow school bus that will take them off to learn to read. The book contains stunning watercolors by 2006 Caldecott honoree, Jon J Muth. Krishna Roach



My Dad's a Birdman

by David Almond, illustrated by Polly Dunbar (Candlewick, 2008).

My Dad's a Birdman, originally a play, is a chapter book that is whimsically illustrated and darkly comic in a very British way. The story of Lizzie and her dad bonding over the Great Human Bird Competition has both the strange lightheartedness and the emotional maturity of Roald Dahl's *Matilda*. I dare anyone to read it and not laugh — or cry. 115 pages.

Danielle Marshall and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

Once Upon a Time

by Niki Daly (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2003).

This is the triumphant story of Sarie, a South African girl who loves to learn but hates to be called on to read aloud in class. She is frequently made fun of because she reads so slowly and cautiously. With the support of her auntie, a fairytale book and a kind classmate, Sarie develops the confidence she needs.
Krisha Roach

The Random House Book of Poetry for Children

Collected by Jack Prelutsky, illustrated by Arnold Lobel (Random House, 1983).

The one poetry collection no home can be without. Whether the poet is Carl Sandburg or Shel Silverstein, Prelutsky's anthology has a poem for every mood, every topic, and every child in one big, fat book that contains over 500 poems, sorted into 14 categories. A few of these poems each day will delight the ear, charm the senses, and satisfy our human need for rhyme and rhythm. Jan LaBonty

Books About School

A Fine, Fine School

by Sharon Creech, illustrated by Harry Bliss (Joanna Cotler, 2001).

Mr. Keene, an exuberant principal, loves his school so much that he decides to have school every Saturday and even during holidays and summer vacation.

Your child will love finding out about Tillie's creative plan to save her vacations. 32 pages. PBS Bookfinder



Get Ready for Second Grade, Amber Brown



by Paula Danziger (Puffin, 2003).

Like all students, Amber is nervous about starting a new school year with a new teacher. Is it true that her new teacher, Mrs. Light, thinks second graders are "knee biters"? Will Amber survive the year with a bully named Hannah? Luckily,

Amber's best friend Justin is also in her class and together they can handle anything. Jennifer Thompson

It's Test Day, Tiger Turcotte

by Pansie Hart Flood, illustrated by Amy Wummer. (Lerner Publishing Group, 2004).

Tiger Turcotte is nervous about taking a standardized test. His biggest problem, though, is filling out the racial identification section of the test because he is multiracial. Themes of racial or ethnic identity and pride are incorporated in the plot.
Children's Choices



Matilda

by Roald Dahl, illustrated by Quentin Blake (Viking Juvenile, 1988).

With his hallmark wit and humor, Dahl tells the tale of Matilda, a child prodigy who defends her sweet teacher against the terrible school principal, Mrs. Trunchbull. Children will love learning about Matilda and her extraordinary powers. 240 pages. PBS Bookfinder

Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys

by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard, illustrated by Earl B. Lewis (Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2000).

Virgie's brothers walk many miles to go to school in Jonesboro, but she is not allowed to go. She fights to go with them, showing her resolve and strength. 32 pages. PBS Bookfinder

Books with Positive Messages***Brundibar***

by Tony Kushner, illustrated by Maurice Sendak (Hyperion Books for Children, 2003).

Although older children and adults will certainly notice that several of the characters in the book wear yellow armbands with a Star of David, and that Brundibar, with his bristly, cropped mustache, bears a strong resemblance to Hitler, the historical context is not necessary to an appreciation of the story. All children are familiar with bullies, and the small children's triumph in the story is cheering and satisfying. In the end they say to the reader, "Remember, please be brave and bullies will behave!" Unfortunately, justice is sometimes a long time coming. 56 Pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

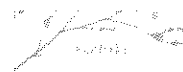
Read Aloud: Ages 4+. Read Alone: Ages 6+.

Common Sense Media

Building With Dad

by Carol Nevius, illustrated by Bill Thomson (Marshall Cavendish, 2006).

Children fascinated by construction sites and the resident massive equipment are bound to enjoy Carol Nevius's new picture book. Here, the world of building becomes even more up close and personal for one young boy and his construction worker father. The boy is getting a brand-new school, and the storyline follows the work's progress from groundbreaking all the way to the first day of class. Each page consists of a rhymed couplet, in which we're introduced to a different facet of the job. ... Nevius's text is sweet and simple, and the boy's feeling of pride for both his father and the school are evident. Bill Thomson's acrylic and colored pencil illustrations are startlingly realistic — at first glance each page looks like a photograph — and will thrill young construction fans. ... 32 pages. © Parents' Choice



Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog

by Pamela S. Turner, illustrated by Yan Nascimbene
(Houghton Mifflin, 2004).

Based on a true story, this touching tale pays tribute to a dog named Hachiko, who waited for nearly 10 years at a Tokyo train station for his master, who never returned. Also tells about the bronze statue in Shibuya Station in Japan and the festival that is held every April, honoring this incredible canine. Darlene Kenny

Lassie Come-Home

rewritten for young readers by Rosemary Wells, illustrated by Susan Jeffers (Henry Holt, 2000).

An unorthodox picture-book text, to be sure, but this sensitive rendition of Eric Knight's 1938 classic about the much-loved collie that refuses to be separated from her young master is sure to win a large, latter-day audience of younger listener/viewers. Stark poverty — a subject much in the news today — forces a jobless Yorkshire miner to sell his son's dog for hard cash. Without a maudlin word, Wells relates the saga of Lassie's unbelievable trek across Scotland and part of England to find her old home. And Jeffers' grave, deeply felt illustrations eloquently capture the harshness of poverty and the high drama of Lassie's incredible journey. The book's uplifting message that — just occasionally — love does conquer all is yet another plus. 64 pages. © Parents' Choice

Mr. Peabody's Apples

by Madonna and Loren Long (Callaway, 2003).

Inspired by a 300-year old Ukrainian story, this tale teaches a lesson about the dangers of gossip, the power of words and how rumors can cause harm to others. With its warm illustrations and important message, this is an amazing children's book, one that should be shared at an early age. Darlene Kenny

***Paint the Wind***

by Pam Munoz Ryan (Scholastic, 2007).

This horse tale shines with rich plot and characters. Parents need to know that this book does have some intense scenes that may upset younger or more sensitive kids, but none are graphic, many are kept to very brief descriptions, and, for the most part, everything turns out all right in the end. Most of the story takes place in Wyoming, so the harsh realities of the wilderness are prevalent. There's also a relatively descriptive account of a horse giving birth that could raise questions. 327 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Publisher's Recommended Reading Level: Ages 7-12, Read Aloud: 7+, Read Alone: 7+. Common Sense Media

Sam and the Lucky Money

by Karen Chinn, illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu (Lee & Low Books, 1997).

For Chinese New Year, Sam receives the traditional token of a red envelope with money. While out with his family, with the money burning a hole in his pocket, he sees a homeless man with no socks on his feet and no food to eat. Sam realizes that the right, lucky thing to do is to use his money to buy the man some socks. 32 pages. Krisha Roach

Velma Gratch & the Way Cool Butterfly

by Alan Madison, illustrated by Kevin Hawkes (Schwartz & Wade, 2007).

A study of butterflies, a trip to the Butterfly Conservatory and one specific Monarch opens a spunky little girl's eyes to the magic of life, and she changes forever. And, the reader will too. While the metamorphosis of a butterfly may be an easy, obvious metaphor for growth and development, its use in this book is made fresh and exciting by the personality of Velma Gratch. From her "carrot curls" pulled up in springy ponytails to her "knobby knees" and "spaghetti arms" to her determination to learn important big words like "metamorphosis," "conservatory" and "migration," Velma is an individual, though she doesn't know it yet. In her, both author and illustrator combine their talents to create the kind of independent, confident spirit that we hope all kids will discover in themselves. 40 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Read Aloud: Age 4. Read Alone: Age 7.

Common Sense Media

Classic Childhood Favorites***The Chocolate Touch***

by Patrick Skene Catling, illustrated by Margot Apple (HarperTrophy, 2006, reprint edition).

Ah, my fantasy... Everything our hero John Midas touches turns into chocolate! However, he soon finds out you can certainly have too much of anything, even chocolate. A cross between *Bread and Jam for Frances* and *King Midas and the Golden Touch*. For a strong reader or a bedtime "read to me." 128 pages.

Danielle Marshall and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

The Dark Is Rising

by Susan Cooper (Simon and Schuster, 1973).

Parents need to know that Susan Cooper's powerful narrative vision will draw young readers into this exciting tale. There is some fantasy violence and a young man turns against his benefactor and follows the forces of the Dark. This is the second book in a five-book series and actually the best one to start with. 224 pages. Boston Globe-Horn Book Award.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Publisher's Recommended Reading Level: Ages 9-12, Read Aloud: 8-9, Read Alone: 9-12. Common Sense Media

The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe

by C.S. Lewis, illustrated by Pauline Baynes (HarperCollins Children's Books, 1950).

Classic fantasy story for kids. Parents need to know that the plot and writing, although superior, are somewhat dated, and the art is small and simplistic. The language is simple but precise, and the main characters act valiantly to help save Narnia from the White Queen's enchantment (though one is initially caught under her sway). Contains bits of British culture and Christian allegory. 208 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Publisher's Recommended Reading Level: Ages 9-12, Read Aloud: 8-10, Read Alone: 10+. Common Sense Media

Little Toot

by Hardie Gramatky (Putnam Juvenile, 1939).

I can't think of another book more perfect for a little boy or girl than this story of a scrappy little tugboat. Although he gets himself in too deep, Little Toot learns that he can do it! The nostalgic illustrations are the perfect compliment to this tale reminiscent of *The Little Engine That Could*. 96 pages.

Danielle Marshall and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

Make Way for Ducklings

by Robert McCloskey (Puffin Book, 1969).

Mr. and Mrs. Mallard search for the perfect place in Boston to hatch their ducklings. They travel all over the city until they find a quaint little island on the Charles River. Once their ducklings hatch, Mrs. Mallard teaches them how to swim, dive and walk in a straight row through the busy city streets. Watch your child smile and laugh with delight with this historic award-winner. 64 pages.

Second-grader Read to Self. PBS Bookfinder

The Puppy Sister

by S. E. Hinton, illustrated by Jacqueline Rogers (Bantam Books, 1995).

Powerful message of how family love overcomes sibling rivalry. The few illustrations are perfect for this well-told story. Reading level and content make it a great read-alone, even for reluctant readers. 128 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Publisher's Recommended Reading Level: Ages 9-12, Read Aloud: 6+, Read Alone: 9+. Common Sense Media

Fantasy Books



Atomic Ace (He's Just My Dad)

by Jeff Weigel, illustrated by the author (Albert Whitman and Company, 2004).

This book tells the story of a young boy whose Dad just happens to be a superhero. His friends don't understand, but when his Dad "saves the day," he is truly a hero. Children really like the cartoon illustrations. 32 pages. Children's Choices

The Bee-Man of Orr

by Frank R. Stockton, illustrated by P.J. Lynch. (Candlewick Press, 2004).

This beautifully illustrated retelling follows the Bee-man's search for his original form. The Sorcerer hopes the poor shriveled man living among bees will make something better of his life next time. Students can predict what he will become years later. Children's Choices

Dinosaurs Before Dark, Magic Tree House Series

by Mary Pope Osborne, illustrated by Sal Murdocca (Random House, 1992).

Children cannot get enough of the adventures of Jack and Annie, as they travel back in time in their tree house. The



tree house is magical and filled with books on subjects such as dinosaurs, knights, Egypt, China, and volcanoes. In this first adventure, Jack and Annie happen upon a book about dinosaurs. Before they know it, they are whisked back in time to 65 million years ago. Children get a lesson in history and experience an unforgettable adventure. Jennifer Thompson

Duck for President

by Doreen Cronin, illustrated by Betsy Lewin (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004).

Duck brings democracy and elections to the farm in a bid to avoid work. Unfortunately, it's campaigning, not serving, that captivates Duck. He abdicates the presidency to return to the farm and write his memoirs. A red, white, and blue delight! 40 pages. Children's Choices

Dude, Where's My Spaceship?

by Dan Greenburg, illustrated by Macky Pamintuan (Random House, 2006).

Author Dan Greenburg's specialty is writing fun chapter books featuring boys, like his very popular earlier series, The Zack Files. It's a challenge for some boys to slow down to read a book, but titles like *Dude, Where's My Spaceship?* keep boys (and girls, too) turning the pages. *Dude* is the first in his *Weird Planet* series, featuring an alien family and their shenanigans on Earth. This is an exciting, rollicking story for readers who love adventure. 96 pages.

Danielle Marshall and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

Hansel and Gretel

retold by Rika Lesser; illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky, (Dutton Juvenile, 1999).

This Caldecott Honor book presents an understated retelling of the Grimm classic. Zelinsky's paintings in this work originally published in 1984 show the beauty and lushness that would result in his 1998 Caldecott Medal for Rapunzel. This is a beautiful and scary world, and the effect is heightened by Lesser's spare, poetic language. Zelinsky's artwork makes this version one that children will not soon forget. The story captures childhood fears and yearnings: abandonment, fantastic candy supplies and reuniting with loved ones. Classic folktales survive and are retold over and over because they serve the purpose of helping protect our children. Luckily for us, such artistry as Zelinsky's help to bring the point home with shadows and magic, elegance and grace. 40 pages. Pauline Harris

The Little Prince

by Antoine de Saint-Exupery (Harcourt Brace, 1943).

A pilot crashes in the Sahara Desert. A thousand miles from any habitation, while attempting to fix his plane, he meets a strangely dressed little boy who seems to have come from nowhere, and who demands that he draw a sheep. "When a mystery is too overpowering, one dare not disobey," so the pilot attempts to draw a sheep. Gradually the Little Prince reveals his story. He comes from a small asteroid, where he lives alone until a rose grows there. But the rose is demanding, and he is confused by his feelings about her. Eventually he decides to leave and journey to other planets in search of knowledge. After meeting many confusing adults, he eventually lands on Earth, where he befriends a snake and a fox. The fox helps him to understand the rose, and the snake offers to help him return to his planet — but at a price. Many adults look back on this book with a catch in the throat and have a special place for it in their hearts. This gentle picture book, concerned with the true "matters of consequence," was as much a part of growing up for those of a certain age as *The Lord of the Rings* or the Beatles. There quite literally has never been anything like it, though others have certainly tried. 96 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Read Aloud: Age 6. Read Alone: Age 8.

Common Sense Media

My Father's Dragon

by Ruth Stiles Gannett (Yearling, 2005).

Pardon me while I gush. This book is, by far, the most memorable early chapter-book of my childhood. While it has never been forgotten in my household, I find that many people nowadays don't know about this magical book, the first of a trilogy featuring Elmer Elevator and his adventures. In *My Father's Dragon*, Elmer rescues a baby dragon from the cruel animals on Wild Island and in the process takes you on a

fantastic journey. My most highly recommended book on this list. 112 pages.

Danielle Marshall and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

Roger the Jolly Pirate

by Brett Helquist (HarperCollins Children's Books, 2004).
Roger isn't like the other pirates. He longs to be accepted and finally manages a way to earn their favor with quite a bang. This is a delightful glimpse into the life and vocabulary of a pirate. Children's Choices

Space Station Mars

by Daniel San Souci (Tricycle Press, 2005).
An action-packed and whimsically illustrated narrative describing the adventures of seven young boys. This is another "clubhouse" mission complete with aliens, spaceships, and secret codes, sure to tap imaginations and lead to sharing of stories. Aliens beware! 40 pages. Children's Choices

Tales Our Abuelitas Told: A Hispanic Folktale Collection

by F. Isabel Campoy and Alma Flor Ada, illustrated by Felipe Davalos, Susan Guevara, Leyla Torres and Vivi Escrivá (Simon & Schuster, 2006).
Gathered from the various spots on the globe that make up the Hispanic heritage - from the Basques northeast and Celtic northwest corners of Spain through the Arab influences of southern Spain to the Americas, these 12 stories have been polished by the retellings from one generation to another; from grandmothers to grandchildren. In this welcome addition to a folktale library, each story has an end-piece with specific information about the origins and versions of the tale. 128 pages. © Parents' Choice

Toys Go Out: Being the Adventures of a Knowledgeable Stingray, a Toughy Little Buffalo, and Someone Called Plastic

by Emily Jenkins, illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky (Random House Children's Books, 2006).
There's more than a spot of borrowing in this updated homage to the hundred-acre wood: we meet our heroes (and heroines) coming "buh-buh bump!" down the stairs just like Pooh, albeit in an up-to-the-minute backpack; one character, like Eeyore, parts company with his tail; and another, like Roo, is prone to bounce. Still, there's plenty to love in a story about a ball named "Plastic," a buffalo named Lumphy, and a stingray named StingRay. ... 128 pages. © Parents' Choice

Traction Man Is Here!

by Mini Grey (Random House Children's Books, 2005).
Traction Man is a toy figure who protects his master and the world he lives in. The book captures children's imagination about having a superhero action toy that keeps a scrubbing brush as a pet and tolerates granny's knitted outfit. 32 pages.

Children's Choices

The Water Horse

by Dick King-Smith, illustrated by David Parkins (Yearling Books, 1998).

Here is another sweet animal tale from the author of Babe. Aside from the Water Horse eating a swan, there is little to be concerned about here. Families who read this book could discuss the Loch Ness Monster. Do you think it could be real? Why or why not? How might a story like this have gotten started? Your children might be interested in doing a little research and seeing the supposed photos of the monster. 118 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Publisher's Recommended Reading Level: Ages 8-12, Read Aloud: 7+, Read Alone: 8+. Common Sense Media

Why The Sky is Far Away: A Nigerian Folktale

by Mary-Joan Gerson, illustrated by Carla Golembe (Little, Brown, 1995).

This traditional folktale, from the Bini tribe of Nigeria, tells of a time not so long ago when the sky was so close that even the smallest child could reach right up and grab a piece to munch on. The sky got very angry and moved out of reach when the tribe became greedy and wasteful. 32 pages. Krishna Roach

Winter of the Ice Wizard, Magic Tree House Series

by Mary Pope Osborne, illustrated by Sal Murdocca (Random House, 2004).

If you are a fan of the Magic Tree House series, you are sure to love Mary Pope Osborne's next adventure into the magical frozen land of the Ice Wizard. Jack and Annie are summoned by their friends from Camelot - Teddy and Kathleen - to help solve the mystery of the disappearance of Merlin and Morgan Le Fay. The team is equipped with only two things to help them, a mysterious rhyme from the Ice Wizard and a magical rope. Will they find Merlin and Morgan Le Fay? Are you brave enough to travel along? Jennifer Thompson

The Worst Witch at School

by Jill Murphy (Candlewick Press, 2007).

This book comprises two titles in the Worst Witch series: The Worst Witch and The Worst Witch Strikes Again. It's a great precursor for readers not ready for the Harry Potter series, mixing friendship, adventures and fantasy. The accident-prone Mildred Hubble experiences a series of mishaps in witch school causing her humiliation, fear (not much), and frustration. She's a likeable character who has good friends and a couple of enemies, including a sharp-nosed teacher named Miss Hardbroom. Children fall from broomsticks, are turned into animals by the wrong spells and threatened by a band of misfit witches. 175 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Publisher's Recommended Reading Level: Ages 8+, Read Aloud: 7+, Read Alone: 7+. Common Sense Media

Historical Fiction

Baseball Saved Us

by Ken Mochizuki, illustrated by Dom Lee (Lee & Low Books, 1995).

Children will love this moving tale in which hope triumphs over evil. In this picture book, a young boy tells the story of his parents' internment in a camp for Japanese Americans in 1942. Despite the deplorable conditions in the camp, the prisoners use an improvised baseball game to keep their hope alive.

PBS Bookfinder

Chig and the Second Spread

by Gwenyth Swain (Delacorte Press, 2003).

Chig's difficulties with size and speaking up will resonate with many readers, and may provide an opportunity for discussion. The harshness of the Depression is kept mostly at bay in this book. 199 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Publisher's Recommended Reading Level: 8-12, Read Aloud: 8+, Read Alone: 9+. Common Sense Media

The Enchanted Dolls' House

by Robyn Johnson (Handprint Books, 2006).

Peer through windows, unfold letters and open closet doors of dollhouses from the medieval times through the 1900s. Search for 10 little boys in the pages of this book filled with information about dollhouses through the ages. 32 pages. Children's Choices

Show Way

by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Hudson Talbott (Penguin Putnam, 2006).

This is a beautifully sewn story of women who travel from slavery to freedom. Parents need to know that though this is a picture book, it's really aimed at middle-grade kids. There are historical references here that will need explaining, especially for younger kids, as will the information in the collages. There are some references to violence: a slave is killed, a silhouette of the capture of a runaway, news images from protest marches. Families who read this book could discuss the history. What was slavery and how did it end? What happened to the freed slaves? What was the Civil Rights era? How is life for African Americans different now than it was even in Mom and Dad's childhood? 40 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Publisher's Recommended Reading Level: 5-8, Read Aloud: 6, Read Alone: 7. Common Sense Media

Mysteries

Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Babe Ruth Baseball

by David Adler, illustrated by Susanna Natti (Puffin, 2004). Jennifer "Camera" Jansen uses her photographic memory to save the day once again! At a hobby show a man's prized Babe Ruth baseball goes missing. Cam clearly remembers a boy in a green jacket standing very close to that same baseball, but can she prove it? 64 pages. Krisha Roach

Julian, Secret Agent

by Ann Cameron (Yearling, 1988). Julian, his brother Huay and their friend Gloria see a wanted poster at the post office with a reward of \$25,000. All they have to do is find a certain master of disguise who loves to cook. Or stop a bank robber or even a kidnapper. Suddenly, cracking the case is the name of the game! 64 pages. Krisha Roach

The Seven Treasure Hunts

by Betsy Byars, illustrated by Jennifer Barrett (Harper Trophy, 1992). Jackson and Goat love trying to outsmart each other by creating treasure hunts for one another. But when Jackson misunderstands a clue, he lands Goat in hot water with his sister Rachel. 80 pages. Krisha Roach

Tuff Fluff: The Case of Duckie's Missing Brain

by Scott Nash, illustrated by the author (Candlewick Press, 2004). When Duckie, resident storytelling toy of Los Attic, loses some of his brainy stuffing and can't tell tales anymore, Tuff Fluff, Private Investigator, is on the case. Creative surgery and sharing between friends puts Duckie back in action. Case closed. 40 pages. Children's Choices



Seasonal Stories

Babymouse: Skater Girl

by Jennifer L. and Matthew Holm (Random House, 2007). This charming mouse has starred in six of her own graphic novels and in this seventh in the series she does not disappoint. Babymouse has the chance to show what she is best at after all her friends are named best at something. When she is discovered by a famous ice-skating coach, her fun hobby treads on thin ice. Jennifer L. Holm is the Newbery Honor-winning author of *Our Only May Amelia*, so the writing is wonderful. Her brother Matthew draws Babymouse whimsically. You'd be hard pressed to find a 9-year-old girl who

isn't pining for this icy Babymouse book. 96 pages.
Danielle Marshall and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

Come on, Rain

by Karen Hesse, illustrated by Jon L. Muth (Scholastic, 1999).
The yellow haze of unrelenting heat steams off every page of this beautifully water-colored story of leggy little girls waiting for rain. Just when everyone in the city is wilting, a delicate breeze through the kitchen window brings hope for refreshing rain. Little girls who dance in the welcome downpour are joined by their Mamas, who can't resist the cleansing storm either. With rich word choice that sizzles, thunders, drenches and simmers, the story concludes with a parched city now glistening after a rain storm that refreshes even the reader. Jan LaBonty

Marja's Skis

by Jean E. Pendziwol, illustrated by Jirina Marton (Groundwood Books, 2007).
In this beautifully illustrated picture book, Marja learns about self-reliance. When she longs to ski to school alone like her older sister, she remembers the words her father once told her, "When you are strong inside, you can do anything." The memory of her father and his words come back to her when her new-found strength is put to the test. This is a moving story with a lasting message. 32 pages.
Danielle Marshall and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

Nate the Great and the Mushy Valentine

by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat, illustrated by Marc Simont (Yearling, 1995).
For those Nate the Great fans, you won't be disappointed by his latest adventure. Nate tries to solve, not one, but two mysteries. Valentine's Day is a day Nate would rather forget because he hates mushy, gushy stuff! Can he ignore a good mystery when it involves his dog Studge and his friend Annie? I think not! Read to find out if Nate gets any Valentines of his own. Jennifer Thompson



Poppleton in Winter

by Cynthia Rylant (Scholastic, 2001).
This collection features three short stories for early readers. In Icicles, the downfall of Poppleton's beloved icicles leads to a new friendship. In The Bust, Poppleton's creative juices get flowing, inspiring him to take up sculpting. And in The Sleigh Ride, he's disappointed that all of his friends stay inside to bake when he wants to go for a sleigh ride ... until he finds out that they were baking in honor of his birthday! Cynthia Rylant's Poppleton in Winter is creative and fun - a perfect read on a snowy day. 48 pages.
Click [here](#) to buy the book on Powells.com.
Sheila Ashdown and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

The Race of the Birkebeiners

by Lise Lunge-Larsen, illustrated by Mary Azarian (Houghton Mifflin, 2007).

Based on an account documenting a true incident in Norwegian history, this book tells the story of the Birkebeiners, a group of brave warriors in 1264, who race to protect a baby, Prince Hakon, the future King of Norway, from his enemies, the Baglers. Woodcuts from the illustrator of *Snowflake Bentley* add dramatic effect to this mesmerizing tale. 32 pages. Danielle Marshall and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

Snow Wonder

by Charles Ghigna (Random House, 2008).

With so much to do — like sledging, ice skating and cookie-baking with grandma — it's "snow" wonder that this brother-and-sister duo have such a great day of wintry fun. Early readers will love *Snow Wonder* for its rhyming story, sticker sheets and colorful illustrations. (The little dog is especially cute!) 24 pages. Click here to buy the book on Powells.com.

Sheila Ashdown and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

The Snowy Day

by Ezra Jack Keats (Macmillan, 1963). This is a special book about the adventures of a young boy, Peter, as he ventures out after a beautiful snowfall. As he plays and explores, he discovers the snow's special qualities. Caldecott Medal, 1963. PBS Bookfinder

**Silliness and Humor*****Chester***

by Mélanie Watt (Kids Can Press, 2007)

"Once upon a time," a huge cat named Chester took a red marker and rewrote Watt's story about a "boring" mouse. Chester's editing delights young readers as his humorous revisions make him the star of the book. 32 pages. Children's Choices

Diary of a Worm

by Doreen Cronin (Harpers Childrens, 2003). Doreen Cronin has done it again with this first person narrative told from the point of view of



a boy worm. This book introduces the concept of a diary in a fun way. Young readers will identify with all the escapades of a worm, as he interacts with family members, goes to school and

vacations at Compost Island. Children will laugh and learn facts in a fun way while learning to appreciate living creatures.
Jennifer Thompson

Down Girl and Sit: Smarter than Squirrels

by Lucy Nolan, illustrated by Mike Reed (Marshall Cavendish, 2004).

Four hilarious stories about the adventures of two dogs told from a dog's perspective by Down Girl. Whether it's getting Ruff (her master) up early so he doesn't have to hear the alarm clock, chasing squirrels and Here Kitty Kitty, or eating an entire bag of dog food in one afternoon, we see life with humans through the loving eyes of our best friends. This simply illustrated, laugh out loud chapter book will make all listeners eager for a sequel. Jan LaBonty



Drooling and Dangerous: The Riot Brothers Return

by Mary Amato, illustrated by Ethan Long (Holiday House, 2006).

Three separate hilarious adventures of brothers Orville and Wilbur and their mother, who is also a school principal, will attract young readers who love silliness. With plastic bugs constantly flying, the brothers become spies and movie stars, celebrate "dwitch say," and almost get into big trouble. 176 pages. Children's Choices

Gator Gumbo

by Candace Fleming, illustrated by Sally Anne Lambert (Farrar Straus Giroux, 2004).

Monsieur Gator is teased mercilessly by a pack of pesky swamp critters who clearly haven't read about Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby or they wouldn't get so close to his bubbling cauldron. Monsieur may not be as young as he used to be but his wits and his maman's recipe get him both dinner and revenge. A beautifully illustrated tale with just a touch of Cajun dialect will delight the ear of the giggling listeners who will know what Mr. Gator is up to long before his tormentors do. Jan LaBonty



Gooney Bird Greene

by Lois Lowry, illustrated by Middy Thomas (Yearling, 2004).

Gooney Bird arrives in second grade in the middle of a school day, which suits her fine. She wants to be in the center of all action - but especially of all attention. Wearing colorful, creative costumes daily, Gooney Bird soon becomes the brightest - in every sense of the word - star of second grade. Her teacher, who is trying to explain the nature of good stories to her class, tolerantly allows Gooney Bird to upstage her by telling melodramatic stories that appear to be whoppers. Declaring, "I tell only absolutely true stories." Gooney Bird enters the annals of funny young protagonists. The format of her book is

excellent for transitional readers; her stories, filtered through a fine imagination, are entertaining; and they will leave readers hoping for more. 96 pages. © Parents' Choice

How to Save Your Tail

by Mary Hansen (Schwartz & Wade Books, 2007).

Once upon a time, there was a verbally creative rat, Bob, who managed to save his tail by telling tall tales. Bob loved two things above all others — reading and baking cookies. One afternoon, when Bob is cornered by two hungry cats, he puts his talents to work to save himself. He enchants the cats with fanciful tales while serving up warm-from-the-oven, mouthwatering cookies alongside fresh saucers of milk. This amusing story is the perfect read-aloud that is sure to elicit a giggle or two. Young readers will quickly recognize that Bob's tales have much in common with classic fairy tales. The illustrations provide a delightful accompaniment to the story, so bake up a batch of cookies, pour a glass of milk, curl up and enjoy this charming tale. 93 pages. Kepler's Books

Ira Sleeps Over

by Bernard Waber (Houghton Mifflin Children's Books, 1973).

The humorous, first-person narrative in a very believable child's voice, and the illustrated details, bring Ira's world to life. 48 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Publisher's Recommended Reading Level: Ages 4-8, Read Aloud: 4-6, Read Alone: 6-8. Common Sense Media

It's Raining Pigs & Noodles

by Jack Prelutsky, illustrated by James Stevenson (HarperTrophy, 2005).

The title, which is also the first line, sets the playful tone. Delightfully anti-authoritarian and anti-establishment, Prelutsky is the unexcelled master of word-playing nonsense. His laugh-aloud poems are rude, disrespectful, annoying and perceptive. In a word, marvelous. Childish readers, however, will read, laugh and pay him the ultimate compliment. They will memorize and repeat them with pickle relish. 160 pages. © Parents' Choice

Moxy Maxwell Does Not Love Stuart Little

by Peggy Gifford, illustrated by Valorie Fisher (Schwartz & Wade Books, 2007).

Every child goes through the plot of this book at some point in his or her school career: it's the day before school starts and you haven't read the book that was required for summer reading. You've got this pit in your stomach because you know that you're in trouble, but you just can't bring yourself to do the reading. Moxy is in the same boat. It's not that she hates to read — she just doesn't want to read what somebody else tells her to read. This laugh-out-loud book is full of wit and charm.

Moxy is a loveable character, even if her schemes are scatter-brained. The action takes place in the course of a fateful day in which a bowl of peaches, a garden hose and Moxy's mother's garden play vital roles. The story will leave you with a smirk on your face. 92 pages. Kepler's Books

Ready Freddy: Don't Sit on My Lunch, Ready Freddy Series

by Abby Klein, illustrated by John Mckinley (Blue Sky Press, 2005).

Second-graders can't get enough of this hilarious new series. Both boys and girls can relate to Freddy and his best friend Jessie, who happens to be a girl. In fact, she is the star hockey player on the peewee hockey team. Readers will delight in the antics of Freddy and Jessie, as Jessie tries to help Freddy get a spot on her team. Of course, no school story would be complete without a class bully! Find out if Freddy can outplay "Max the Bully" in this entertaining read. Jennifer Thompson

Science Verse

by Jon Scieszka, illustrated by Lane Smith (Viking Juvenile, 2004).

Loosely based on a variety of famous poems ("Listen, my children, and you shall hear/Of how loud noises go in your ear."), these 21 wacky poems - accompanied by Lane Smith's equally goofy illustrations - cover everything from the "Water Cycle" ("It's raining, it's pouring/For H₂O, it's boring") to anatomy ("I think that I ain't never seen/A poem ugly as a spleen") to parasites ("Mary had a little worm./She thought it was a chigger./But everything that Mary ate/Only made it bigger.") The main thing you'll learn about science is that it can be a lot of fun. 40 pages. © Parents' Choice

Soupy Saturdays with the Pain and the Great One

by Judy Blume, illustrated by James Stevenson (Delacorte Press, 2007).

This book is about an older sister ("the Great One") and a younger brother ("the Pain"). Each chapter is told from alternating perspectives, so both kids get equal time telling their stories, which are funny, realistic and endearing. Though they both make cases for detesting each other, it is clear that the siblings are close. For example, when the Pain is afraid to get his hair cut, the Great One makes him a pair of fake ears, saying that if he wears one and gets cut, the barber will suffer from the curse that she placed on the ears. A perfect read-aloud for the whole family, this can easily be read by a newer reader. Parents who grew up on Judy Blume will enjoy it, as I did. Siblings will empathize with the characters, and everyone will laugh at the situations that are unmistakably "Judy Blume." 108 pages. Kepler's Books

Tacky in Trouble

by Helen Lester, illustrated by Lynn M. Munsinger (Houghton



their lifecycle, habitat, predators and even what they like to do for fun. With easy-to-understand explanations and plenty of illustrations, *Emperor Penguins* is a great choice for young animal lovers. 48 pages. Click [here](#) to buy the book on Powells.com. Sheila Ashdown and the Kids' Team at Powells.com

Encyclopedia Prehistorica: Dinosaurs

by Matthew Reinhart and Robert Sabuda (Candlewick Press, 2005).

Parents need to know that this book is both too delicate, and possibly too scary (on one page the jaws of a T-rex come out at the reader) for young kids. Also, though thoroughly researched, some of the information presented, both verbally and pictorially, is controversial, though the author is usually careful to indicate this. Families who read this book could discuss the science behind it, the sleuthing and inferences made by paleontologists. How did they figure out what the dinosaurs looked like and ate? What has caused their ideas to change? Families can also do further research together on the types of dinosaurs presented, or find out about other species. 12 pages.

Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.

Publisher's Recommended Reading Level: 8-12, Read Aloud: 7, Read Alone: 8. Common Sense Media

Look What Tails Can Do

by Dorothy Souza (Lerner Publications, 2007).

This book proves that a tail can be more than just a tail. The appearance and function of tails as different as the prehensile tail of an opossum to the deadly tail of a scorpion to the beautiful tail of the Central American quetzal are discussed. Simple vocabulary and close-up color photographs enhance the appeal for young readers. If this book is a hit, there are additional titles in this series (*Look What Animals Can Do*). 48 pages.

Interest grade level: 2-4 Ellen Phillips

Water Hole

by Zahavit Shalev (DK Publishing, 2005) (DK 24 Series).

This book follows the daily routine of five diverse animals at a water hole on the African savannah from dawn until midnight. The pages, which include a clock indicating the time of day, are packed with facts about the eating, playing, resting and sleeping behaviors of the animals found in this particular habitat. The visually appealing photographs and the conversational style may just hook those reluctant readers.

There are additional titles in the series, including *Coral Reef*, *Mountain*, *Arctic*, *Rain Forest*, and *Desert*. 48 pages.

Reading grade level: 7, Interest grade level: 3-6, Ellen Phillips

Biographies

The Flyer Flew! The Invention of the Airplane

by Lee Sullivan Hill, illustrated by Craig Orback (Millbrook Press, 2006).

This brief chapter book featuring short simple sentences and basic vocabulary introduces the story of Wilbur and Orville Wright, inventors of the airplane. The brothers, who ran a bicycle shop, read about the flight research of German flier Otto Lillenthal. When Lillenthal dies in a crash, the brothers decide to continue his research and begin to build gliders. Technical terms are explained in words and pictures. An afterword provides an introduction to their scientific method, and a glossary is included. This would be the perfect read for inquiring young scientists and those kids fascinated by aircraft and flight. 48 pages.

Reading grade level: 2, Interest grade level: K-3, Ellen Phillips

Frida

by Jonah Winter, illustrated by Ana Juan (Arthur A. Levine Books, 2002).

The remarkable and inspirational life of Mexican



artist Frida Kahlo is celebrated in this exceptional picture book. The pivotal events that greatly influenced her painting career are told through simple text and original illustrations that resemble Frida's work. Available in English and Spanish. PBS Bookfinder

Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates

by Jonah Winter, illustrated by Raul Colon (Atheneum, 2005).

This beautifully illustrated book chronicles the career of Latino baseball star Roberto Clemente, from his childhood in Puerto Rico, through his major league career, and finally to his tragic death in a plane crash on his way to aid earthquake victims in Central America. This inspirational story follows Clemente from humble beginnings (his first baseball glove was made from a coffee-bean sack) to World Series fame in the major leagues to his legacy as a role model for aspiring baseball players and as a hero to the people of Puerto Rico for his humanitarian work. 40 pages.

Reading grade level: 5, Interest grade level: K-3, Ellen Phillips

Sixteen Years in Sixteen Seconds: The Sammy Lee Story

by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Dom Lee (Lee & Low Books, 2005).

This is the moving and inspirational story of Sammy Lee, an Olympian diver. Growing up Korean American in 1930s Los Angeles,

Sammy was only allowed to use the pool one day a week because he was viewed as "Colored." Sammy did not let this obstacle stand in his way. He knew that diving was in his soul,



so he spent his days practicing in sand near his home, and his nights studying to be a doctor in order to honor his father's wishes. In 1948, Dr. Sammy Lee became the first Asian American to win a gold medal in the Olympics. Accompanied by sensitive, thoughtful illustrations. Krisha Roach

Smart About - George Washington Carver, The Peanut Wizard

by Laura Driscoll, illustrated by Jill Weber (Grosset & Dunlap, 2003).

In this installment of the Smart About? series, student Annie Marcus has chosen her favorite scientist, George Washington Carver, as the subject of her assignment. Through Annie's journal, which includes great illustrations and photographs, readers learn that George Washington Carver was one of the first farmers to introduce crop rotation for better and healthier crops. He also pioneered the commercial use of peanuts, including the invention of peanut butter! Krisha Roach

What Presidents Are Made Of

by Hanoch Piven (Atheneum, 2004).

A humorous yet informative look at the U.S. Presidents in chronological order. Piven uses found objects to comprise the facial features of the presidents with hilarious results. Fun tidbits that actually stick with you! Krisha Roach

History

George Crum and the Saratoga Chip

by Gaylia Taylor, illustrated by Frank Morrison (Lee & Low Books, 2006).

Growing up in the 1830s in Saratoga Springs, New York, George Crum experienced prejudice because of his mixed Native-American and African-American racial heritage. With a passion for cooking and against the odds, he landed a job as a chef at a fine restaurant frequented by an upscale clientele. He prided himself on his culinary talent and reputation, and the popularity of his cuisine grew. One day a diner complains that her French-fried potatoes, a fashionable new dish at the time, are cut too thick. In a fit of aggravation and to teach the customer a lesson, George accidentally creates the all-American snack food, potato chips. The lively and comical acrylic illustrations add to the fun of this quirky true-life story. 32 pages.

Interest grade level: 2-4 Ellen Phillips

It's Disgusting and We Ate It!: True Food Facts From Around the World and Throughout History

by James Solheim, illustrated by Eric Brace (Aladdin, 2001).

This book is filled with outrageous stories, facts, and fascinating tidbits about food from around the world. If your child has an interest in unique historical facts, this is the book for him. PBS Bookfinder

On the Mayflower

by Kate Waters, illustrated by Russ Kendall (Scholastic, 1996).
 What would it be like to have traveled to America on board the Mayflower? Why did people leave their homeland and come to the New World? What was it like on this long treacherous voyage? The answers to these questions and more are answered in this historical account of an apprentice boy and a passenger girl as they journeyed to Plymouth. 40 pages.
 Jennifer Thompson

Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance

by Jennifer Armstrong, illustrated by Frank Hurley (Random House, 1998).
 This is a survival saga of the man who attempted to cross the Antarctic in 1914. Better than fictional survival stories, beautifully written, illustrated with photos that survived from the voyage, this is history as exciting adventure. 128 pages.
 Read the complete review on the Common Sense Media Web site.
 Read Alone: 8-10. Common Sense Media

The Story of the Pilgrims

by Katherine Ross, illustrated by Carolyn Croll (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1995).



The Story of the Pilgrims, a picture book, begins with the plight of a group of people who were being persecuted for their religious beliefs. Though the risks were many, the Pilgrims decided to leave England. Ross takes readers on the harsh journey to the New World and explains the suffering during the Pilgrims' first winter. She also explores the relationships the colonists had with the Indians, and she brings the feast of the first Thanksgiving to life for primary readers. 24 pages. Jennifer Thompson

How Things Work***How to Be a Baby, by Me the Big Sister***

by Sally Lloyd-Jones, illustrated by Sue Heap (Schwartz & Wade Books/Random House Children's Books, 2007).
 A big sister explains things you can't do as a baby and things you can do as an older child. The humorous story and illustrations help older children appreciate their accomplishments while gaining a better understanding of younger siblings. 40 pages. Children's Choices

My Librarian Is a Camel: How Books Are Brought to Children Around the World

by Margriet Ruurs (Boyd's Millis Press, 2005).
 From camels to elephants to boats and trolleys, this is an inspirational look at the great lengths that some librarians go to

to bring books to children around the world. 32 pages. Krishna Roach

My Senator and Me

by Edward M. Kennedy, illustrated by David Small (Scholastic Press, 2006).

Splash, a Portuguese water spaniel, follows his owner, Senator Edward Kennedy, through a typical day on Capitol Hill, providing commentary on what goes on there. This book is a look at our legislative process that is considerably more entertaining than most, thanks in part to David Small's humorous illustrations. Included in the book is additional information on Senator Kennedy, Splash the water spaniel (and how to contact him by email), and the process by which a bill becomes a law. 56 pages.

Interest grade level: 2-4 Ellen Phillips

Science and Nature

Compost, by Gosh! An Adventure With Vermicomposting

by Michelle Eva Portman (Flower Press, 2002).

What is vermicomposting? It's a system for turning food waste into planting soil with the help of worms. Michelle Eva Portman provides a primer on the process as an entertaining story — a young girl and her mom convert a storage box into a house for their new "pets." The box is a vermicomposting bin, and the pets are redworms. Accompanied by adorable illustrations, *Compost, by Gosh!* includes a how-to section for children to try composting at home. 42 pages. Danielle Marshall

Dear Children of the Earth

by Schim Schimmel (Northword Press, 1994).

This book delivers an extremely important message. It's a letter to all children from Mother Nature, asking them to please love her as she loves them. The illustrations are absolutely stunning! Adults as well as children can benefit and will be impacted by this book. Darlene Kenny



Michael Recycle

by Ellie Bethel, illustrated by Alexandra Colombo (Worthwhile Books, 2008).

Written to celebrate Earth Day (April 22), *Michael Recycle* tells the adventures of a young superhero whose powers allow him to teach people about recycling. Kids will relate to this "green-caped crusader" and the idea that one person can make a difference. 28 pages. Danielle Marshall

Recycle! A Handbook for Kids

by Gail Gibbons (Little, Brown Young Readers, 1996).

Prolific children's author Gail Gibbons's cartoons in primary shapes and colors illustrate how to recycle various products to cut down on the need for landfills. Paper, plastic, glass and

Darlene Kenny is the librarian at San Francisco's Clarendon Elementary School, a California Distinguished School. Darlene has been Clarendon's librarian for 20 years, during which time both her son and her nephew graduated from the school.

Dr. Jan LaBonty is a professor in the School of Education at the University of Montana.



Danielle Marshall is a former longtime bookseller, most notably for Powell's Books in Portland, Oregon. She continues her love of all things book related by now working as the marketing manager for Beyond Words Publishing, best known as the publisher of *The Secret*. When not working or reading, you can find Danielle with a saucepan or an iPod in her hands.

Ellen Phillips holds a master's degree in library and information management and has been a librarian in the Saddleback Valley Unified School District in California for 22 years. She has worked in both elementary and secondary libraries, created recommended book lists for K-12 teachers and managed motivational reading programs for both elementary and secondary school students. Ellen is the mother of two grown daughters, both avid readers.

Krishna Ashley Roach is an early education administrator. As a former book seller for over 16 years she created reading lists for K-12 teachers. Krishna is the mother of three boys, ages 13, 10 and 2.

Jennifer Thompson is a Reading Specialist for the Manassas City Public Schools in Virginia. She was recently awarded the Washington Post's Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award. Jennifer has 18 years of teaching experience, a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and a Reading Specialist License for K-12.

Children's Choices, a project of the International Reading Association and The Children's Book Council, is an annual list of favorite books chosen by children.



Common Sense Media is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping parents make informed media and entertainment choices for their families.

Kepler's Books, a half-century old, full-service general bookstore in Menlo Park, California. **Antonia Squire** is the buyer and manager of the children's department there. Squire believes that

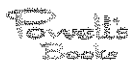
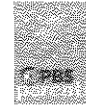


a reluctant reader is one who has not yet found the right book, and takes great pleasure in putting the right book in the hands of the right child.



The Parents' Choice Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit evaluator of children's books, videos, toys, audios, computer software, television and magazines. Its mission is to "search out and recommend products that help kids grow - imaginatively, physically, morally and mentally ..."

PBS Parents On PBS Parents, a section of the PBS Web site, you'll find a feature called Bookfinder, where you can discover books geared to the age of your child.



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